

INSPECTION REPORT

Malvern Link CE VA Primary School
Malvern

LEA area : Worcestershire

Unique Reference Number : 116899

Headteacher : Mrs Jennifer Potts

Reporting inspector: Fred Ward
18605

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707415

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 : Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils : 3 - 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Malvern Link C of E Primary School
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Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Reverend Canon G Lyall

Date of previous inspection : April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Fred Ward, Rgl	Mathematics	Attainment & progress
	Information technology	Teaching
	Music	Efficiency
Katy Blake, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour, personal development
		Attendance
		Support, guidance & welfare
		Spiritual, moral, social & cultural
		Partnership with parents & community
Frank Jones	Science	Leadership & management
	History, geography Physical education	Staffing, accommodation & resources
	Special educational needs	
Wendy Hiscock	English, Early Years	Curriculum & assessment
	Technology, art	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils behave well, show initiative and have high self-esteem.
- In the juniors, good progress is made by most pupils in mathematics and by those with special educational needs in reading and spelling.
- Three and four-year-olds make a very good start in the nursery and reception classes.
- Very good opportunities for personal, social and health education are provided.
- Relationships are good and pupils generally have a positive attitude to learning.
- Almost two thirds of teaching is good or better.
- Staff are caring, hard working and dedicated to supporting pupils.
- Good links are made with parents, the community, and the church.
- The headteacher and governors have worked well together to extend and improve the buildings and classrooms and create an orderly and welcoming atmosphere as the number on roll has grown.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are below average for 11-year-olds, in writing and information technology; and for seven-year-olds, in speaking and listening, reading and writing, mathematics and science.
- Talented pupils are underachieving.
- A third of the teaching in the infants is less than satisfactory.
- Long term plans do not give high enough priority about how to raise standards further.
- Governors do not pay enough attention to the effects of their spending decisions on raising standards.

The school has the opportunity to build on its strengths, which outweigh its weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses are to be improved. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Most of the key issues identified in the last inspection have been tackled successfully but there are still shortcomings. All subjects now have appropriate schemes of work, generally based on national guidance. Nearly all teachers use assessment and test results to help them plan lessons that match the different stages and rates of pupils' learning. However in Year 2, the work is often too hard or too easy and talented pupils in other classes are not challenged enough. While the school now has good guidelines on marking work, some teachers do not generally write helpful notes to tell pupils how they can improve.

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	Key
English	D	D	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i>
Mathematics	B	B	<i>average</i> B <i>below average</i> C <i>well below average</i> D E

Science	D	C	
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Just over a third of pupils come from low income families; the attainment on entry of a third of the pupils when four-years-old is below that found in most schools and the proportion with special education needs is well above the county average. These factors make comparison with schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals invalid and the letter scores above have been upgraded by one level accordingly. Inspection findings confirm these standards for the current Year 6 for mathematics and science but found an improvement overall in English, which is now around the national average. However, pupils' writing is still below average but this is compensated by their higher than average standard in reading. Most of these pupils also do not reach the level of attainment in information technology as found in most schools as until recently the school has not had sufficient high quality computers and suitable learning resources. For seven-year-olds, the picture is bleaker. Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing, mathematics and science are still well below average when compared with similar schools, as they were in national assessment tests and tasks in 1998 and 1999. This is mainly because, after making a good start as four and five-year-olds, their learning is allowed to be disrupted by inappropriate behaviour of a few difficult boys in Year 2 and the work they are given is often too easy. The under-fives in the reception class are on course to reach the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes by the time they start compulsory schooling.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Science	Not applicable	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Not applicable	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Religious education	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Other subjects	Good	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence

The teaching in the nursery and reception classes is always good and often very good. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory or better in 86% of lessons. The teaching in about two thirds of lessons is good or better. Teaching is less than satisfactory in 14% of lessons, nearly all occurring in Key Stage 1. Common features of the good or better teaching are the secure knowledge and understanding teachers have of the national literacy and numeracy projects, their high expectations of behaviour and learning capabilities and their very good relationships with pupils. The less than satisfactory teaching is mainly due to inexperience which leads to a lack of confidence in teaching English, mathematics and science, too low expectations about what pupils can learn and weak management of difficult pupils' behaviour. Insufficient teaching in subjects other than English, mathematics and science could be seen during the inspection to make secure overall judgements about the quality of teaching in these areas.

