

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Mill Hill Primary School**  
Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area : Stoke on Trent

Unique Reference Number : 124015

Headteacher : Miss M Murray

Reporting inspector : Mrs M Fitzpatrick  
24236

Dates of inspection : 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707767

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Type of school :              | Infant and junior   |
| Type of control :             | County  |
| Age range of pupils :         | 3 to 11 years   |
| Gender of pupils :            | Mixed   |
| School address :              | Sunnyside Avenue<br>Tunstall<br>Stoke-on-Trent<br>ST6 6ED |
| Telephone number :            | 01782 234 466   |
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| Appropriate authority :       | Governing body  |
| Name of chair of governors :  | Cllr J Edwards  |
| Date of previous inspection : | June 1996   |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members   | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--|--|--|
| Mrs M Fitzpatrick, RgI   | Science<br>History<br>Religious education  | Attainment and progress<br>Teaching<br>Leadership and management   |
| Mr M Romano, Lay Inspector   | Equal opportunities  | Attitudes, behaviour and personal development<br>Attendance<br>Support, guidance and pupils' welfare<br>Partnership with parents and the community<br>Staffing, accommodation and learning resources |
| Mr R Greenall, Team Inspector                                      | English<br>Information technology<br>Physical education  | Curriculum and assessment  |
| Mr K Johnson, Team Inspector                                       | Mathematics<br>Science (support)<br>Art  | The efficiency of the school   |
| Mrs B Rogers, Team Inspector<br><br>Mr P Thrussell, Team Inspector | Music<br>Under fives<br>Design and technology<br>Geography<br>Special educational needs (including English as a second language) | Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development  |

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

The school is well led. There is strong , effective leadership and clear educational direction from the headteacher.

- The school has significantly raised attainment in mathematics and science across the school and has made some improvement in attainment in English at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. This makes a positive contribution to the progress they make.
- The personal development of pupils is very good. They have high self-esteem and they are able to show initiative and exercise responsibility well.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and help to create positive attitudes to learning.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. A large number of pupils participate and the activities make a good contribution to their personal and social development.
- The quality of teaching in art is good throughout the school and supports the pupils to reach standards in the subject that are higher than are found nationally.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.
- The school has established strong supportive links with parents and these help pupils to do well at school.
- The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour.
- There is very good financial control and administration by the headteacher and the administrative staff.

\* All of these contribute to the school's very good ethos.

### Where the school has weaknesses

Attainment in English is low, especially at Key Stage 1.

- I. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It is below the national average for similar schools.
- II. There is some weakness in the provision for pupils with special educational needs; the monitoring of individual educational plans is not consistent.
- III. There is some weakness in the teaching of English at lower Key Stage 2.

**What the school does well far outweighs its weaknesses. The weaknesses identified above will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection the school has made good improvement in both the standards attained by pupils and in the quality of educational provision. Standards have been raised in all of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, although English remains weaker than the other two and further improvements are needed. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, with at least half of the teaching now being good or better and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching greatly reduced to four per cent. Overall, teachers' expectations of pupils are higher and they provide work that matches pupils' needs in most subjects. There is still a need to set more challenging tasks to higher attainers, especially in reading and writing. Since the previous inspection there has been a development in the use of a wider range of teaching styles. In mathematics and science, pupils are given more opportunities to work in groups, and in science they are encouraged to design and carry out experiments. Pupils are now given sufficient opportunities to for individual research and investigation. Teaching is now monitored through scrutiny of teachers' plans, pupils' written work, their performance in tests and through direct classroom observation. Whole school assessment procedures are now followed, with subject co-ordinators assembling portfolios of pupils' work to provide guidance for colleagues on the different levels of attainment. All teachers now follow a common format for their lesson planning and recording, which was not the case at the previous inspection. There is strong leadership from the headteacher and she is well supported by an effective senior management team. The capacity for further



improvement in the school is good.

## Standards in subjects

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

| Performance in | Compared with all schools | Compared with similar schools | <i>Key</i>                |          |
|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|
|                |                           |                               | <i>well above average</i> | <i>A</i> |
|                |                           |                               | <i>above average</i>      | <i>B</i> |
|                |                           |                               | <i>average</i>            | <i>C</i> |
|                |                           |                               | <i>below average</i>      | <i>D</i> |
|                |                           |                               | <i>well below average</i> | <i>E</i> |
| English        | D                         | C                             |                           |          |
| Mathematics    | B                         | A                             |                           |          |
| Science        | B                         | A                             |                           |          |

The information shows that pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests in English is below the average for all schools and is in line with the average for pupils in similar schools. In mathematics and science pupils' performance is above the average for all schools nationally and it is well above the average of pupils in similar schools. These results mark a significant improvement in the results achieved in 1998 in these subjects. By the end of both key stages pupils reach the expected levels in information and communication technology. In religious education they reach the levels required by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Children under five make satisfactory progress in all of the desirable learning outcomes, except in mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of the world, where they make good progress.

## Quality of teaching

| Teaching in:           | Under 5      | 5 - 7 years  | 7 - 11 years |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| English                | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Good         |
| Mathematics            | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Good         |
| Science                | n/a          | Satisfactory | Good         |
| Information technology | n/a          | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Religious education    | n/a          | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Other subjects         | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons; in 12 per cent of lessons it was very good or better. Four per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. These were in design and technology at Key Stage 1 and in English, mathematics and music at Key Stage 2. The strengths of teaching for under fives are the teachers' knowledge and understanding, their management of pupils and their use of time and resources. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers' strengths are in the methods they use, their management of pupils and in their use of time and resources. Teachers at Key Stage 2 also make good use of assessment to inform their lesson planning and good use of homework. Teaching in art is consistently good at both key stages.

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

## Other aspects of the school

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| Behaviour                                       | Good. Behaviour and relationships within the school are good. Pupils show very good levels of maturity and independence by the time they leave the school.   |
| Attendance                                      | Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory despite efforts made by the school to encourage and support parents in sending their children to school.   |
| Ethos*  | The school has a very good ethos.  |
| Leadership and management                       | Good. The headteacher has been very effective in steering the school towards a raising of attainment and creating a very good environment for learning. The senior management team are hardworking and effective. The governing body are supportive of the headteacher and the work of the school. |
| Curriculum                                      | The curriculum for all pupils is broad and balanced. Planning is sound and the school has good assessment procedures to help set targets for pupils and teachers.  |
| Pupils with special educational needs           | Satisfactory provision overall. There is a need for more in-class support for literacy. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress because of the well-planned support they receive.  |
| Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development | There is good provision for moral and social development; satisfactory provision for the spiritual and cultural development of pupils.   |
| Staffing, resources and accommodation           | Satisfactory. The school has enough teachers with the correct expertise to teach the subjects of the curriculum. Resources for teaching are adequate. There are shortcomings in the space available for teaching, but the school does much to overcome the difficulties created.                   |
| Value for money                                 | The school gives good value for money.   |

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

## The parents' views of the school

| What most parents like about the school  | What some parents are not happy about  |
|--|--|
| IV. The way the school encourages their children to care for each other.<br>V. The way parents are encouraged to play a part in the life of the school.<br>VI. Their children are encouraged to get involved in more than daily lessons.<br>VII. Their children enjoy going to school. | VIII. The amount of information about the<br>IX. Some teachers did not have high enough<br>X. The inconsistent provision for homework. |

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views about the school. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities; the school has a caring ethos and parent helpers make a good contribution to the work of the school. The school has recently re-introduced its newsletter, which gives parents information on what their children will be doing each half term and details of school events and outings. Inspection evidence supports the view that some teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils and the school is tackling this issue through its monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress. During the inspection, younger pupils were given reading homework regularly and those in Years 5 and 6 were given a good range of tasks in English, mathematics and science.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The headteacher, staff and governors should maintain the improvements they have made since the previous inspection and continue to build on the good progress they have made. To further improve the standards of pupils' attainments and the quality of education provided, they should now:

Raise standards in English, especially in reading and writing, at both key stages by –

- \* improving teachers' understanding of language and the process of language development in young children - paras 38, 118, 126.
- \* establishing consistent and systematic approaches to the teaching of reading and writing skills – paras 40, 48.
- \* monitoring the effectiveness of such strategies in order to share the best practice – para 56
- \* evaluating the progress pupils make in order to develop target setting which is based upon accurate assessments in reading and writing – paras 125, 127.

Continue to enlist the support of parents in improving pupils' attendance by:

- \* actively involving the support and expertise of the local education authority to bolster the good efforts currently made by the school – para 66.

Review the whole school provision for special educational needs to ensure:

- \* that individual education plans are reviewed and updated regularly and that the class-teacher has a responsibility in this process, so that reviews can be held promptly, when this is necessary - para 50.
- \* that the process of moving through the stages of the Code of Practice does not falter at key points as it does now at Stages Two and Three, by actively involving the local authority in the school's quest for further support for pupils with special educational needs – paras 83, 94.
- \* that the school's practice of using group educational plans does not obscure the individual needs of pupils nor impair recognition of their progress against targets, by involving class-teachers in the monitoring and review of individual education plans

In addition to the key issues above, the following, less important weaknesses, should be considered for inclusion in the action plans:

- \* extend the opportunities for pupils to learn about the multi-cultural facets of the society in which they live – para 61.
- \* ensure that the governors' annual report to parents meets its statutory obligations in full. – paras 70, 78.
- \* ensure that higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged with work which will fully develop their potential – paras 49, 80.

## INTRODUCTION

### • **Characteristics of the school**

- 1 Mill Hill Primary School is situated in the town of Tunstall, in the Stoke on Trent Local Education Authority. There are 526 pupils on the school roll, with an approximate balance between the numbers of boys and girls. There is a thirty place nursery on site. The school is much larger than the average size of primary school. There are currently one hundred and nineteen pupils on the special needs register, which is in line with the national average; there are seven pupils with statements of special educational need, which is below the national average. Twenty six pupils in the school have English as a second language and this proportion is above the national average for primary schools.
- 2 The majority of pupils who attend the school are drawn from two nearby local authority housing estates. Unemployment in the school's catchment area is above the national average and, overall, the pupils' socio-economic circumstances are below those found nationally. This is reflected in the high percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (36 per cent), which is above the national average. Pupils enter the school with attainments which are well below those that are expected for their age, especially in language and social skills.
- 3 The school aims to provide a stimulating, happy and caring environment where children are expected to work to high standards. The school seeks to promote good attitudes to learning through the professional development of teachers who will act as role models for their pupils.
- 4 The school's main priorities are:
  - \* to improve literacy, particularly writing skills;
  - \* to raise expectations and aspirations in mathematics;
  - \* to develop the use of assessment information to help teachers plan their teaching and pupils' learning;
  - \* to improve pupils' behaviour within class;
  - \* to improve the use of information technology throughout the school.

## 4 Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1

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

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1999 | 39   | 37    | 76    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results   |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | Boys     | 30      | 28      | 35          |
|   | Girls    | 22      | 20      | 27          |
|   | Total    | 52      | 48      | 62          |
| Percentage at NC Level 2 or above       | School   | 64      | 59      | 77          |
|   | National | 77      | 81      | 84          |

| Teacher Assessments                     |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | Boys     | 23      | 33          | 30      |
|   | Girls    | 21      | 25          | 21      |
|   | Total    | 44      | 58          | 51      |
| Percentage at NC Level 2 or above       | School   | 62      | 78          | 69      |
|   | National | 81      | 85          | 86      |

## Attainment at Key Stage 2

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

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1999 | 46   | 32    | 78    |

| National Curriculum Test Results              |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils<br>at NC Level 4 or<br>above | Boys     | 24      | 35          | 43      |
|   | Girls    | 21      | 21          | 23      |
|   | Total    | 45      | 56          | 66      |
| Percentage at NC<br>Level 4 or above          | School   | 57      | 71          | 85      |
|   | National | 70      | 69          | 78      |

| Teacher Assessments                           |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils<br>at NC Level 4 or<br>above | Boys     | 26      | 33          | 42      |
|   | Girls    | 21      | 23          | 26      |
|   | Total    | 47      | 56          | 68      |
| Percentage at NC<br>Level 4 or above          | School   | 60      | 71          | 87      |
|   | National | 75      | 69          | 75      |

## Attendance

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

|                         |                           | %    |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|------|
| Authorised<br>Absence   | School                    | 5.4  |
|                         | National comparative data | 5.7  |
| Unauthorised<br>Absence | School                    | 2.2. |
|                         | National comparative data | 0.5  |

## Exclusions

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

|              | Number |
|--------------|--------|
| Fixed period | 1      |
| Permanent    | 0      |



**Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
|                        | %  |
| Very good or better    | 12 |
| Satisfactory or better | 96 |
| Less than satisfactory | 4  |

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

- 1 When children enter the nursery they have very low attainment in all areas of development. The local authority's baseline assessment shows that when children start the reception class they have levels of attainment below those expected for children of this age. In creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world, the children have attainments which are typical for their age. In mathematics, physical development and personal and social development they are below the level expected for their age and in language and literacy development they are very low compared with the expected level. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, but only about 40 per cent of children attain the levels described by the desirable learning outcomes for children aged five. The remaining 60 per cent of children enter Key Stage 1 with below expected attainments in all areas of learning, except in the development of language, where their attainment is well below the expected standard.
- 2 At the end of Key Stage 1, the overall attainment of pupils is in line with national expectations, except in English, where it is well below the national average.
- 3 In English, the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected standard in reading was well below the national average in tests for seven-year-olds in 1998, and the number achieving higher levels was close to the national average. Overall, standards in reading were below the national average. In writing, the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected standard was well below the national average and the percentage achieving higher levels was below the national average. Overall, standards in writing were well below the national average. Inspection findings indicate that standards in English are well below the national average by the end of Key Stage 1. In speaking and listening, standards are in line with the national average. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and to each other, they answer questions audibly and appropriately. In reading and in writing, pupils are well below the national average. They write stories with interesting openings, but fail to sustain the plot and structure.
- 4 In mathematics, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the 1998 National Curriculum tests was below the national average, and was well below the national average for pupils achieving the higher levels. Overall, standards were below the national average. This is due to the low level of prior attainment of pupils and to periods of unsettled teaching following teacher illness. Inspection findings indicate that, by the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in mathematics is in line with the standard expected nationally. Pupils know the names of two-dimensional shapes and can recognise numbers up to 100. In science, the percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in teacher assessments was well below the national average and below average for those achieving the higher levels.
- 5 The level of attainment pupils achieved in the National Curriculum tests in 1998 was below the average for similar schools in reading and writing and was in line with similar schools in mathematics. Girls perform better than boys in reading and writing in national tests. There is no difference in their performance in mathematics.
- 6 In English, pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 in reading and writing. In speaking and listening they make good progress. Where standards of listening are good, pupils follow teachers' explanations closely and respond appropriately to questions. Reading is not so well developed because of the inconsistent use of reading strategies, which results in many average and below average attaining pupils having poorly developed reading skills. There has been little improvement in this aspect of English since the previous inspection. Pupils learn to write legibly and higher attainers punctuate sentences correctly by the end of the key stage. However, pupils are given too few opportunities to extend their writing skills for a specific purpose and there has been little improvement in provision for this since the previous inspection.

- 7 Pupils' progress in mathematics is good. They add and subtract numbers up to twenty with confidence. They recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and begin to represent data in block graphs and diagrams.
- 8 In science, they make satisfactory progress in all programmes of study and their attainment is in line with the national expectation in life and living processes, and in materials and their properties. They learn the essential growing conditions for plants and discover what happens when any of these conditions, such as light or water, is missing. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils have extended their science vocabulary and have a sound recall of technical terms they use.
- 9 At the end Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with the standard expected nationally for seven-year-olds and they make satisfactory progress in the subject. The sound standards found at the previous inspection have been maintained. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a sound vocabulary relating to the subject, which they use accurately when talking about their work. They control the mouse effectively to give and follow commands, to create text and pictures and to save their work.
- 10 In religious education, attainment is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress in knowledge about religion and, in some instances, they make good progress in understanding the significance of symbol and ritual. They know the main Christian traditions and have an understanding of moral concepts, such as forgiveness. For some pupils, more opportunity to learn from first hand experience would enhance their understanding of unfamiliar notions. Pupils make good progress in art and satisfactory progress in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
- 11 Overall, the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national expectations, except in English, where it is below average.
- 12 In English, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level in the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds was well below the national average and the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was also well below the national average. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected level was well below the national average, as was the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels. In science, the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected level was close to the national average, while the percentage achieving the higher levels was above the national average. Taking all core subjects together, the performance of pupils was well below the national average. Provisional test results for 1999 indicate an improvement in performance in English and mathematics and sustained good performance in science.
- 13 The performance of pupils in English and mathematics tests was below that of pupils from similar schools. The performance of pupils in science was above that of pupils from similar schools. Each of the subjects shows a rising trend of attainment over the past three years, with English and mathematics rising in line with the trend nationally and science rising faster than the national trend.
- 14 Inspection findings indicate that, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English is below the national average. The majority of pupils read with some understanding, but a significant minority still have a limited range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words and only the highest attainers read with expression. As a result, their reading skills are below the expected level at the end of the key stage. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, but are attaining below the national expectation in this aspect of English. They follow lengthy and sometimes complicated explanations from teachers; they discuss a variety of topics, often building on the ideas of others in discussion. The range and quality of writing is restricted and many pupils do not develop beyond the narrative style in their work. Handwriting is not well promoted and there are many pupils not using cursive script by the end of the key stage. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in writing is still well below that expected.

- 15 The school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to practise and develop the range of their literacy skills across the wider curriculum. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson on money, the teacher prominently displays all the basic vocabulary of money. In history, Year 6 pupils studying “Britain Since 1930” write letters home and diaries whilst in role as wartime evacuees. A Year 4 class writes ‘tabloid’ news stories based on Greek myths. Under headings such as ‘ZEUS EATS HIS MOTHER’, they use appropriate style, detail and layout. Such examples illustrate how work in other subjects can highlight language and seize opportunities to extend literacy skills. Many classrooms provide an environment in which reading and writing are presented as attractive, important and enjoyable to do. Some special reading and writing areas show books invitingly, and displays of pupils’ work, or of information on topics, help to extend pupils’ vocabulary and literate awareness. However, the school does not yet have a coherent, whole-curriculum strategy for promoting literacy. The school has two well planned library areas with collections of good-quality non-fiction books in a range of subjects, but, during the inspection, very few pupils were seen using, or being taught to use, library and study skills in these areas.
- 16 In mathematics, inspection findings indicate that the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is close to the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but higher attaining pupils could be more challenged in the earlier parts of the key stage. Pupils use mental recall of tables to work on fractions and decimals and develop accurate methods of computation. By the end of the key stage, Year 6 pupils double and triple numbers accurately and have a sound knowledge of fractions and the terms ‘numerator’ and ‘denominator’. The improvement in attainment since the previous inspection is due to improved management of the subject, following the appointment of a new subject co-ordinator.
- 17 In science, pupils are attaining at least in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2 and a significant minority are attaining above it. Pupils undertake their own investigations to discover the effects of exercise on the pulse rate. They design and carry out experiments to test hypotheses about solutions and record their findings accurately. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a good basic scientific knowledge, for instance, they know the functions of the main organs of the body, they understand how friction effects movement and they understand the inter-dependence of creatures in the food chain. The considerable improvement in pupils’ attainment in science since the previous inspection is due to an improved scheme of work, improved teacher knowledge and expertise and a greater emphasis on investigative science, which ensures satisfactory progress for all pupils.
- 18 Pupils’ attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of the computer and how it works and in their understanding of how it affects society. Pupils use information technology skills across different subjects of the curriculum. For example, Year 5 pupils use the computer to create repeating patterns when designing in the style of William Morris and others use the CD-ROM to discover information about the Victorians for their studies in history.
- 19 In religious education, pupils attain in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 2. They make satisfactory progress in knowledge about major world faiths. In some lessons, they make good progress in understanding and in learning from religious belief. They understand how religious belief affects behaviour and customs and know the rituals connected with the major faiths of the world.
- 20 In art, pupils make good progress, especially in skill development, and, by the end of the key stage, they attain above the national expectation. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education they make satisfactory progress and attain in line with national expectations.

- 21 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in all subjects of the curriculum except English, where they need more in-class support to help them with language development and reading strategies. Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems make good progress because of the well planned support and guidance they receive from the co-ordinator for special educational needs and their class teachers. The previous report stated that pupils with special educational needs attained standards appropriate for their developing abilities and this is still the case. There are clear procedures in place to enable pupils to move between stages of the register or to be removed from it when that is appropriate. During the previous year, 30 per cent of pupils were removed from the register.
- 22 The school has established the Literacy Hour effectively at both key stages. Teachers follow the national literacy strategy that supports planning, but have not yet developed this at Key Stage 1 to ensure that pupils have enough time to consolidate their knowledge of phonics. There are signs of more developed uses at Key Stage 2, where teachers are creating opportunities for pupils to apply the skills learned in the Literacy Hour to their writing in history and science.
- 23 Standards in numeracy are close to the national average in both key stages. Pupils' understanding and use of number develop satisfactorily at both key stages. Pupils carry out mental calculations with increasing accuracy as they move through the school. They use their numeracy skills across a range of subjects, especially in science, where they record observations and compile charts to compare findings when doing experiments.

#### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 24 Pupils' attitudes to learning, their relationships with staff and each other and their behaviour are good. The opportunities provided for their personal development are very good. Behaviour in lessons, at playtime and around the school, is good. Children under five make slow progress in developing confident attitudes towards learning.
- 25 Rewards and sanctions for good or poor attitudes or behaviour are clear and consistently applied. Pupils know the school and class rules and, generally, abide by them. There is a high degree of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils' good attitudes make a significant impact on their learning. Staff are very good role models in their behaviour towards each other and pupils' achievement, in effort or behaviour, is recognised and praised.
- 26 Pupils value their teacher's approval and praise and are proud to receive the certificates awarded at the weekly "shield" assembly. These awards can be for improved behaviour as well as for effort or good work. The use of personal and social education, circle time and assemblies to discuss caring, friendship, bullying and other issues with pupils, is effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and in teaching them the value of good relationships, respect and courtesy towards others. Pupils care for property and each other. Incidents of bullying (which are rare), are dealt with effectively. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility. They put out and collect resources in class, carry registers, act as door monitors, care for younger pupils in the playground and at lunchtime and organise the school bank each week. In co-operation with the local education authority, through the Behaviour Support Group and with parents through the Home / School Agreement, the school has put in place a secure, ordered community which gives the maximum support for pupils' learning. Only one pupil was excluded in the past year for a fixed term.
- 27 Pupils' response in lessons was judged to be good overall.

## **Attendance**

- 28 Attendance in the school is unsatisfactory; it is just below the national average, with unauthorised absence being well above the national average. Whilst the school makes every effort to provide a welcoming environment where pupils wish to go, there is a number of families whose children do not value regular attendance or punctuality. The attainment and progress of those pupils is affected adversely by their absence or lateness. The majority of pupils attend school regularly and are punctual.
- 29 Attendance was judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection but, overall, this has not been sustained, despite the good efforts of the school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

- 30 The overall quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory for under-fives and at Key Stage 1 and is good at Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in 96 per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory. In 51 per cent of lessons it is good or better; in 11 per cent it is very good and in 2 per cent it is excellent. Compared with findings at the previous inspection teaching has improved significantly. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced and the proportion of very good or better teaching has increased. The improved quality of teaching is one of the major factors contributing to the rise in attainment now found in the school and is a significant indicator of the school's ability to maintain and further improve standards. The school has a strong team of teachers who are beginning to have an impact on standards
- 31 Of the observed teaching for the under fives, 100 per cent is satisfactory, with 41 per cent of teaching being good or better. There is good teaching in language and literacy in reception and in knowledge and understanding of the world in the nursery. Teachers and nursery staff show a good knowledge and understanding of the children they teach. They are aware of their low levels of social skills and plan carefully to develop these so that children become more effective learners.
- 32 In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good or better in 51 per cent of lessons, satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in 4 per cent. In one mathematics lesson observed, the teaching was excellent, with pupils making very good progress in their understanding of number. There is some very good teaching in literacy at Key Stage 1 and some excellent teaching of mathematics. There is some unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 1 in design and technology, where the teacher's planning did not make provision for teaching the skills pupils would need, nor did the lesson include any opportunity for design work. As a consequence, pupils made unsatisfactory progress and were not well motivated.
- 33 In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good or better in 49 per cent of lessons, satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in 6 per cent, with some very good teaching in mathematics and science and some excellent teaching in literacy. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in music at the lower end of the key stage, where the teacher's lack of subject knowledge led to a slow pace, resulting in poor behaviour from the pupils. In literacy also, at the lower part of Key Stage 2, there is some unsatisfactory teaching, where the lack of challenge and low expectations of pupils leads to a slow pace and unsatisfactory progress.
- 34 Teachers' subject knowledge is generally satisfactory at both key stages, except in English, where some teachers who have an insecure understanding of how children acquire and develop language skills. This, in turn contributes to slower progress in pupils' reading and writing. At Key Stage 2 insecure knowledge of music leads to unsatisfactory progress for some pupils. In other subjects teachers use their knowledge to plan appropriate activities and to target correct vocabulary in subjects such as mathematics and science.