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	Generally good in classrooms and around the school apart from some Year 2 boys who often behave inappropriately in lessons.
Attendance	Good and lessons start punctually.
Ethos*	Pupils generally have a positive attitude to work, show increasing independence and relationships are good. While most pupils are expected to work hard, some seven-year-olds are too often allowed to be inattentive and untidy in their recorded work.
Leadership and management	The governors and headteacher have successfully created a caring and supportive school with attractive buildings, particularly for the infants and under-fives. While they are improving standards in the early years and in the juniors, they have not been effective in raising the attainment of seven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science.
Curriculum	There is a very rich and varied programme for pupils in the nursery and reception classes. Curriculum guidance is particularly effective in supporting teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy. Assessment information is used well in the juniors to identify pupils who need extra help but not enough in the infants.
Pupils with special educational needs	These pupils generally make good progress because their weaknesses in reading and spelling are accurately diagnosed and they are given appropriate work and help.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Support and guidance for pupils' social development are very good. Provision for their spiritual and moral development is good. Opportunities to explore their own and different cultures are satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staff are well supported, particularly through training and guidance from more experienced colleagues. Learning resources are good and the building extensions and the on-going refurbishment are much improving the accommodation. However, the Year 3 classroom is still cramped and storage facilities are limited.
Value for money	Despite below average standards at seven-years-old, pupils overall make satisfactory progress and are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education. Costs are about the same as for most schools. Therefore, the school gives satisfactory 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff are easy to approach to talk about children's progress.• The encouragement and appreciation of playing an active part in school life.• The positive effects of the school's values and attitudes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are not clear about what is being taught.• Dissatisfied with the amount of homework.• The progress of talented children.• The way bullying is dealt with.

Inspection findings support the parents' positive views of the school and found that the level of homework is appropriate. However, talented pupils are not sufficiently challenged. There was one reported incident of bullying during the inspection and this was dealt with properly according to the governing body's agreed procedures. Inspection findings confirmed that information is not readily supplied to parents on what is being taught.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve the quality of education and raise standards further, the governing body, headteacher and deputy head should:

- Agree and achieve realistic targets to raise standards of attainment at:
 - Key Stage 1 in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science
(Refer paras: 5,8,97,99,113,114,121,122)
 - Key Stage 2 in writing and information technology
(Refer paras: 5,9,10,102,103,109,128,132)
- Improve the rate of progress of talented pupils across the school; (7,9,11)
- Improve the behaviour of a few younger boys in lessons; (18,49)
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - Helping less confident teachers in Key Stage 1 acquire the necessary subject knowledge and understanding in English, mathematics and science in order to raise expectations of pupils' behaviour, capability, effort and productivity; (24,30,31,81,107,108,113)
 - Extending the use of information technology to support more learning in a full range of subjects at Key Stage 2 and including a greater range of different forms of writing in lessons; (9,10)
 - Planning and supporting more specific learning activities for those high attaining pupils who are able to cope with work well beyond that expected for their age; (36)
- Agree and put into practice development plans that clearly show realistic, medium and long-term targets with clear priorities and the action required to raise standards further; (59,61)
- Establish reliable monitoring arrangements to check the effects of decisions on what to do to raise standards and use the information to see if they provide value for money.(38,60,82)