- 35 The previous report suggested that teachers' expectations were not always high enough for some pupils, resulting in a lack of suitably challenging work. While expectations vary, they are now at least appropriate in mathematics and science. They are generally better towards the end of Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics and science and in some English lessons. They are less often good in Key Stage 1 and pupils are given too much work that relies on worksheets, thus inhibiting their growing independence and preventing them from making decisions about the work they do. Except at the upper end of Key Stage 2, expectations of average and higher attaining pupils are not high enough in English, especially in reading and writing.
- 36 Teachers' long term and medium term planning is satisfactory. Medium term plans identify learning objectives and these are translated into daily lesson plans, ensuring progression and continuity in learning. In mathematics and science, they are good, with learning objectives related to the National Curriculum programmes of study clearly identified in most lesson plans. Teachers are generally successful in ensuring that suitable tasks are set for pupils who are at different stages in their learning. This is not always the case in English, where teachers have not yet sufficiently developed the programmes of the National Literacy Hour to meet the needs of their pupils. Pupils' lack of reading strategies and their under-developed writing skills are a product of some planning which does not take enough notice of the progress pupils are making, and many skills are not consolidated in the subject. However, there is now greater consistency in teachers' planning across the school and this marks an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 37 Teaching methods and strategies have shown some improvement since the previous inspection and are now good overall. Teachers, particularly those at Key Stage 2, use group activity effectively as a vehicle for learning. This is very successful in science lessons, where pupils design and then conduct their own experiments. The responsibility they take for accurately recording results and drawing conclusions makes a good contribution to the retention of what they have learned. Art is well taught throughout the school, with a good focus on systematic skills development in all media. All teachers make sensible use of whole class, group and independent activity to develop a range of learning styles in their pupils. In the best mathematics lessons, at both key stages, teachers achieve a good balance of these aspects of learning and all pupils make good progress as a consequence. There is good emphasis on investigative work in information technology and teachers relate tasks well to history topics, making good use of CD-ROMs.
- 38 The relationships teachers develop with pupils are good and serve to create a secure and positive learning environment. Their management of all pupils is very good, and where they have pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties in their classes, this management is occasionally excellent. At both key stages, the majority of teachers ensure that any instances of misbehaviour or disruption are dealt with promptly and calmly, without interrupting the flow of lessons. In a few instances, teachers' insecure subject knowledge or failure to insist that expectations are met, does lead to noisy, disruptive behaviour and a lack of progress for pupils. These instances are rare and, in the main, short lived.
- 39 The use of time in lessons is good in lessons at both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils are kept on task and make good progress in mathematics lessons because of the high expectations of the teacher, who makes good use of time to exert pressure on her pupils to complete tasks and move on. In many science lessons at Key Stage 2, the pressure of time and careful staging of elements of the lesson ensure that pupils are well challenged and make good progress throughout. Whole class teaching is often conducted at a brisk and energetic pace, which both enthuses and enlivens the pupils. Many instances of this were seen in English lessons at Key Stage 2 and in mathematics lessons at both key stages. Teachers make good use of resources and produce in-house materials to provide a well matched resource for learning. This is the case in science, mathematics and religious education lessons, where pupils are well supported, either in the generation of ideas or in the recording of ideas by the well made resources provided by the teacher. Some use is made of information technology to support other areas of the curriculum, such as science and English. Support staff and parent helpers are used effectively to support individuals and small groups of pupils at both key stages.

- 40 Spellings and reading are regularly set for homework at Key Stage 1. Additional tasks, at Key Stage 2, include research or follow up to work in science, history and geography, and pupils are expected to learn their tables for mathematics. Pupils' work is marked regularly, with comments on how it might be improved. Teachers make sound use of day-to-day assessment at Key Stage 1 and, at Key Stage 2, they make good use of it to alter their teaching as the lesson progresses. Assessments are not fully used to plan the next stage of learning in English often enough, though teachers generally make good use of assessment to inform their planning at Key Stage 2.
- 41 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall at both key stages. The special needs co-ordinator and the support staff use classroom support and withdrawal sessions carefully and effectively. There are some instances of individual education plans not being monitored as closely as they might be by class teachers. When this is the case, pupils do not make the steady progress of which they are capable.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

- 45
- 42 The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory. It fully meets statutory requirements and provides a broad and balanced programme, which embraces the six areas of learning experience for young children. It promotes good progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
- 43 At Key Stages 1 and 2, the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. It provides a curriculum of satisfactory breadth and balance, which promotes the intellectual, physical, aesthetic, social and personal development of all its pupils. It successfully extends their experience within a coherent framework, and prepares them for their secondary education. There is a good programme of personal and social education at both key stages, and satisfactory provision for health, sex and drugs education.
- 44 At each key stage, the school has adopted the recommended national strategies for literacy and numeracy. All classes now receive an hour-long daily lesson in each area. Teachers follow the established structure and process within the hour and use time well. Additional time is allocated to literacy in both key stages in view of pupils' low attainment in these skills. However, the literacy curriculum does not yet effectively address all significant reasons for this low attainment. In particular, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their understanding of the English writing system at this key stage. Consequent weaknesses in their reading and writing skills continue to restrict their development and use of literacy across the school. However, in English at Key Stage 2 and in mathematics throughout the school, positive effects of these curricular developments are already evident in rising standards. Other subjects benefit from, and sometimes contribute to, improving skills in these key areas. But there is no clear overall policy to promote consistent practice at this level, for instance, to develop reading skills through a series of small research projects in history, geography and religious education, or to refine drafting and editing skills through planned use of information technology in several subjects.
- 45 The school has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. Teachers successfully ensure that gender biases are avoided in all areas, including after-school activities, and they carefully vary their groupings to enable pupils to have work and support appropriate to their needs and interests. In practice, however, this does not ensure that higher attaining pupils are always suitably challenged to realise their potential. This weakness was identified in the previous report and remains a minor concern for attention. Provision to ensure equality of access is good.



- 50 No pupils with special educational needs are disapplied from the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. They are integrated in their classes and have the opportunity to take part in all extra-curricular activities. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has encouraged early identification of pupils with special educational needs through observation of pupils in the nursery and reception classes and through the analysis of baseline assessment scores. Individual education plans are written by the SENCO. They are reviewed half-termly at Key Stage 1 and termly at Key Stage 2. In some cases, pupils reach targets before review dates and some teachers then contact the co-ordinator for an earlier review. In practice, this does not always happen, as in a Year 1 class, where most pupils had reached their targets in numeracy. Teachers are expected to keep records of the frequency with which small targets on group educational programmes are addressed for each pupil, but such record keeping is inconsistent.
- 46 Overall, curriculum planning is satisfactory across the school. The systems for planning the curriculum are consistent, thorough and up to date. All subjects are covered by clear policies and detailed schemes of work which effectively support teachers' planning for continuity in pupils' learning. In several subjects, for example, science and information technology, teachers make good use of guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to ensure that pupils progress coherently through the range of knowledge and skills. Long-term plans construct clear pathways through the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and give teachers a broadly reliable picture of what pupils learn at different ages and stages. Useful links between subjects are seldom made. Medium term and weekly plans use a common format and identify what pupils in different groups are expected to learn and by what means. Better quality plans show how specific skills will be developed and assessed. Teachers plan in year-group teams to make efficient use of expertise and ensure consistency of experience for each class. Curriculum leaders systematically monitor teachers' planning to check its quality and ensure adherence to agreed schemes.
- 47 The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and is a clear testament to the commitment and enthusiasm of many teachers. Weekly or twice weekly meetings of the choir and recorders groups, and of clubs for art, chess, drama, line dancing, computers and needlework, offer opportunities throughout the year for aesthetic, intellectual and practical development. For Year 6 pupils, a very popular course in computing meets for four evenings each week in eight-week 'runs'. The course is organised by the Port Vale Study Scheme and uses the information technology facilities of the high school to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and computing in relation to a football topic. For sporting interests, there are cricket and cross-country clubs and very successful teams, for both girls and boys, play football, rounders and netball. Younger pupils have a popular Quiet Club, which meets at lunchtimes. A good range of visits and visitors extends and enriches the curriculum. Each class has organised visits to nearby places of interest. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to stay at an outdoor pursuits centre at Kingswood.
- 48 Parents are asked to sign a homework contract at the beginning of each year. Reading homework is continuous for all classes, whilst pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are set regular independent tasks in mathematics, science, information technology and writing. This developing practice is effective in promoting higher standards in key skills.
- 49 The school has developed good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, and makes satisfactory use of the resulting information to inform the planning of the curriculum. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when weak assessment practice was identified as a key issue. However, action on this key issue is very recent and the procedures are not yet in consistent use throughout the school.

- 50 Baseline assessments when children enter the school are used to set individual targets and to identify pupils who are not progressing satisfactorily. This group is monitored closely to enable the school to identify the factors which account for good or poor progress, and to make appropriate adjustments. The school conducts formal assessments in English, mathematics and science at the end of each year. These include the statutory National Curriculum tests at the end of each key stage. In addition, teachers assess pupils' attainment half way through each year and also keep continuous records of individual progress, particularly in reading. This information is analysed in order to identify weaknesses which require action. These include pupils who are not reaching their targets and need directed support; teachers who may need specific training in certain areas of their work and aspects of the curriculum that need strengthening. For instance, close analysis of assessment information for Year 1 pupils last year led to the introduction of several strategies to raise the attainment of Year 2 pupils this year, particularly in relation to poor skills in reading comprehension and extended writing. The current progress of these pupils is being closely monitored to check the effectiveness of these curricular changes. In addition, co-ordinators and year group teams regularly sample and moderate pupils' work to ensure that all teachers are able to assess attainment accurately in relation to National Curriculum attainment levels. Continuous assessment is carried out in all subjects of the curriculum through observation, talking to pupils and marking their work. These assessments are recorded and used as a basis for reporting to parents, both orally and in satisfactory annual written reports.
- 51 The effectiveness of these good procedures is compromised by a number of weaknesses. There are examples of serious inaccuracy in teachers' assessment of National Curriculum levels, particularly in the assessment of literacy at Key Stage 1. Some teachers' written marking of pupils' work also shows practice falling short of school policy. Whilst good examples were found of teachers using marking to 'celebrate success and offer targets for future development', most teachers fail to apply this principle consistently. Some teachers, especially in Year 3, do not effectively use available assessment information to plan what groups of different attainment should appropriately learn next. Finally, teachers do not consistently integrate assessment into their planning and teaching. Plans sometimes identify assessment opportunities, but they rarely specify criteria or methods.

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

- 52 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and continues to successfully promote these aspects as it did at the time of the previous inspection.
- 53 The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There are plenty of opportunities during whole-school, key stage or classroom assemblies for pupils to respond to stories, song, music and prayer with sensitivity and reflection. Most members of staff attend such assemblies and so give status to this important aspect of school life. Special achievement assemblies, to celebrate success, add much to raise pupils' self-esteem and sense of belonging to the school community. Work in religious education lessons extends pupils' understanding of the value and beliefs of others. Circle times are used well for exploring attitudes and feelings. Displays such as 'Friendly Faces' and 'Give others your smile' make a sound contribution to the spiritual ethos of the school.
- 54 The provision for moral development is good. Staff act as excellent role models and endeavour to make the school a happy and caring place. They work together to promote an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life. They are effectively taught the difference between right and wrong. Relationships are very good. Provision for moral development is supported by an agreed behaviour management policy and a merit system which actively reinforces attitudes of concern and respect of others. Pupils show sensitivity to the needs of the less fortunate through their work for charitable causes.

- 55 The provision for social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to become involved in classroom duties and older pupils respond well as they perform a range of duties, which include looking after the younger pupils on the playground, assistance in the dining room and general monitor tasks. Pupils are courteous and helpful to visitors. Through their topic work, pupils are taught to treat their environment well and the school is an orderly, safe place in which pupils can work with confidence. The school is active in the community. Pupils distribute harvest gifts to the elderly and the choir performs to members of local residential homes. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities and residential visits to an outdoor education centre make a valuable contribution to the pupils' social development.
- 56 The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory and is promoted through a variety of planned experiences in art, geography, history, religious education and literature. Pupils listen to a range of music, both classical and modern, during assemblies and many take advantage of extra-curricular activities, such as line dancing and choir, to enhance their cultural development. Visits to museums and other places of educational interest increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of their British heritage. Pupils study the beliefs and traditions of other religions through their work in religious education, but their general understanding of life in a multi-cultural society is less secure.

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

- 57 The school makes good provision for the educational and personal support of pupils and their guidance. Children under five are actively introduced to the school's routines. The high standard of support identified in the last report has been further improved by recent initiatives to raise attainment through target setting, based on improved assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' performance through the school. This was identified as a key issue in the last report and the school has brought about significant improvement.
- 58 Personal development is well monitored by teachers who know their pupils well. Circle time and assemblies are used well to reinforce pupils' attitudes towards taking responsibility, caring for one another, being honest and respecting all in the school community.
- 59 The school has a good behaviour policy, very well structured with a rewards and sanction system designed to promote good behaviour. All staff monitor and discuss disciplinary matters very well, involving pupils and their parents at an early stage. The consistency of the application of rewards and sanctions by all teachers means that pupils are clear about the rules and the high expectations the school has of them in their behaviour. The school has effective procedures for dealing with bullying and parents commented that it was not an issue. Midday staff are recognised by the school to have a key role in monitoring lunchtime behaviour and they deal sensitively with pupils' needs, raising concerns with class teachers if necessary. Regular staff meetings are held to monitor individual and school behavioural concerns; midday staff are consulted and informed at the same time.
- 60 There are very good procedures in place for child protection, health and safety, including fire, medicine administration, first aid, illness, accidents. New staff are given information on these aspects as part of their induction, and the school has good links with the relevant outside agencies, including social services and the school nurse. Pupils are taught about safety in science, design and technology, physical education and other lessons. Health and sex education are taught appropriately as part of the curriculum, within Personal Social and Health Education.
- 61 Whilst procedures for monitoring attendance and timekeeping are satisfactory, the school has not yet convinced a small number of parents that their children's attainment is adversely affected by their regular absence and lateness. Though the school promotes good attendance through an awards system, there is no similar scheme for encouraging punctuality. However, the school has plans in hand to introduce this, in an endeavour to emphasise the benefits of punctuality to pupils. There is an attendance co-ordinator within the school, who is aware of the need to work with parents and the Education Welfare Officer, to more actively promote the virtues of good attendance.

- 62 Staff are caring and sensitive to pupils' needs, who say they feel secure and confident in approaching any member of staff when troubled. Overall, the standard of pastoral care provided for pupils is good. This makes a significant contribution to their academic and personal development. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in classrooms by learning assistants who work alongside teachers, often planning and preparing learning materials. Good use is made of specialist support from outside agencies who make their report to the special educational needs co-ordinator. Support is also given by a visiting teacher to pupils having English as an additional language.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 63 The partnership between the school, its parents and the community continues to make a good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development.
- 64 An overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire, and met in school, said that their children liked school, and that they found the school approachable when they had concerns or wanted information.
- 65 Information for parents through reports, newsletters and parents' meetings is good and the recently introduced "Target Books" for Years 5 and 6, help to provide parents with information on their children's work, progress and homework set. The governors' report to parents is generally satisfactory but does not contain information on the special needs provision, which is legally required.
- 66 Induction information for parents of children entering nursery or reception is good, with meetings, invitations to produce story sacks and to work in the classroom. Meetings for parents to discuss progress are currently held twice a year, with plans to add an "open evening" in Spring Terms. The school has included, as a key part of the school development plan, the "greater involvement of parents in their child's education". Part of the target has already been achieved through the recent re-formation of the Parent/Teacher Association. Whilst the school is welcoming and encourages parents to be involved, the help which parents give at home is limited. The school has taken positive steps to increase this through the new Family Literacy Initiative, to help parents support their child's literacy work at home and through the setting up of training courses for parent helpers in school. Both of these initiatives are operating in partnership with the Community College.
- 67 The school communicates well with parents whose children have special educational needs. They are invited (and usually attend) annual reviews of their child's progress and the Special Needs co-ordinator is always willing to discuss progress or concerns if parents approach her. Assemblies, concerts and other school events are well attended, but Literacy, Numeracy and other curriculum meetings are less popular. The school works hard to involve parents more and a number of them work in classrooms with pupils on a regular basis.
- 68 The school has good links with the immediate and wider community. The local college works with the school directly on several initiatives, to help parents. Many students on teacher training, nursery nursing and work placement give class support, and many visitors to school enhance pupils' learning. These include police, fire service, clergy, the school nurse, RSPCA, Yorkshire Bank and a number of local companies. Links with the secondary school are particularly effective. A major project with Port Vale FC (using football as a motivator for pupils) enables pupils to assess and improve their own literacy and numeracy on the High School's computer suite using "Success Maker" software. This helps their Year 6 to 7 transition by ensuring continuity in their work in English and mathematics. Induction arrangements for pupils to the High School are very good, with a full programme of visits for pupils and their parents. Teachers communicate well between the schools about pupils' personal and academic needs.
- 69 Pupils have the opportunity to go on a wide range of educational visits, including residential trips to Tatton Hall, visits to Jodrell Bank (with secondary pupils, staff), theatres, museums and local parks, as well as the local football club. They also visit local potteries, through the work of the Staffordshire Partnership, which also enabled several teachers to undertake placement at a pottery and a power station.

70 Overall, the school's partnership with parents and the community is good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The positive picture of this aspect presented by the last report has been improved upon. The school is looking to build further on the good work done since the last inspection and is to increase, further, parents' involvement in their children's work.

## THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### Leadership and management

- 71 The good improvement seen in the school since the previous inspection is due to the good leadership and unwavering sense of direction provided by the headteacher. The headteacher has had the committed support of the governors and together they have dealt with a number of difficult personnel issues to bring about changes that have resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of education provided by the school. The school also benefits from a strong core management team who work very effectively with the headteacher. Together, they provide a clear direction for the work of the school, which demonstrates a determination to seek further improvements in standards and provision. They have been successful in providing a clear sense of purpose in the majority of staff, especially those who have recently joined the school. All of these factors are contributing to the strong sense of teamwork, which is evident in significant parts of the school. The headteacher has established very effective systems for the day-to-day management of the school, and those relating to behaviour management are having a positive impact on the quality of learning which takes place. Through regular monitoring of teachers' planning, pupils' work, teaching and pupils' performance in tests, the headteacher is well aware of the strengths and areas for development in the school and of individual members of staff.
- 72 The senior management team, which includes the headteacher and the co-ordinators of school and community liaison, early years education, pupil achievement and the curriculum, provides good leadership for the work of the school. They are hardworking, committed to the aims of the school and are expert in their areas of responsibility. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities appropriately to key stage co-ordinators and subject co-ordinators. This allocation of responsibilities enables teachers to contribute to the overall development of the school and also gives good opportunities for individual professional development. The special needs co-ordinator provides good leadership in the identification of pupils with special educational needs and in the quality of home-school liaison she has established. She has been particularly effective in meeting the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and the systems she has established for their management in classrooms make a positive contribution to the learning of all pupils in a class. The emphasis on learning support is less fully developed and there is a need for this to be given greater prominence if all pupils with special educational needs are to benefit from the school's provision.
- 73 The governors are very supportive of the headteacher and are involved in the management of the school. They hold regular meetings and there is an appropriate structure of committees. The governor with responsibility for special education needs is a regular visitor in the school and has a good working knowledge of the Code of Practice and how the school implements this. The governing body has a strategic view of the school's development, it evaluates spending decisions and the financial planning is sound. The school's development plan, though not fully costed, gives clear direction to the work of the school and how it will improve. The plan contains effective evaluation criteria. Statutory requirements are met in almost all areas. The school's prospectus is well presented and gives clear information to parents. The governors' annual report to parents contains all the information it should, except the detail of the school's financial arrangements and the effectiveness of the policy for pupils with special educational needs.

- 74 The school's aims are focussed on providing a stimulating, happy and caring environment, where children are expected to work to high standards. The school seeks to promote good attitudes to learning through its professional development of teachers who will act as role models for the children. The provision of a stimulating, happy and caring environment is evident in the warm and supportive atmosphere which pervades the school; in the good quality of relationships which underpin the work in classrooms where teachers and pupils alike are mindful of the needs of the individual and accept differences; and in the very good provision for promoting pupils' well being, health and safety. The curriculum provision ensures that pupils have appropriately challenging work and are supported to make progress in all areas of learning. The school shows a strong commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils and the policies which support this are reflected in the school's practice. Through the effectiveness of these aims and the manner in which they are put into practice the school succeeds in producing a very good ethos for learning and makes clear its commitment to raising standards of attainment.
- 75 Since the previous inspection, the school has made good improvement in both the standards attained by pupils and in the quality of educational provision. Standards have been raised in all of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science; although English remains weaker than the other two and further improvements are needed. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, with at least half of the teaching now good or better and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching greatly reduced to four per cent. Overall, teachers' expectations of pupils are higher and they provide work that matches their needs in most subjects. There is still a need to set more challenging tasks to higher attainers, especially in reading and writing. Since the previous inspection, there has been a development in the use of a wider range of teaching styles. In mathematics and science, pupils are given more opportunities to work in groups and, in science, they are encouraged to design and carry out experiments. Pupils are now given sufficient opportunities to for individual research and investigation. Teaching is now monitored through scrutiny of teachers' plans, pupils' written work and their performance in tests and through direct classroom observation. Whole school assessment procedures are now followed, with subject co-ordinators assembling portfolios of pupils' work to provide guidance for colleagues on the different levels of attainment. All teachers now follow a common format for their lesson planning and recording, which was not the case at the previous inspection.
- 76 The school has continued to foster its caring ethos and has developed good links with parents as partners in their children's learning. The school is well aware of what developments are needed if it is to continue to improve and it is in a good position to secure further improvements.

#### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 77 Since the last report, there has been considerable staff turnover. The current staff are suitably qualified and experienced, with three newly qualified teachers in post. The support and induction for these teachers has been very well managed to ensure that they are an effective part of the teaching staff. There are sufficient teachers and the arrangements for staff development are very effective in meeting both school priorities and individuals' needs. Literacy, numeracy and various initiatives to raise standards have been the main focus for teachers' training, and information gained on training courses is evaluated and used to benefit all staff.
- 78 Whilst support staff are generally well qualified, their numbers are inadequate to support both pupils with special educational needs and other pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. They are generally effective and used well, but pupils' needs cannot be fully met with the unsatisfactory levels of classroom assistance. The school has identified specialist training needs (and is providing that training), for classroom assistants to work with special educational needs pupils, but there will still be insufficient support for that group of pupils if current support staff levels are not increased.

- 79 The accommodation is unsatisfactory, due to a lack of a classroom for Year 5 pupils. Currently, there are two classrooms in mobile classrooms housing all Year 5 (79 pupils); up to sixteen of these pupils are timetabled to work in the library area outside the hall for most lessons. This area is unsuitable, since the noise and interruptions, caused by traffic down what is really a corridor, regularly disrupt the pupils' learning. The two Year 5 classrooms and the two Year 2 classrooms have no water or toilet facilities. However, the local education authority has in hand plans to improve accommodation on the school site in the near future.
- 80 The rest of the accommodation is satisfactory. It is clean, well maintained and shows no sign of vandalism or graffiti. The school makes very good use of what is clearly unsatisfactory accommodation. Staff work hard to minimise the disruption to pupils' learning.
- 81 Resources are generally satisfactory. There are good displays in many classrooms, and recent spending on literacy has improved the supply and quality of books to an acceptable standard. For mathematics, there is a shortage of small apparatus, and, for information and communication technology, there is a need to improve the software available for Key Stage 2 up to that available in Key Stage 1. However, resources are adequate in all areas except music, where there is a poor provision in quality and quantity.
- 82 The last report described staffing as appropriate, accommodation adequate, with the limited space in reception class as "constraining in teaching and learning". There has been no improvement in the accommodation, with the reception area still providing constraints on space, and the inadequacy of the Year 5 classrooms has been highlighted by the higher numbers of Year 5 pupils. The shortage of support staff was not identified at the previous inspection. Overall, despite relative weaknesses, staffing, accommodation and learning resources make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning.

### **The efficiency of the school**

- 83 The school maintains a sound financial position through prudent management of the allocated budget. Reduced staffing costs over the two previous years has resulted in a moderate surplus of funds, with which it is planned to improve resources.
- 84 The school sets clear targets for improvement. Teachers and governors contribute annually to the development plan, which sets short and longer term priorities. Although staff development costs are planned, because of funding arrangements made available to the school, there is no clear prediction of spending in other areas such as staffing, resources and maintenance based on previous costs. Nor is there any longer term strategic spending plan which would enable governors to predict trends or identify spending priorities in advance.
- 85 All specific grants are used effectively. Funding from the National Grid for Learning has been used to enhance the provision of information technology equipment in Key Stage 1. Grants for numeracy and literacy have been used well to support those subjects.
- 86 Financial controls and school administration are very good. There are very efficiency systems for internal finances. All funds are properly accounted for. This was acknowledged in the 1998 auditor's report.
- 87 Funding for special educational needs is greatly supplemented by money from the school's budget to pay for teaching and support staff.



- 88 The governing body fulfils its role satisfactorily and is very supportive of the school. This role has been maintained since the previous inspection. Full governing body meetings are held termly. Committees are formed as appropriate but there are no formally agreed committees with particular responsibilities for aspects of management. There are named governors who have an interest in numeracy and special educational needs, and who are active in the management of these areas. Some progress has been made since the previous inspection in the evaluation of the effects of spending. Teachers report to the governors on developments such as the procedures for tracking achievement and target setting, following recent spending in staff development to address this. However, there are currently no formal systems to ensure on-going evaluation of spending decisions.
- 89 Class teachers are deployed effectively and are supported well by classroom assistants. The role of the co-ordinator for special educational needs is well defined. The learning and behavioural needs of pupils are carefully monitored, enabling those who have difficulties to be integrated well in classes, but, as the demand for both learning and behavioural support in the school is high, there is insufficient support to meet the requirements of all pupils on the special needs register.
- 90 Available classrooms are used effectively to promote learning for most pupils. The siting of a class in the library area, however, denies access to the library resource for others and reduces the opportunity for pupils to develop independent learning skills.
- 91 Bearing in mind the significantly improved standards in mathematics and science, the lower than average costs incurred, the positive climate for learning created for the pupils, the high proportion of good teaching and the good attitudes of the pupils to learning, the school gives good value for money.

## PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

- 92 Children under five are taught part-time, either mornings or afternoons, for five half days in the nursery and full-time in three reception classes at the start of the year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, all children in the reception classes were below compulsory school age. The nursery offers 30 places each session to children under five. Classes in the nursery are staffed with two qualified nursery nurses; reception classes are staffed by three teachers, a nursery nurse and two non-teaching assistants.
- 93 Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. The majority of children have poor linguistic and social skills and their listening skills are poorly developed. However, children make good progress overall in the nursery and, by the time they start compulsory education, standards of attainment are improving, but still below that expected of children of their age. Evidence from the inspection indicates that children are establishing a firm foundation for learning in the nursery and are gaining in confidence.
- 94 In the 1999 baseline assessment of children leaving the nursery, attainment was well below average in comparison with the national benchmark in all areas of learning that were assessed. Accredited baseline assessments of children leaving reception and entering compulsory education this year, show that almost two fifths have attainment consistent with the national average, while over three fifths have attainment below the national average.
- 99 Language and literacy
- 95 A substantial number of children enter the nursery with limited language skills and standards of attainment that are very low compared with the level expected for children of this age. High priority is given to this area of development and, from this low base, children make satisfactory progress.
- 96 By the time they enter compulsory education, standards are improving, but remain well below national expectations. Most children show an interest in books. They enjoy hearing stories read to them. Children in the nursery are learning how to handle books correctly and to follow a story from front to back. They are learning that print carries meaning. They play games, such as picture lotto, and explore sand, water and wet soil to help stimulate their vocabulary and encourage interaction with others. A substantial number of reception class children can recognise their own names and a few familiar words. They develop a growing knowledge of letter sounds through dice games and appropriate guessing game activities. However, their overall phonic ability is weak and this adversely affects their readiness to read.
- 97 Most children in the reception classes are at the emergent writing stage. A small number of children can copy their teacher's writing. Some children can write their own first name, but they are not, as yet, independent writers.
- 98 Children enjoy stories and listen for a short time to their teachers. However, attention spans are short and children need close supervision to remain focussed and on task.
- 99 Teachers provide good opportunities for children to develop their vocabulary in role-play situations and through organised play activities in the nursery. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory. Teachers and nursery nurses create opportunities for children to socialise as they share drinks at break-times. They tell stories well and involve children in short conversations about their play. All staff encourage children to listen carefully and make good use of praise for their contributions. However, many children generally lack the confidence to look directly at the person to whom they are speaking for any length of time. The newly furnished theme room, which the reception classes enjoy under good quality supervision, creates good opportunities for the children to socialise and develop their language skills with their peers.

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104     Mathematics

- 100     Attainment in this area of learning is below average for pupils under five. Nursery children learn about shape and colour through matching games and puzzles. They match one to one as they plant bulbs in containers and place pegs in appropriate spaces on peg boards. They are in the early stages of mathematical understanding and number recognition and progress is broadly satisfactory. Children in the reception class are developing their understanding of colour, shape and pattern well through activities such as bead threading and painting hand patterns and shapes. Most children can count to ten and can recognise patterns of two and three. They can match pairs of socks and hang them on the washing line. A few children are able to separate their name cards into boys and girls and match them to find how many more there are of one over the other.
- 101     Progress in number is good. The majority of children are developing an understanding of the language of mathematics and have sound counting skills.
- 102     The quality of teaching in mathematics is always satisfactory and, in some lessons in reception, it is good. Teaching is mainly focused on opportunities that lend themselves to the development of counting skills and knowledge of space and measure. Teachers plan a good variety of practical activities which present challenge for children.

107             Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 103     Standards of attainment in this area of learning are broadly satisfactory by the time the pupils are five. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils are making good progress. They use magnifying glasses to explore objects on display such as fir cones and wood and plant bulbs and seeds. They extend their knowledge of the wider world as they walk around the school and into nearby nature areas. Teachers encourage them to use their senses. They learn about the passage of time as they check the days of the week and decide on the day's weather. Children make good use of attractive displays of objects designed to stimulate interest and conversation.

108             Physical development

- 104     Standards of attainment in physical development are below average for pupils under five. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, though the majority of children have poorly developed skills in cutting, folding and the handling of tools. They are learning to paint and hold pencils and crayons with control. Staff encourage pupils to be independent whilst dressing and undressing for physical education. Children are beginning to be aware of their own space and of others as they hop, skip and jump in their physical education lessons. They are learning to respond to a tambourine and stop on command. Nursery children are encouraged to look and learn as they walk to the hall for their first visit. They are making sound progress in learning to adapt to a bigger space and avoiding others as they move around the room. Children develop their gross motor skills as they ride wheeled toys outdoors, but the range of equipment is narrow and there is poor provision for this area of development.

109             Creative development

- 105     Attainment in this area is broadly satisfactory by the time the pupils are five. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the children experiment with a variety of media, such as paint, crayon and differently textured materials, such as sand and soil. They enjoy singing rhymes and respond very well to story time. They are developing their limited skills of cutting and sticking with adult support. Children under five, in both nursery and reception, are making satisfactory progress in their knowledge and use of percussion instruments.

### Personal and social development

- 106 The pupils' personal and social development is given appropriate priority and is always well focussed. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, though attainment in this area of learning is below average. The majority of children behave well and are learning to take turns and share. Nursery children remain rather passive in their interaction with others and are lacking in confidence. Most are shy and unwilling to talk. They are still developing their listening skills and concentration spans. Without task focus or sufficient adult intervention, pupils lose concentration very quickly and revert to play. Progress is slow in working towards the intended learning outcomes. Most children enjoy coming to nursery and school, relationships between staff and children are warm and positive. Staff encourage children to become independent in a variety of situations. Good use is made of the 'activity' bags, which the youngest children take home to share with parents and there is a popular exchange system of nursery rhyme and story tapes to support home/school links. The guinea pig in the nursery is an excellent resource to develop children's awareness of caring for the needs of others.
- 107 The curriculum for the under fives appropriately includes all the nationally agreed areas of learning. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of speaking and listening skills and children's personal development. Daily routines help to promote social skills. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, sometimes good or very good. Teaching is less effective when lessons lack appropriate challenge or are unstimulating in nature. Teachers' planning is generally sound and teaching areas are well organised. Teachers and support staff work hard together and this has a positive effect on the quality of learning. Good use is made of resources and the limited space available, but there is a lack of outdoor play equipment to support the development of children's gross motor skills.
- 108 The pupils' response to the teaching is satisfactory. They sit quietly in circle time and are keen to respond to teacher's questions. They are attentive in the focussed teaching time and settle quickly to their activities, but levels of concentration are limited and pupils need much support to remain on task. They enjoy story time and sharing books with their teachers.
- 109 Parents are encouraged to help in their children's learning at home and to make use of the newly created early years library. The staff provide activity bags which include books and toys to stimulate talk between parent and child.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

- 110 In the 1998 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (level 2) was well below the national average in both reading and writing. The percentage reaching the standard expected of more able pupils (level 3) was close to the national average in reading, but below in writing. When compared to schools in similar social contexts, attainment in reading is close to the average, but again below in writing. During the period from 1996 to 1998, the attainment of seven year olds has been consistently well below national averages in both reading and writing. The national assessments for 1999, for which national comparisons are not yet available, indicate a significant fall from the levels achieved in previous years. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirms this picture of low attainment in literacy, despite the initiatives taken to raise standards. It also confirms that, in the year group assessed as seven year olds in 1999, as in the current Year 2 classes, there is a large percentage of pupils with special educational needs.

- 111 In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentages of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) and the higher level (level 5) were both well below the national averages. They were also well below the averages for similar schools in 1998. These results are, nevertheless, consistent with an improving trend since 1996. The trend is further confirmed by significantly improved results in reading at both levels in 1999. Inspection evidence relating to pupils currently in Year 6 reflects this improved position, although attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 remains below average. At both key stages, girls outperform boys by more than the difference typically found nationally. Despite recent variations, the overall picture of low attainment and of areas of under-achievement, presented in the last inspection report, remains substantially true.
- 112 Standards in speaking and listening are well below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils listen with interest to their teachers, but are slow to develop turn-taking skills and their answers and comments often reflect poor understanding of what they hear. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils begin to offer clear and relevant answers, but few command the vocabulary and grammar to extend their ideas fluently. Many pupils show immature pronunciation for their age and lack the confidence to contribute to discussions. Teachers work hard and often skilfully to build relationships, encourage confidence, and create a range of opportunities for pupils to listen and talk for different purposes. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress. Although standards are still below average at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress in most skills as a result of the quality of opportunity provided in Years 5 and 6. Most pupils ask, as well as answer questions, relevantly; they speak clearly and expressively; listen carefully, and take turns to participate in orderly discussion. Higher attainers expand others' ideas and explore alternative viewpoints.
- 113 Standards in reading are well below average at the end of Key Stage 1, although some higher attaining pupils use a range of strategies to identify unfamiliar words, such as 'gorgeous', and read quite demanding texts accurately, fluently and with expression. All higher attainers understand what they have read, recall content correctly and show sound basic knowledge of libraries and information books. Some, however, have difficulties in tackling unfamiliar words, particularly in relation to vowel sounds. Average attainers read hesitantly but accurately, and can retell the story and make reasonable predictions. However, their knowledge of the sounds of letters is insecure. Lower attaining pupils look for support, or use picture cues, to read simple words. They have very few phonic skills for word building, and also find difficulty in framing sentences to tell a story from pictures. A judgement in the previous report, that 'younger and lower attaining pupils do not have sufficient word-building skills and rely too heavily on their sight vocabulary', still applies. This reflects a weakness in the teaching of early reading, which is continuing to restrict progress. Pupils in the same year group do not use consistent or common strategies in reading. Teachers' assessments are sometimes inaccurate and, consequently, books chosen from the reading scheme are not always attuned to abilities. Evidence from reading records indicates a clear link between attainment and the level of home-support for reading.
- 114 By the age of eleven, attainment in reading is below average. The above problems continue to check progress through the key stage, particularly in Year 3, but good teaching of older pupils improves their confidence, enjoyment and skill. Higher and average attaining pupils seldom read with expression, although most read a variety of texts accurately and with understanding. They have sound skills in locating detail in information books and can describe a thesaurus and a glossary. Some higher attainers have left the reading scheme and can explain their strategies for choosing books from a selected range and for using non-fiction or CD-ROM for independent research. However, few can discuss favourite authors or interpret more challenging fiction and average attainers often fail to recognise their own errors as they read. Lower attaining pupils read slowly from simple but appropriate reading-scheme texts, but they wait for help or guess when a word is not recognised. Their guesses show some understanding of the context but a poor ability to break down words and use knowledge of the spelling patterns of English. Most pupils claim that they enjoy reading, especially in quiet reading time and group reading situations, and they say that they use public libraries locally.

- 115 Pupils' attainment in writing is well below national averages by the age of seven. Pupils of above average attainment produce a variety of writing which matches national standards. They use simple sentence forms and a limited vocabulary, but their spelling and use of basic punctuation are accurate. They write stories which have lively beginnings and strong incidents, but often lose control of structure and end lamely. Average attaining pupils complete a range of writing tasks, some of which match national standards. Too often, however, the well-defined beginnings and endings of their stories lack development in the middle. Punctuation is sometimes neglected and weak spelling shows poor awareness of the sound elements of words, especially vowels. Lower attaining pupils have poor control of letter formation and sentence units. By the end of Key Stage 2, the writing of most pupils is still well below the expected standard for their age. Pupils write for a wider range of purposes, and there are some opportunities for poetry and personal writing. They are taught to plan and edit their work, although there was little evidence of the use of information technology to develop drafting skills. Average and lower attaining pupils do not develop effective planning strategies and their continuous writing lacks overall structure. They write legibly, although few show a consistently joined style and their spelling and vocabulary are limited. There are few examples of the use of dictionaries as they proof-read their work, or of the thesaurus to intensify the language. Higher attainers have secure control of a good range of texts, including reviews, poems, letters, accounts, news reports, biographies and a variety of stories. They plan and spell their work carefully and use punctuation accurately to reinforce structure and meaning.
- 116 Progress in English at Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 is mainly satisfactory. In most lessons, pupils consolidate and extend their skills and understandings because the sound teaching routines and learning processes of the Literacy Hour support and develop their enjoyment of texts, their awareness of language and their purpose for writing. Progress is best when tasks are well matched and directly supported; pupils' progress is often unsatisfactory when working independently, particularly when the task lacks interest and suitable challenge. Pupils make good progress overall in English through the later years of Key Stage 2. Progress is good in reading, speaking and listening; in writing it is satisfactory. Good progress in speaking and listening is a consistent priority, and teachers at this stage are skilful in their use of questions and organisation of activities, so that these skills are steadily fostered and used. There are many examples of clear and effective promotion of literacy skills, and much good progress occurs in lessons. However, this progress is not consolidated into good overall progress for average and lower attaining pupils because their lack of secure basic understandings and skills continues to hold them back.
- 117 Pupils' response to their English lessons is satisfactory or good, in roughly equal measure. In Years 1, 5 and 6, it is predominantly good. Most have a good attitude to work and each other and listen to their teachers with interest. They respond well to the structure and procedures of the Literacy Hour; they adjust quickly to its different phases, and organise themselves responsibly for their tasks. They ignore, or sometimes try to help, those pupils who have difficulty in listening and maintaining concentration. In lessons where work lacks challenge, pupils grow restless and inattentive; their efforts become dutiful rather than whole-hearted. When activities hold their interest, they are keen to work and maintain concentration; for example, in group or guided reading tasks, or when sharing the writing of a text with their teacher. As pupils' attitudes mature and their language skills develop, they listen keenly to each other, build on each others' ideas, and make appreciative comments and co-operative decisions. Many pupils take a pride in their work and share it eagerly, although the standard of handwriting and presentation is often unsatisfactory. Relationships are good in almost all lessons.
- 118 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, compared with their prior attainment, in the Literacy Hour, at both key stages. Teachers plan lessons and organise their classrooms so that these pupils can take a full part in class activities whilst having the benefit of available support with their tasks. However, not all teachers clearly link the targets in the pupils' individual educational plans to the work they are asked to do in class. The support provided by classroom assistants is of good quality, but there are too few of them to cover the extent of need. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have good specialist support and their progress is in line with that made by most pupils.