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

- Mathematics Scheme of Work at Key Stage 1 (35,113)
- Content of Individual Education Plans (40)
- Opportunities to appreciate diversity and richness of other cultures (46)
- Minor Health and Safety issues (51)
- Quality of some pupils' reports (54)
- Omission of Key Stage 2 annual results in governors annual report (54)
- No alternative times for parents to attend school meetings (54)
- Responsibilities of special educational needs co-ordinator (64)
- Year 3 classroom (67,73)
- Inconsistent marking of work (25).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Malvern Link Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school is situated in a suburb of the small Worcestershire town of Malvern. There are currently 200 full-time pupils on roll with slightly more boys than girls. A nursery class opened this September, attended in the morning only by 24 children. Pupils come from a broad mix of social backgrounds but just over a third are from economically disadvantaged families. Therefore, the small number (2.5%) eligible for free school meals, below the national average, is not a reliable indicator by which to make comparisons with other schools. Generally, the attainment on entry of around a third of the pupils at four-years-old is below the county average, particularly in their personal, social and language development. This is reflected in the large proportion of pupils, again about a third, who have special educational needs. Of these, 2% have statements, which is above the national average
2. There have been significant changes since the last inspection in 1996. The school roll has increased by a third. All classes are single year groups and include a nursery. The deputy has changed and five of the eight teachers are new to the school. There has been a major refurbishment to the buildings and an extension added.
3. The school aims to be a happy and secure environment where children can develop in all areas of the National Curriculum and prepare themselves socially, morally and spiritually to adapt to changes needed when they progress to their secondary school.
4. The school has the following development priorities
 - The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy initiatives
 - Raising pupils' attainment in writing, particularly at Key Stage 1
 - Improving the progress of high attaining pupils
 - Opening the nursery class all day

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1

for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	16	15	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	11	13	14
	Total	24	22	24
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	(80) 61	(87) 70	(80) 77
	National	(80) 82	(81) 83	(85) 87

¹

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

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	8	12	13
	Girls	12	15	13
	Total	20	27	26
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	(77) 65	(80) 87	(77) 84
	National	(81) 82	(85) 80	(86) 86

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	9	16	25

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	18	20	19
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	(64) 72	(59) 80	(57) 76
	National	(65) 70	(58) 69	(69) 78

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	18	18	19
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	72	72	76
	National	68	69	75

Attendance

		%	
Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year	Authorised	School	4.7
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0.9
		Absence	National comparative data

Exclusions

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

Quality of teaching

		%
Percentage of teaching observed which is :	Very good or better	9
	Satisfactory or better	86
	Less than satisfactory	14

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

5. Standards of attainment are above the national average in mathematics for 11-year-olds, below in information technology and average in English and science. The picture for seven-year-olds is not as good; in all these core subjects, standards of attainment are below the national average. This is because, while pupils make a good start to their schooling in the nursery and, at first in the infants, during Year 2 progress is unsatisfactory. Overall, pupils make good progress in Years 3, 5 and 6 and catch up with their learning by the time they are ready to leave school for the next stage of their education.
6. All children have attended local playgroups, many at the one in the school during the afternoon session, before entering the morning nursery class when they are three-years-old. The attainment of a third of pupils on entry is below the county average in most aspects of their development, particularly in personal, social and language skills. Overall, these young children make good progress because they have a well-taught, rich and varied programme of appropriate activities in the nursery and reception classes. As a result, by the time they are ready for compulsory schooling at five, most have reached the nationally recommended learning outcomes and some high attainers are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum. However, a significant minority are below average.
7. Overall progress across Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but this masks the differences between classes. In Year R and 1, progress is generally good because the teachers establish effective routines that encourage pupils to learn independently. Children are asked suitably challenging questions and encouraged to think carefully and learn from their mistakes. This is particularly effective in reading, where pupils are helped to use a range of skills to establish meaning from the appropriate books they read. At this stage of their learning, many receive good support for reinforcing their developing reading skills at home; these pupils make even faster progress. The progress of pupils in Year 2 is limited by too many occasions when there is insufficiently high expectations of behaviour and some difficult boys are allowed to be inattentive and disrupt the learning of others. Also much of the work is too easy as it is not matched appropriately to the stage and rate of learning of different groups and individuals. As a result, many do not make much effort and spend a great deal of time not working hard enough.
8. For these reasons at the end of Key Stage 1, the results of the 1999 assessment tests and tasks are well below the national average in reading, writing and below in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, as defined more accurately by the high proportion with attainment below the county average on entry than by the relatively low eligibility for free school meals, these results are very low in reading and well below in writing and mathematics. Results over the last three years have fluctuated, reflecting the changes in the attainment profile of each year group, but have remained well below those of similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that this trend is continuing and the attainment of most Year 2 pupils now is well below what it should be in English and mathematics. Teacher assessment of science at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 reported an improvement on the previous year but evidence from the inspection shows that the current Year 2 are still average. However in information technology, standards of attainment are fairly typical for seven-year-olds as they have gained confidence using computer programs to support their learning, particularly in numeracy and literacy. In other subjects of the curriculum, not enough lessons could be seen and so there is not sufficient

evidence to form a secure judgement on overall standards. Standards of attainment are much lower in this key stage than at the last inspection, when levels in English, mathematics and information technology were around the national average and science was above.

9. Overall, progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. In English, progress in reading is good as pupils having difficulties have been given additional teaching and others have been successfully encouraged to read for enjoyment and improve their skills. However, while progress in writing is improving because of the national literacy initiative, too many pupils still find spelling difficult and this holds them back from writing confidently and they do not make satisfactory progress. Although most are confident speakers and listen attentively, their vocabulary is limited, which restricts the richness of their language. In mathematics, they catch up in Year 3 because of the attention given to learning and recalling number facts in mental calculations. In Year 4, progress is sound as learning is consolidated. In Years 5 and 6, pupils generally make good progress. Here, they are successfully encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding in solving problems. Mathematics lessons are well organised to present and develop new skills in interesting and different ways. Pupils enjoy rising to the challenge of recognising patterns and similarities and working out new ways of solving calculations for themselves. In science, progress is generally sound. Pupils in all classes are beginning to be more skilful at carrying out systematic practical investigations and use their developing knowledge and understanding appropriately to pose and test hypotheses. They still find designing and setting up their own experiments challenging as the emphasis on practical investigations has only recently been introduced. The current Year 6 have not had the opportunity to use information technology to support their learning to any degree as the equipment was not readily available and teachers generally lacked confidence in the use of new technologies. Consequently, they have made unsatisfactory progress and there are a number of gaps in their knowledge and skills, particularly in their data handling and using programs to control external operations. However, younger pupils now have access to better computers and a wider range of resources, which are increasingly being used to help them explore and investigate interesting topics in all subjects.
10. At the end of Key Stage 2, the 1999 assessment results are above average for mathematics and below for English and science. However when compared with similar schools, the levels attained in science are average. In past years, the proportion attaining at the higher level in all these subjects was well below the national average. However, the school has been successful in tackling this problem in mathematics and science by making sure that these pupils have had sufficiently challenging tasks, especially in developing problem solving skills. The number attaining Level 5 is now similar to national figures. The task in English has been more demanding as these pupils have particular difficulties with spelling and using more complex vocabulary correctly. As a result, their writing is not sufficiently varied and interesting. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 is maintaining this above average performance in mathematics and improving their results in English and science. Despite a continuing problem with writing, most pupils are reading and speaking and listening as expected and overall, standards are about average. The unsatisfactory progress in information technology means most pupils' attainment is below what it should be. Last year all pupils could swim 25 metres by the time they were 11-years-old. As at the end of Key Stage 1, there was insufficient evidence to form secure judgements on overall standards in other subjects. Since the last inspection, there has been a general improvement in attainment in mathematics, while levels in English and science have been maintained as satisfactory.
11. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well looked after. In most year groups, they make good progress because their difficulties are identified early and accurately so that appropriate support is provided. Specialist teaching in withdrawal groups has been

particularly effective in helping pupils acquire and consolidate skills in reading and spelling. While individual education plans do not describe specifically enough what needs to be done, the informal contact between the special educational needs co-ordinator and other staff is effective in ensuring work undertaken outside the classroom is developed further when these pupils return. As a result of training initiatives, high attaining pupils are now given more appropriate learning activities and make good progress in mathematics and science. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the small numbers of talented pupils scattered throughout the school are generally under-achieving. This was a concern raised by a few parents and supported by inspection findings. The school is aware of the problem and is looking at ways of providing them with more opportunities to work at higher levels, particularly in mathematics.