- 119 Teachers make good use of opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Good presentations of stories, poems and other texts often create an awareness of how language can convey feeling and a sense of wonder about the world. These texts often also relate to cultural, social and moral themes and teachers are quick to draw attention to these.
- 120 Across the school, the quality of teaching is good or better in almost half the lessons observed, satisfactory in forty per cent and unsatisfactory in just over ten per cent. The quality is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 1, all lessons were at least satisfactory; thirty per cent were good, and one very good lesson was seen. At Key Stage 2, seventeen per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and a third was judged satisfactory. One excellent lesson was seen; the remainder were good. All the unsatisfactory teaching was concentrated in the lower junior classes, where few lessons are better than satisfactory. Almost all the good and outstanding teaching at Key Stage 2 was seen in Years 5 and 6. The chief weaknesses in the unsatisfactory lessons were: a lack of pace, urgency and impact; a failure to grasp and use key learning opportunities, and a poor match between tasks and abilities. In one lesson, some pupils could not read the text they were asked to work with, whilst another group found their task too easy. Good knowledge of pupils and subject matter was not evident in planning or teaching, and few pupils made useful progress. Characteristics of the best lessons are the teachers' knowledge and interest in the subject, and their ability to share these with pupils through brisk and balanced variation of setting and linked activities. They keep the learning purposes in clear view at each successive stage of the Literacy Hour, and they ensure that all pupils are actively engaged, supported and challenged to develop and review their language learning at their own best level. For example, one excellent Year 5 lesson used the vigorously shared enjoyment of a good quality story to develop different levels and kinds of appreciative response through skilful questioning and differently demanding tasks. Speaking, listening, reading and writing were all strongly interrelated and very well promoted.
- 121 All teachers have worked and trained together to implement the National Literacy Strategy. The process has raised levels of linguistic and literacy awareness. It has also developed a secure grasp of the procedures of the Literacy Hour, and most teachers now work comfortably within its recommended framework and manage a good balance of linked activities. Many teachers are skilful in presenting stories and other texts interestingly, and in using questions and tasks to build on previous learning and extend pupils' critical and creative responses. Most teachers manage classes and organise activities very effectively; use a good variety of methods and resources, and make productive use of time. They plan carefully in year-group teams to ensure an efficient use of resources and equality of provision for pupils of the same age. However, a significant proportion of teaching lacks the rigour and sureness of purpose that come from a secure understanding of all the key processes of language development. Lacking this, some teachers use terms and concepts incorrectly, lose sight of the specific skills they aim to teach. They do not effectively use assessment to identify the individual strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning, and to adjust their own expectations. Most teachers of upper junior classes show good levels of expertise, but this quality is inconsistent elsewhere.
- 122 The co-ordinator has managed the development of the Literacy Strategy very well, and has spent wisely to ensure an adequate range of good quality texts to resource the work of the Literacy Hour. She has led the training for the Literacy Strategy, and monitors and supports the work of her colleagues, both in classrooms and through planning and pupils' work. There is a good policy and scheme of work, fully based on the national framework. Guidance for teachers across the school is good, and gives appropriate emphasis to the role of assessment and monitoring, and to the development of speaking and listening. The school recognises most of the features of low attainment in literacy and is developing rigorous systems for identifying and tackling its causes. Good strategies have been introduced to promote and track rising standards in reading, but these have yet to impact on attainment and their effectiveness depends on more accurate and diagnostic assessments than some staff are able to make.

## Mathematics

- 123 Attainment in the 1998 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 was well below the national average. The 1999 test results indicate a fall in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level, to below the 1998 national average. This may be explained by high levels of unsettled patterns of teaching due to staff sickness, some identified weak teaching and a higher than average proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards of attainment are close to averages in 1998.
- 124 At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in 1998 was well below average for pupils reaching the expected level 4 and the higher level 5. Standards were also well below average in comparison with schools in similar social contexts.
- 125 Results of the 1999 tests for eleven year olds show a significant improvement, with pupils reaching above the 1998 national average. This rise in attainment can be attributed to improved management of the subject and improved organisation of classes. All Year 6 classes had teachers who were experienced with that age group. Year 6 pupils for the first time were taught in ability groups, and a 'target group' was identified for extra teaching provision. Lessons focussed strongly on mental arithmetic and understanding of number, following the structure now common to all schools as part of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- 126 Current levels of attainment, as seen during the inspection, are broadly in line with expectations for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6. Most Year 2 pupils, for example, can count and recognise numbers to 100, when using a 100 square. They mentally add and subtract numbers up to 10 and are beginning to calculate to 20, for example, by using a number line to add  $8+7$  or  $12+2$ . Most recognise patterns in number and count confidently in 2's. They know the names of two dimensional shapes, such as square, circle and triangle and are beginning to recognise three dimensional shapes, such as cuboid, cylinder and sphere. Most Year 6 pupils have an adequate knowledge of number and number patterns. They double and triple numbers mentally and are accurate with written calculations. All recognise simple fractions as parts of one whole and understand terms such as 'numerator' and 'denominator'. The higher attaining pupils have a secure knowledge of multiplication tables and understand, for example, that 762 divided by 100 is 7.62. A significant number, however, are not able to carry numbers in their minds and still use fingers for calculating.
- 127 Although levels of attainment, for a significant proportion of pupils in Year 3, are currently below expectations, due to earlier staffing difficulties and their special learning needs, most now make satisfactory progress in consolidating their number skills and developing their understanding of shape. In one lesson, for example, pupils learned to identify quadrilaterals and could accurately describe shapes, using correct terminology. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are grouped by ability for numeracy lessons. This helps progress because work is better matched to pupils' abilities. The small amount of unsatisfactory progress seen in lessons can be linked to specific weaknesses in teaching.
- 128 In Year 4, the majority of pupils have satisfactory mental agility and can use a variety of methods to add and subtract mentally. Almost all know, for example, that 230 centimetres is 2.3 metres or 2 and three tenths and they can measure accurately in metres and centimetres. Pupils in Year 5 recognise sequences of number and count accurately in 4's, 8's, or 11's. There is good consolidation of all multiplication tables. Most pupils can express fractions and decimal as a percentage, for example,  $\frac{1}{4} = .25 = 25\%$ .
- 129 Pupils who have special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress. Occasionally, however, once pupils meet their individual targets, too much time is lost before new ones are set.



- 130 Pupils show good attitudes towards the learning of their mathematics. They enjoy lessons and approach discussion and practical work with enthusiasm. Pupils remember what they have learned previously and are eager to help in demonstrations or share their ideas. Most respond well when expected to work independently. They work well in groups and try hard to complete their tasks. Relationships in the classrooms are good. Pupils respect the views of one another and share well towards each other. In those lessons where the pace is slow or work unchallenging, pupils become restless and inattentive. These attitudes result in pupils attempting only the minimum amount of written work and unsatisfactory progress in the lesson.
- 131 The quality of teaching in mathematics lessons throughout the school is good. Of the lessons seen, in Key Stage 1, over 50 per cent are good or better; 100 per cent are satisfactory or better. In Key Stage 2, 31 per cent of lessons seen are good or better, 92 per cent are satisfactory or better and 8 per cent are unsatisfactory. The common strengths in the teaching include clear and well focused planning, which, combined with teachers' sound subject knowledge, enables a confident and lively approach to lessons. Teachers motivate pupils well, generating enthusiasm and interest, through their choice of activities and use of resources. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils enjoyed the 'multiplication challenge' showing intense concentration whilst working out the answers. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher used a number line very effectively to challenge pupils in a game to find which number she had thought of. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. There is mutual respect, which promotes good order in classrooms. In the most effective lessons, there is a very brisk pace to teaching and to pupils' learning. No time is lost in moving from one activity to the next and there is a systematic approach to teaching which challenges all pupils, whatever their ability. Teaching of this quality was seen in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils had time to consolidate number skills, apply those skills to the task of adding prices on a 'shopping list', then building on the knowledge gained to explore the value of larger coins. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is a lack of pace and rigour in the teacher's questioning and the activities do not challenge the abilities of the pupils. In one lesson, for example, questioning simply confirmed that pupils know to add double zero to a number when multiplying by 100. There was no probing to test pupils' understanding of why this should be so by getting them to explain or how the place value of the digits changed. In the measuring activity, pupils were not required to estimate measurement before testing their own accuracy. Expectations were too low in that no targets were set for the amount of work to be covered, resulting in some unsatisfactory progress.
- 132 Leadership and management of the subject are good. Since her relatively recent appointment, the co-ordinator has developed a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses in mathematics. Arrangements for grouping pupils by ability, which were implemented successfully last year, have now been extended to include Year 4. Effective arrangements for assessing pupils and monitoring their progress are now in place. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the subsequent staff development and monitoring of teaching are also having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- 133 Resources for teaching are adequate. Some gaps have been identified in the quantity and quality of apparatus to support numeracy and in software which would enable more effective use of computers within the subject. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## Science

- 134 The attainment of pupils in science is in line with the national average at the end of both key stages.
- 135 The results of the 1998 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds show that the percentage of pupils attaining the levels expected for their age was below average. The provisional results for 1999 show that pupils are attaining in line with the national average.

- 136 The results of the 1998 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests show that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was in line with the national average and that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was above the national average for eleven year olds. These results are above the average of pupils from similar schools. The provisional results for 1999 show that the improvement in attainment in the subject is being sustained.
- 137 Over the past three years, attainment in science at Key Stage 2 has risen sharply from below the national average to in line with the national average. These results mark a significant improvement for the school. Changes in the scheme of work, monitoring teaching to identify, then meet, the training needs of teachers and an emphasis on investigative work for pupils all play a part in this improving picture.
- 138 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know the basic conditions plants require for healthy growth. They understand that without light and water plants will not flourish and will eventually die. They plant seeds so that they can learn from direct observation how plants develop. Year 2 pupils learn about structures and devise ways of strengthening a bridge to make the span wider. They learn from their observations and through discussion. Higher attainers begin to devise ways to test their structures.
- 139 Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in the class and are able to learn at the same rate, because of the investigative nature of the work they do. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a sound knowledge of mini-beasts and their habitats. They are able to make simple predictions about what might happen in their experiments and they have become secure in recording what they observe.
- 140 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a strong foundation of scientific knowledge based securely on investigative work. They have a good range of skills, such as good observation, accuracy in recording, setting and testing hypotheses and drawing conclusions from the experiments they conduct. Pupils' knowledge of solutes is enhanced when they investigate rates of dissolving, saturation point and the factors that affect these. They have a good understanding of the functions of the main organs of the body and, from experiments, understand the effect of exercise on the pulse rate. Higher attaining pupils link this to their knowledge of the circulatory system to extend their understanding of the relationship between the two. Pupils write clear and accurate accounts of their experiments and higher attainers extend their work with clear explanations of conclusions they have drawn.
- 141 Overall progress is good at Key Stage 2. Pupils make predictions and devise experiments, with higher attaining pupils near the end of the key stage showing a good understanding of fair testing. Lower attaining pupils are able to apply the theory of fair testing to experiments they conduct. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and they are well supported, in some instances, by classroom support assistants and, in others, by the help of their peers. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a broad base of scientific knowledge, much of which is supported by good understanding of underlying principles. All pupils have satisfactory practical skills and conduct experiments sensibly.
- 142 Pupils' attitudes to science are good and, in many cases in Key Stage 2, they are very good. They are always enthusiastic about the subject, regardless of the topic, seeing in it a real opportunity for thinking and decision making. All pupils work very well in groups, supporting each other with ideas and suggestions and sharing tasks fairly. In both key stages, pupils accept responsibility for equipment and look after it sensibly. They show high levels of self-control when conducting experiments on dissolving solids in water. They become excited when they engage in vigorous exercise to test the rise in pulse rate, but they remain focussed on their task. Most pupils, especially at Key Stage 2, take pride in the presentation of their written work and diagrams are usually carefully drawn and labelled.