12. Literacy skills are being developed through other subjects, particularly in extending pupils' technical vocabulary and research skills in using published texts. However, there is still a dependency on work sheets that require little continuous writing and many pupils do not have fluent and legible handwriting. Numeracy skills, on the other hand, are well practised. During the inspection, many examples were observed of pupils confidently using mathematics to support their learning, such as when drawing maps to scale in geography, producing designs in technology, calculating time periods in history and using geometric shapes in art. Information technology is increasingly playing an effective part in pupils' learning. The internet is regularly used to access information on topics being studied in geography and history, appropriate programs are helping pupils consolidate learning in numeracy and literacy and creative use is made of design programs to explore colours and patterns in art.
13. Since the last inspection, boys have consistently performed better than girls in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1, which is against the national trend. At Key Stage 2 during the same period, girls have improved their performance and for two years, did better than boys at mathematics; also against the national trend.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

14. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes towards their learning, their behaviour and personal development are good. This is a decline in the reported standards of the last inspection where attitudes were reported as being very good and behaviour was reported as excellent.
15. Most of the pupils are lively, interested learners who are happy to come to school and enjoy the experiences provided for them. The under-fives are consistently attentive, enthusiastic and keen to participate. They concentrate for extended periods and take pride in their work. In the nursery class, pupils listened to a long story with complete attention and in the reception pupils took pride in their handwriting.
16. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have satisfactory attitudes overall. Attitudes are generally good in Year 1 where pupils persevere with challenging tasks. In a science lesson on magnetism, pupils were keen to experiment and remained on task throughout the lesson. In Year 2, pupils often display unsatisfactory attitudes to learning. When lessons lack pace or challenge they are inattentive and fail to settle and concentrate. In a mathematics lesson, pupils did not respond quickly to the class teacher and took little care with their presentation.
17. In Key Stage 2, pupils generally have a positive attitude to learning. They enjoy lessons, are eager to answer questions and enthusiastically generate ideas. Pupils concentrate well, although after the effects of Year 2, pupils in Year 3 occasionally have difficulty in sustaining concentration for extended periods. Pupils learn from their mistakes and take

pride in their performance, such as in mental mathematics work with negative numbers in Year 5. Younger pupils show their capacity for independent work in the way that they persevere and focus on tasks and, after Year 2, older pupils continue developing their capacity for study.

18. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in classrooms, around the school and on the playground. The school functions as an orderly community. Pupils respond well to the school's clear routines, such as lunchtime procedures and movement from playground to class. All pupils are friendly and courteous to each other and to adults. They hold doors open and are helpful without prompting. The behaviour of most pupils is good in class, which helps their learning. The under-fives are consistently well behaved because they are well managed. In Year 2, pupils' behaviour sometimes obstructs their learning when they are restless, noisy or shout out. This happens when the class teacher's expectations of behaviour are not high enough or when lessons lack pace or challenge. Older pupils can be very well behaved in class. In Year 6, pupils read their books in absolute silence. Most pupils show respect for property and use school equipment with care. A group of Year 6 boys used school computers with care and respect to develop their keyboard skills. Although an incident of bullying was reported during the inspection, this was not a typical occurrence and was dealt with promptly according to the school's policy. The school has not had to exclude any pupils in the past year.
19. Relationships throughout the school are good and make a positive contribution to the caring ethos of the school. In lessons, pupils form constructive relationships with each other, working co-operatively in pairs or groups. Both the youngest and oldest pupils support and help one another's learning. Pupils in the reception class encouraged each other's learning by showing appreciation of the effort individuals made with their Christmas cards. In Year 6, pupils supported each other in pairs when enthusiastically generating ideas about case studies in community responsibility. Occasionally in Year 2, good relationships are not secure. There was a lack of consideration when pupils laughed at a boy who spilt milk. Pupils care for each other out of class; for instance children assist each other when they are upset and older pupils help younger pupils. The relationships formed with staff and voluntary helpers are supportive and very caring and pupils have confidence in them.
20. Pupils' personal development is good. They are fully involved in the daily routines of the school community and willingly fulfil their increasing responsibilities, such as class duties, a wide range of whole school duties and selling snacks at lunchtime. They show initiative as they become older. A Year 6 boy with special educational needs extended his learning activity on the computer without being asked. Pupils are willing to listen to what others in the school have to say and are interested in views, experiences and ideas that are different from their own. In the nursery, pupils showed respect for other people's experiences by listening well to each other's experience of Christmas Day. In Year 6, pupils reflected upon each other's different ideas about the conflict of the right to make a noise and the right to experience quiet.

Attendance

21. Attendance is satisfactory and around the national average. The recorded rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average. The number of authorised absences for pupils on family holiday last year was about the same as for the previous year. Most pupils arrive at school on time and all lessons start promptly. This has a beneficial effect on teaching and learning. These findings show a slight decline since the last inspection when attendance was reported as good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

22. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 86% of lessons. The teaching in just over a half of these lessons is good and in 9% very good. Teaching is less than satisfactory in 14% of lessons. While overall the proportion of good or better teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection, in 1996, there was no unsatisfactory teaching reported and no significant weaknesses identified.
23. The teaching of the under-fives in the nursery and reception classes is generally good or better. Both teachers and support staff have very good relationships with their pupils and are very knowledgeable about education in the early years. This ensures they plan a very rich and varied programme that stimulates pupils to want to learn but at the same time matches their stage of development. In the nursery class, the teacher involved a small group preparing sandwiches for the morning snack; they enjoyed spreading butter and honey and looked forward to eating the finished products. She sensitively helped them hold knives correctly and develop fine motor control, allowing them to make and learn from their initial clumsy attempts. There is an appropriate emphasis on personal, social and language development. Teachers have established daily routines and all staff engage in constructive conversation, asking questions and extending pupils' thinking. Expectations of attainment and behaviour in both classes are high and consistently applied.
24. At Key Stage 1, half the teaching is good but a third is less than satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, just over half the teaching is good or better, with one out of ten being very good. Just over a third of the teaching is sound and there are very few instances of unsatisfactory teaching. The strengths of teaching are common to both key stages and the unsatisfactory teaching is generally a result of inexperience and lack of confidence.
25. Teachers are very hard working and committed. They have coped very well with the changes brought about by the increase in pupil numbers and the introduction of the literacy and numeracy initiatives. For instance, some teachers have had to use unsuitable accommodation, such as the hall and converted kitchens, for their classroom while buildings have been refurbished. They have undergone intensive training to implement the new ways of teaching English, mathematics and science and are beginning to have a positive effect on raising standards in most classes.
26. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. In most classrooms, there is a supportive climate in which pupils know they can express themselves and take risks in their learning. In a Year 3 science lesson, pupils confidently put forward their ideas about what external factors affected plant growth. When there was a lively exchange over the difference between "hot" and "warm" conditions, no suggestions were ridiculed but all given consideration before being put aside if inappropriate.
27. Teachers know their pupils well. This is apparent in the way they organise class sessions, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The first part of lessons are used effectively to review pupils' prior learning by well directed questions, pitched at an appropriate level of difficulty to make individuals think carefully. The pace is varied and pupils have to keep alert and make an effort. In a Year 1 numeracy session on number sequences and place value, the teacher targeted her questions to low attaining pupils to establish their understanding of "the next/ previous unit" in sequences up to 100, while high attaining pupils were encouraged to "round number up/down to the nearest 10".
28. Resources are used effectively to support and promote learning. Every attempt is made to give pupils first-hand experience in order to practise and refine skills and, increasingly, new technologies are being incorporated into the teaching and learning. In a Year 4

history project on Roman Britain, pupils visited Isca Caerleon, took digital photographs of a classroom Roman feast and produced word-processed accounts of their investigation. Support staff are also deployed effectively. They have had a particularly positive affect on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The close liaison between class teachers and assistants has ensured that individual work is directed at improving skills that enable pupils to complete work set to the class. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, despite the very difficult behaviour of a pupil, the assistant showed extreme patience and perseverance to engage a special educational needs group in ordering a sequence of instructions in logical order.