- 143 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in 100 per cent of the lessons seen at Key Stage 1. Teachers have secure knowledge of the topics they teach and, where teaching is good, they ask searching questions to develop pupils' thinking, as seen in a Year 2 lesson on bridges, where pupils were challenged to consider what would happen if the bridge span were extended. Teachers usually have good expectations of pupils and they intervene while pupils are working to support and encourage them. In the occasional instance when this is not the case, teachers spend time managing incidents or talking over the noise of pupils, the pace of the lesson slows and pupils' progress is hindered. Teachers consistently make use of investigative work and of scientific vocabulary and this supports the pupils to express their ideas and findings fluently and accurately.
- 144 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good or better in 25 per cent of lessons seen and satisfactory or better in 100 per cent. There are instances of very good teaching in the subject. Teaching is very good where teachers share the lesson objectives with the class and allow them to discuss hypotheses fully before designing experiments to test these. All teachers give sufficient time for well organised investigations to take place and are rigorous in their expectations of accurate recording of observations. In some instances where teaching is satisfactory, teachers could give more attention to drawing together what has been learned in a plenary session, as happens in the best lessons. Through well planned lessons based on good schemes of work, teachers ensure that pupils have a good balance of knowledge and understanding about science as well as practical skills. Teachers set homework regularly in Years 5 and 6 and in all lessons relate what is being learned to experiences in everyday life.
- 145 The co-ordinators have given strong leadership for the development of the subject. There has been a programme of monitoring teaching and pupils' progress that has led to well targeted professional development of staff. The scheme of work is based on that of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority and works well in supporting teachers' planning for progression and continuity. Assessment strategies are developing with end of unit assessments which are used for moderating purposes. A recent innovation, in Key Stage 1, is the use of writing frames to shape pupils' thinking and to support their literacy development. Resources for the subject are adequate, although there are a number of classrooms without water and this limits the possible range of activity.
- 146 The school has made good progress in science since the previous inspection. Standards have improved significantly, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school now has a complete scheme of work that ensures continuity and progression at both key stages. Pupils are now adept at devising and conducting their own experiments and in taking responsibility for their own learning.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Information technology**

- 147 Judgements of pupils' attainment and progress are based on observations of lessons and of pupils using computers, scrutiny of their previous work, examination of teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils and teachers.
- 148 By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is in line with national expectations. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 also meets national expectations, and pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make satisfactory overall progress at both key stages. The school endeavours to keep pace with change in the subject, and has maintained the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. As few pupils have access to computers at home, most depend on the school for their skill development.

- 149 In Key Stage 1, pupils develop their awareness of control technology in the home and classroom. They use cassette players and the television, and know about plugs and batteries and how to use various domestic machines. In school, most can give planned instructions to a floor robot to enable it to follow a simple route. By the age of seven, pupils are able to use the most common features of the keyboard, though their speed in doing so is relatively slow. They know how to control a mouse to select from on-screen instructions, icons or menus and to drag items to other parts of the screen. They learn how to process their own stories and make simple amendments.
- 150 Pupils develop these skills and understandings steadily in Key Stage 2. In Year 3, they share their knowledge in order to distinguish devices which are computer operated from those that are essentially electrical and non-electrical. They discuss difficult distinctions and devise a table to record and present their data. Pupils in Year 4 change the size and type of font, or the depth of print and can load and save files. Year 5 pupils work together to use a paint program to create a repeating pattern in the style of William Morris. They use CD ROM to access information for their work on the Victorians. They learn to cut and paste, to evaluate information and to combine text and graphics. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils show a secure understanding of computers in the world, of control functions and procedures, of the main programs in an 'office suite' and of the use of data handling to produce charts and graphs. They are confident enough to explain and demonstrate.
- 151 All pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They show a quick and enduring interest in everything which develops their experience and knowledge of computers. They co-operate well, sharing their ideas and taking turns to watch and operate the equipment. They are trustworthy and adhere faithfully to the rules they have drawn up for working at the computer. In several classes, there are a few 'experts', at their own level, who enjoy supporting others in class and taking responsibility for setting up or closing machines down. Pupils in Year 5 eagerly accepted a homework task which asked them to decide what a computer would need to do to control a particular machine.
- 152 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. This judgement is based on the observation of seven lessons in which information technology was taught directly to whole classes. Six of these were in Key Stage 2, of which half were satisfactory, two were good and one was very good. The Key Stage 1 lesson was also good. Most teachers have confident expertise and use lessons well to explain and demonstrate the importance and specific place of each step in a systematic process. Where teaching is good, teachers keep all pupils involved in discussion and observation and make good use of individuals to model and explain specific techniques. They are careful to set the particular focus of each lesson in the wider context of communications and technological awareness. For example, in one lesson, a Year 6 class was challenged to devise and produce an eye-test chart. The task required the pupils to relate the selection of font style and size and of print layout, to a very particular use of knowledge. As a result, discussion brought up many issues beyond the technical and pupils made good progress. Where teaching lacks such quality, teachers have less confidence in their subject knowledge. They therefore work more narrowly to an agreed plan, using questions to limit discussion and activity rather than to open it up. These teachers are also less adept at creating opportunities to use and develop their information technology skills, through independent tasks and projects in other subjects. During the inspection, pupils were rarely seen working with machines outside information technology lessons. There is evidence of increasing use of information technology to support pupils' work in literacy and numeracy, but there is insufficient reference to such uses in teachers' planning and little evidence of recorded assessments to track pupils' progress and inform plans for future learning.

- 153 The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator has led good developments since his appointment. He offers training and individual support for teachers and has taken good initiatives to secure local facilities for staff development. A good policy and scheme of work are strengthened by the adoption of units from guidance published by a government authority. Implementation of this has ensured that pupils' attainment in skills has improved. The vision and direction for the development of the subject are good. Hardware and software resources are being rapidly upgraded and those now in place, in all Early Years and Key Stage 1 classrooms, promote good progress. The range of applications available to older pupils in Key Stage 2 does not match their developing skills and this checks day to day progress. However, this problem is largely resolved by the opportunity for these pupils to participate in an intensive programme which gives pupils sustained access to information technology facilities at the high school. This project aims to develop literacy and numeracy skills through work with computers in relation to a football topic.

## **Religious education**

- 154 Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths. They show some understanding of the cultural background to the major faiths of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. They recognise and describe symbols associated with different faiths.
- 155 Progress through Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in their class, either by work which is adapted to suit their needs, or by additional support from the teacher. In Year 1, pupils learn about ritual in the Christian faith and talk about the importance of special meals in their own families. They take part in a simulated communion service and experience a sense of wonder at the feeling inspired by a communal activity conducted with ceremony. In Year 2, pupils consider the ideas of forgiveness which arise from their discussion of the Old Testament story of Joseph. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a sound knowledge of the major festivals of the Christian faith and are beginning to understand how faith can affect the way people behave.
- 156 By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made satisfactory progress in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are assisted to make similar progress to others in the class because of the way in which ideas are presented and developed through story and discussion. In Year 3, pupils learn about the significance of light and dark in the Hindu religion. They learn about the festival of Divali and begin to understand how belief has an affect on the customs people develop. In Year 4, they learn about religious buildings and visit local churches to discover the significance they hold for people and how they are used for important occasions. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a sound understanding of the major world faiths and are able to conduct a serious discussion about Mohammed in Year 6, exploring the feelings he might have had when confronting his enemies with his beliefs. As they move through the key stage, pupils develop a deeper understanding of the significance of religion in peoples' lives.
- 157 The majority of pupils are interested in the ideas they encounter in religious education lessons. They listen closely to teachers telling stories and explaining different aspects of religious belief. They take part in ritual, showing a sense of occasion and a personal response to the experience. At the upper end of Key Stage 2, they are keen to discuss different viewpoints and to consider what their own is on certain issues.
- 158 The quality of teaching in religious education is satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of lessons seen and there is some good teaching in the subject at both key stages. Teachers have secure knowledge of the aspects they teach. They make good use of questioning and discussion to encourage pupils to think for themselves. Where teaching is good, teachers make use of artefacts, role-play and pictures to make unfamiliar ideas understandable. There is a weakness in some teaching in the way teachers ask pupils to record their work. In a good number of instances, there is an over reliance on work sheet completion of tasks, which does not always reflect the level of discussion pupils have enjoyed.

- 159 The policy for religious education places emphasis on understanding based on knowledge and reflection. There is evidence that this is beginning to happen in a number of classes and this marks an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers' knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject are secure. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that extreme variations in teaching at Key Stage 2 have now been eliminated. The recently appointed co-ordinator is a subject specialist who has strong commitment to the development of the subject and she has already convinced a number of her colleagues of the importance of that vision in developing pupils' understanding of the spiritual dimension of their nature. The scheme of work meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

## **Art**

- 160 Most pupils reach standards in art which are above expectations for their ages. They make good progress throughout the school, due to good teaching and the sound subject knowledge of teachers, which promotes a systematic development of skills and techniques. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils explore ways of printing using pieces of fruit to show texture. In Key Stage 2, pupils make their own printing blocks using a range of materials to add texture and line. At the end of the key stage, pupils print batik designs on material and experiment with other methods of printing by combining wax crayon and heat from an iron. Pupils explore a wide range of media to develop observational skills. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils used paints, pastels, charcoal and the computer to create still life compositions of fruit, after looking at the work of Cezanne. They showed good control of brushes and pencils and copied shapes accurately, adding detail to their pictures. Work is often linked well to other subjects, such as geography, when pupils drew the road signs found outside of the school, or to science, when pupils used clay or art straws to create structures. Work on display shows imaginative use of colour and shape when painting butterflies, for example, to create collage pictures in the style of Kandinski.
- 161 In Key Stage 2, pupils combine skills and techniques well. They translate observational drawings into three-dimensional work, such as weaving, using photographs to stimulate ideas. They combine tissue paper and pastels to add colour, texture and dimension when creating pictures of vases of flowers. Observational skills are tested well when pupils complete the missing half of a photograph to 'reveal' the whole face.
- 162 Pupils show good attitudes to art. They use materials sensibly and finished and unfinished work is treated with great care. In lessons pupils organise their own resources and work independently. Pupils in Year 6 reliably used a glue gun, heated wax and a hot iron when working on their designs. Behaviour in lessons is good because pupils are interested in what they do. They discuss their work with others in the class and share evaluative comments.
- 163 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers apply their subject knowledge well to the planning and teaching of lessons. Good use is made of the work of many artists to experiment with different materials in order to develop pupils' work. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were encouraged to make full use of their senses by listening to the sound of the ink and roller and feeling the textures in the samples of work which were passed around. Resources for lessons are well managed and readily available, enabling pupils to select what they need and to work independently. The weekly art club is well supported and provides a good opportunity for pupils to improve their skills and increase their appreciation of art.
- 164 The subject co-ordinator is very effective in supporting colleagues and monitoring standards in the school. It is recognised that the scheme of work, which has served the school well, is in need of review, placing more emphasis on three dimensional work and that the collection of work samples for assessment purposes needs to be more systematic. Standards in art have improved since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be in line with the nationally expected levels.

169     **Design and technology**

165     The previous report showed that pupils were making gradual progress in design and technology and that many lessons built on and extended the pupils' previous learning. This inspection shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress and that pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers in design and technology and have an understanding of the need to evaluate designs and products.

166     In Key Stage 1, as part of food technology, pupils consider the need to eat more fruit and vegetables and how this message can be conveyed. They design 'Joseph's Coat' and consider the materials to be used in making it. Food technology is further considered in Key Stage 2, when pupils consider sandwich snacks; they also make model hot air balloons using papier mache and carefully design and construct the basket to hang underneath; they design and make pump-bags, evaluating the products and identifying the strengths and weaknesses in design and materials. Techniques for making seams and for patterning material are considered. In Year 4, pupils design and make purses. They used a running stitch for seams and found that there were gaps where coins could fall out, so the design was altered and a back stitch used. Year 6 pupils use tie-dye and batik techniques, as well as fabric crayons, to pattern the material for pump bags.

167     Overall, teaching in design and technology is satisfactory at both key stages. Good lessons were observed where pupils were designing and making purses and were given the opportunity to evaluate and change their work in progress. In an unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were expected to make a shopping bag, using a range of materials, without any consideration being given to design or construction. The unstructured nature of this lesson meant that pupils were given no guidance on design or use of certain skills and, as a consequence, made very little progress. A lesson on food technology, where pupils were considering the different stages in making a sandwich, stressed health and hygiene. However, the task set was too easy for the higher attainers and did not stretch them and the vocabulary in the task for the lower attainers was too difficult.

168     Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are overall satisfactory. They work well in groups discussing ideas and sharing materials; they can explain why designs and methods of construction need to be revised; they enjoy their tasks and share any tidying up that has to be done.