29. Teachers generally use homework effectively to reinforce learning. There were concerns by some parents that there was either too much or not enough. The inspection found that overall the amount for each year group was appropriate. When parents support homework, as is usually the case with reading for younger pupils, better progress results. Marking of work does not always give sufficient guidance to pupils to show them what to do in order to improve.
30. There are some common shortcomings in teaching at both key stages, which limit the progress of pupils. The principal feature is that while all teachers plan and support separate learning activities for pupils who learn at different rates, not enough attention is paid to developing the talents of the few gifted pupils. This was a concern of parents and inspection findings support their view. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson which was dominated by good teaching, a small number of pupils were engaged in presenting data using methods that relied mainly on a colouring activity. They were capable of recording and interpreting this information on bar charts and pictograms, a level 3 activity as opposed to a level 1 task. Similarly, there is a tendency for teachers to not give pupils enough opportunity to design, test and evaluate their own ideas. The school is aware of this and has made good progress in helping teachers be more confident in planning activities that focus on pupils using and applying their knowledge and understanding. However, too often tasks are over-prescribed and there is insufficient contribution from pupils. In a Year 6 physical education lesson, the pupils had to work very hard at carrying out the teachers' instructions but spent little time evaluating their performance and making suggestions on how to improve. A further area requiring development is the use of plenary sessions at the ends of literacy and numeracy lessons. Often insufficient time is allowed and not enough attention is given to involving pupils actively in reviewing what they have learnt and pointing the way forward to the next lesson.
31. The less than satisfactory teaching results from lack of experience and confidence. Expectations of behaviour, effort and productivity are too low. As a consequence, too many pupils are inattentive, spend a lot of the time engaged in activities unrelated to the intended learning and a few difficult pupils behave inappropriately and disrupt the learning of others. Much of the work is pitched at too low a level and pupils' recorded work is often untidy and not completed. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson on making and recording choices, the pupils on the edge of the group sitting on the carpet were unable to see the teacher writing on the board and they became uninterested and played or whispered to each other. The explanation for the group task was not clear enough so that nearly two thirds of the class completed the task incorrectly. As a result, very little learning took place.

The curriculum and assessment

32. The school provides a generally broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils including the under-fives. Provision for pupils' personal development is good and the curriculum provides a sound foundation for the next stage of education. It makes an effective contribution to the overall attainment of the majority of pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 2 and the progress of pupils with special educational needs in reading and spelling.

33. A rich curriculum is provided for the under-fives with an emphasis on developing their literacy, numeracy and social skills. Planning is very thorough and provides good guidance for the teacher and classroom assistants showing clearly how the recommended areas of learning are covered.
34. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides appropriately for sex, health and drug education. There is generally equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. On occasions, some pupils in the Year 2 class are prevented from learning by the inappropriate behaviour of a few difficult pupils. The curricular requirements of the pupils on the special educational needs register are fully met in line with the Code of Practice.
35. The curriculum is planned systematically and there is comprehensive long, medium and weekly planning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was a need to refine planning procedures to ensure coverage of the programmes of study. Schemes of work are now in place for most areas of the curriculum apart from speaking and listening. The information technology scheme is currently under review with the aim to be more helpful to teachers with insecure subject knowledge. Schemes of work now satisfactorily identify what is taught in each year group and support knowledge and understanding of each curriculum area. The exception is mathematics, where the published scheme is not helpful to Key Stage 1 teachers and there is some repetition of topics being covered at the same level.
36. In their medium term plans, teachers make links across the curriculum. For example, art work is included in history and measurement in design technology. Weekly plans identify clear learning objectives. This is an improvement since the last inspection. These plans give appropriate guidance and most teachers clearly identify activities for pupils who learn at different rates. This results in a high proportion of lessons where pupils are learning the right things and making satisfactory progress. However, not enough challenging work is provided for the small number of talented pupils and they are not working to their full potential.
37. The school has effectively established the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and all staff use this guidance well in their planning.
38. There are comprehensive systems for assessing pupils' attainment on entry and in English and mathematics throughout the school. Effective use is made of standardised tests, optional standard assessment tests and national assessment results to identify weaknesses in the attainment and progress of year groups. These are carefully analysed and used to set individual pupils appropriate targets, for example in spelling and reading. However, the school has not paid sufficient attention to declining assessment results at the end of Key Stage 1 in order to identify and tackle shortcomings in teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science.
39. There are appropriate assessment procedures being used and developed in most other subjects. Teachers record significant strengths and weaknesses in individuals and clearly identify assessment opportunities in their weekly plans.
40. Assessment and review arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory but Individual Education Plans are not rigorous or focused enough to identify the specific learning needs and do not provide sufficient guidance for class teachers.
41. Extra curricular provision is good. Well-supported clubs are organised which cover a range of sport, music environmental study and computer skills. Pupils regularly go on educational visits. These include a residential outdoor pursuits week for pupils in Year 5