169     The co-ordinator for design and technology, a Key Stage 2 teacher, is assisted by a Key Stage 1 colleague. The policy and scheme of work have recently been reviewed following discussions with staff, and the QCA scheme is now being trialled. Teachers' planning is monitored and support is given with ideas and suggestions of materials that might be used. All staff have recently had in-service training in design and technology and a portfolio of pupils' work is being assembled. Resources for design and technology are adequate, but more construction kits would be beneficial.

174     **Geography**

170     The previous report showed that pupils in both key stages were making satisfactory progress in geography. From a limited observation of lessons and scrutiny of the previous year's work, this inspection shows that pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs, are still making satisfactory progress in the subject.

171     In Key Stage 1 pupils begin to look at their local environment; in Year 1 they study the area immediately around the school, looking at roads and traffic. Pupils survey parked cars, making note of the colours and they also compare the number of cars parked at different times of the day. In Year 2, they look at the buildings in Tunstall, such as the clock tower and baths. They begin to study mapping skills by looking at plans of the school and by drawing maps of their journey to school. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue local studies by looking more closely at human and physical features in the environment; mapping skills are developed, but with little evidence of progression. They learn more about world geography as they study European countries, world landscapes and climate zones.

172 The quality of teaching in the two lessons observed was satisfactory, with a better response being shown by pupils in the lesson where they were actively involved with a traffic survey. Teachers make cross-curricular links when they ask pupils to consider changes in the local environment over time. When studying ancient Greece, they also look at the place of Greece in Europe today. Co-ordinates are studied in mathematics and debates about the environment are a part of literacy.

173 There is a recently appointed geography co-ordinator. The previous co-ordinator realised that the provision for geography was patchy throughout the school and that there was a need for a more consistent development of geographical skills. These shortcomings are evident from the scrutiny of the previous year's work. A new scheme of work, which follows the QCA guidelines, has now been introduced. At the time of the inspection, only two year groups had geography on their timetables, as the subject is taught in blocks at different times of the year. However, the teaching of skills is continued throughout the year through cross-curricular links. Teachers' planning and pupils' learning outcomes are being monitored; co-ordinators have a rolling programme of release time to observe teaching. Resources for teaching geography are adequate.

## 178 **History**

174 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in history at both key stages. This is a similar picture to that given in the previous inspection report. It was not possible to observe any teaching of history at Key Stage 1 during the inspection, but scrutiny of pupils' work from the previous year and photographs showed a good coverage of the subject and sound progress in knowledge.

175 Pupils develop an awareness of the past by investigating changes in their own lives. They build a vocabulary of words to do with time, such as 'now' and 'then', 'before' and 'after'. In Year 2, they learn about bridges in science and link this to knowledge about the past, looking at how bridges have changed over time. Although pupils do record their new knowledge of history, this is sometimes confined to completing worksheets or drawing pictures and the opportunity for writing development is lost.

176 At Key Stage, 2, history has a central place in the curriculum as a subject in its own right. Pupils learn about famous people and key events in specific eras in history. They learn about the Greek civilisation and Greek mythology in Year 4. They use the subject as a stimulus for their mosaics and masks in art and the thrilling events in mythology to create stories for tabloid newspapers. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a secure knowledge of key events in Britain since 1930. They understand what caused food shortages during wartime and how these shortages led to food rationing. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils experienced at first hand the kind of food people had to make do with during the war, when they cooked using a wartime recipe. Across the key stage, pupils develop skills of investigation by using photographs, diaries and artefacts. By the end of the key stage, they show their understanding of history best in their class discussions, which give a better picture of pupils' attainments than does their written work.

177 Pupils have good attitudes to learning in history. They find the topics they study both interesting in their own right and a useful stimulus for other learning. They co-operate well in dramatic activities and are good listeners to the teacher and each other. When taking part in group activities, such as cooking, they take turns and are sensible when handling materials and equipment.

178 Teaching is satisfactory in 100 per cent of the lessons seen, with some good teaching in the upper stages of Key Stage 2. Teachers have sound knowledge of the topics they teach and, where teaching is good, they use this knowledge to lead lively discussion, which develops the pupils' thinking. They make good use of resources, many of which are donated by families or the local community. They use a variety of methods to interest and motivate pupils, such as role play, discussion and group research and presentation. Management of pupils' behaviour is good and the good relationships promoted by teachers create a secure and stimulating learning environment. Teachers take care to provide work matched to the needs of pupils and they record attainment in history at the end of each topic.



179 The school has recently revised its scheme of work for history and this ensures continuity and progression in the subject for all pupils. There is occasional use of theatre companies to dramatise events from the past for pupils. The school also makes use of local museums and heritage centres to give its pupils simulated experience of life in the past.

180 Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and there are enough resources to ensure that teachers make at least adequate and often better coverage of topics. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development and a good contribution to their cultural development.

## 185 **Music**

181 Pupils throughout the school are making satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy singing, repeating choruses and consolidate their early number work with songs and rhymes. They are gaining confidence in performing with a variety of percussion instruments and can handle them with appropriate care. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the concept of echo when singing and they can hum tunelessly to their music. They maintain pitch well and sing with control. They respond to simple rhythmic patterns with a fair degree of accuracy. Pupils in Year 4 compose rhythmic patterns, incorporating the names of Greek gods they have studied in their history lessons and are beginning to understand the use of ostinato. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are learning the recorder and are acquiring a sound understanding of note value. The evidence relating to pupils with special educational needs is limited.

182 The pupils' response to the teaching is satisfactory. They enjoy the lessons and the majority of pupils join in the planned activities with enthusiasm. They co-operate well with each other when taking turns to compose or perform. Pupils' response is better when activities are stimulating. Pupils enjoy playing percussion instruments and take appropriate care of them. A small number of pupils play the recorder at an extra-curricular club. The school has an enthusiastic choir, some of whose members write their own songs for the choir to perform. Boys and girls in the choir sing equally well.

183 The small amount of teaching seen was satisfactory, overall, though lessons ranged from good to unsatisfactory. The majority of teachers are non-specialists, who sometimes lack subject knowledge and confidence. Where there is more specialist teaching, standards improve and progress in the development of skills is ensured. There is no provision for visiting instrumental teachers and this has a detrimental effect upon the standards of attainment, especially for the number of pupils in school with a musical aptitude, which is not being developed.

184 Overall, the curriculum has insufficient balance and breadth. A limited amount of singing was observed during the inspection, especially in Key Stage 2. Curricular planning in Key Stage 1 is based on a commercially produced scheme which provides lesson plans that offer basic support for non-specialist teachers. There is less structure for how to teach the key elements of music for pupils in Key Stage 2. The subject co-ordinator is the only pianist among the staff and a Year 6 pupil often accompanies singing in some assemblies. The co-ordinator works hard to support colleagues in planning and curriculum matters and she has a number of improvements planned. There are a small number of experiences that enrich the curriculum, such as concerts and visiting music groups, but further visits are not a priority. Resources are barely adequate and there is a lack of provision for large tuned percussion and ethnic instruments to support both specialist teaching and the music curriculum.

## 189 **Physical Education**

185 By the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment in physical education is in line with that expected for their age. The school has maintained the standards reported by the previous inspection.

186 By the age of seven, pupils control a variety of movements with reasonable awareness of direction, space and safety. They devise and perform an ordered sequence of simple shapes, balances and linking

movements, and develop their throwing and catching skills by thoughtful practice with partners. However, many show poor awareness of their role, and that of other players, in team games.

- 187 Throughout Key Stage 2, all pupils have good opportunities to achieve confidence and competence in the water and, by the age of eleven, almost all reach the expected standard of being able to swim 25 metres unaided. In gymnastics and dance, Year 6 pupils successfully work in groups to plan, perform and refine a sequence of frozen and travelling movements to fit a short piece of music. In both football and netball, girls and boys show sound ball control and tackling skills. A significant minority of pupils develop skills that are good for their age. They participate in a variety of team games and individual sports, and a full trophy cabinet testifies to the success of school teams in local competitions and tournaments. The school's very good range of extra-curricular provision for sports, games, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities makes a major contribution to pupils' physical, social and moral development.
- 188 Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall, although standards dip in some lessons in Years 3 and 4. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to understand the reasons for warm-up and cool down at the start and end of a lesson and also the importance for their own safety of working carefully and of responding immediately to their teacher's commands. They learn to use space well when changing direction and working in different ways, and they see the need to practise ball skills regularly. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop these skills. Where the lessons have pace, purpose and clear structure and are vigorously managed and challenging, as is more often the case in Years 5 and 6, they make good progress in each aspect of the subject.
- 189 Most pupils enjoy physical education lessons. They change quickly into appropriate dress, listen attentively to instructions and follow them carefully in working thoughtfully to improve their skills. They demonstrate their ideas confidently, ignore any instances of misbehaviour, and value the performances of their classmates. They move and use apparatus responsibly and co-operate sensibly in pairs and larger groups. However, in many classes a minority of pupils, usually boys, show poor attitudes, which often isolate them from the co-operative processes of the lesson. They sometimes carry inappropriate kit, and, although they are well managed, their behaviour slows the pace of the lesson.
- 190 During the inspections, lessons in gymnastics, dance and games were observed at both key stages. During each school year, pupils experience a full programme of physical education activities, which, at Key Stage 2, includes swimming and athletics. One lesson selected for observation was cancelled, thereby denying pupils access to this element of their week's curricular programme. The reason given was a reluctance to disturb the class working in the library adjacent to the hall, but this is an unsatisfactory situation.
- 191 The quality of teaching in five of the six lessons seen was satisfactory; in the other it was good. There is no marked difference in quality between the key stages. Teachers have sound knowledge of the subject, and they manage pupils, space and routines effectively in relation to clearly planned aims and activities. Where teaching is good, the activities have pace, variety and challenge; the teacher plays a more active part in modelling new skills and involves pupils in observing and commenting on their performance. In most lessons, however, expectations for behaviour and safety are higher than those for effort and progress, and higher attaining pupils are not fully extended. Pace is sometimes slow and there is a general lack of crispness in starting and ending the lesson and in marking the specific stages of its development. Teachers do not focus sufficiently on the development of individual skills and techniques.
- 192 The subject co-ordinator was absent during the inspection. However, clear documentation provides sound guidance for teachers and indicates a broad and balanced coverage of the various strands of physical education. The provision of a wide range of sports and games enables pupils to find activities that suit them and at which they can do well. Sporting links with local clubs and other schools are productive and have a positive impact on pupils' interest and attainment. Resources for the subject are easily accessible and adequate in quantity and quality for the demands of the curriculum. However, some of the older equipment is worn out and needs replacing.



## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

193     A team of six inspectors carried out the inspection over a period of five days. In that time the team:

- \*     observed 114 lessons or parts of lessons;
- \*     listened to pupils in each year read;
- \*     scrutinised samples of pupils' work;
- \*     examined the school's register of special need;
- \*     discussed aspects of their work and school life with the pupils;
- \*     attended collective acts of worship;
- \*     examined the school's current development plan and school policy documents;
- \*     studied teachers' planning and pupils' records;
- \*     held discussions with the headteacher, staff and members of the governing body;
- \*     analysed the school's budget;
- \*     held a meeting prior to inspection which parents attended;
- \*     analysed responses to questionnaires returned by parents;
- \*     checked attendance registers and observed daily registration of children;
- \*     examined the school's annual reports to parents.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

|                     | Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent) | Number of pupils with statements of SEN | Number of pupils on school's register of SEN | Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---|
| YR – Y6             | 526   | 7                                       | 119  | 203   |
| Nursery Unit/School | 30  | 0                                       | 8  | n/a   |

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent) | 23 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher                    | 22 |

#### Education support staff (YR – Y6)

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Total number of education support staff | 6      |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week  | 150.20 |

#### Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent) | 0   |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher                    | N/a |

#### Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 2  |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week  | 65 |

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| Average class size: | 30 |
|---------------------|----|

**Financial data**

Financial year:

1998-1999

|  | £          |
|--|------------|
| Total Income                               | 838,795.00 |
| Total Expenditure                          | 834,816.00 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1,427.00   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 33,960.00  |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 37,939.00  |

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

450

Number of questionnaires returned:

41

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

|   | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school           | 10             | 61    | 10      | 10       | 10                |
| I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren) | 22             | 56    | 12      | 5        | 5                 |
| The school handles complaints from parents well   | 5              | 55    | 20      | 7        | 12                |
| The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught                                     | 5              | 59    | 15      | 20       | 2                 |
| The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress                                | 12             | 46    | 10      | 22       | 10                |
| The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work                             | 12             | 59    | 17      | 12       | 0                 |
| The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons            | 27             | 46    | 15      | 10       | 2                 |
| I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home                   | 15             | 41    | 10      | 17       | 17                |
| The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)                       | 10             | 59    | 10      | 15       | 7                 |
| The school achieves high standards of good behaviour  | 7              | 41    | 20      | 20       | 12                |
| My child(ren) like(s) school  | 44             | 37    | 5       | 10       | 5                 |

Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, the sum may not equal 100%

Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, excluding nil replies