and 6 and an overnight residential experience for Year 2 pupils. These first hand experiences make a valuable contribution to extending pupils' understanding and knowledge.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

42. The school successfully promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils through a wide range of activities, which reflect the school's aims. The school is particularly successful in its provision for social development and this is a strength of the school. While still satisfactory, the school is less successful in its provision for cultural development. These findings broadly reflect those of the last inspection.
43. Pupils' spiritual development is well promoted. This church school ensures that its Christian foundation is at the heart of the school and it is clear that knowledge of Christian values and beliefs are promoted. Teachers regularly plan learning activities that encourage pupils to respond sensitively, explore their feelings and reflect on what they have heard or experienced. Very good opportunities are found, in circle time, for younger pupils and in personal, social and health education lessons for older pupils. Pupils are also given opportunities to empathise with the feelings of others. The youngest pupils used role-play to imagine what it felt like to be in a stable. In Key Stage 1, the music of 'Joseph' was used effectively to produce a climate for reflection on what it felt like to be abandoned. In history, the oldest pupils wrote letters imagining themselves as a Victorian child. Pupils' self esteem is consistently promoted throughout the school. The many attractive displays of pupils' work and the general use of plenary sessions reflect the value teachers have for pupils' ideas across the curriculum.
44. The pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are made aware of what is expected of them and the difference between right and wrong through informal daily routines, class discussions in personal, social and health education and assembly. The school's moral code fosters values such as courtesy, honesty and respect for each other and property. Sensitive use is made of daily opportunities to promote these values. In Year 1, two boys who irritated each other were encouraged to consider how each would wish to be treated. The head teacher, staff and voluntary helpers provide very good role models and consistently treat pupils, visitors and each other with respect. There are many planned opportunities for pupils to develop and express moral values such as in the school's well established support of charities. The whole school learned of the necessity to protect wildlife for future generations and participated in a fund raising event for the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. Older pupils have good opportunities to extend their social and personal understanding across a wide range of issues. In personal, social and health education, Year 6 explored balancing rights and responsibilities in the community. They also wrote to the Prime Minister about the justice of debt relief in the Jubilee 2000 campaign.
45. Arrangements for promoting pupils' social development are very good. The organisation of the school and contents of lessons give pupils good opportunities to experience and understand social relationships and the rights and responsibilities of individuals. The under-fives' curriculum promotes independence. They are given many opportunities to learn social conventions and to share resources such as large outdoor play equipment and small construction toys. Throughout the curriculum and across the whole school, opportunities are often planned for pupils to work in pairs or in small groups. In Year 5 science, pupils had the opportunity to work in groups and pairs to investigate the properties of solids liquids and gases. Regular school productions, such as 'Whoops A Daisy Angel' and 'Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat', provide opportunities for all pupils to learn teamwork and the social skills involved when working with a large group. A range of day visits and very good provision for residential experiences for Years

2, 5 and 6 pupils enhance social development. All pupils are regularly expected to undertake duties in class and around the school. The oldest pupils have a wide range of responsibilities which they carry out diligently; they sell snacks at lunchtime, act as worship monitors and clear litter from the school grounds. The school regularly plans activities to enable pupils to contribute to the life of the school as a community. Pupils in the gardening club enhanced the school grounds and other pupils took part in school worship performing a dramatic sketch 'The Low Budget Christmas'. The provision of cycling proficiency and very good personal, social and health education contribute towards an understanding of responsible citizenship. There are many times when pupils are given the opportunity to show initiative, such as when older pupils help and care for younger pupils or when pupils carry on working at a task after the lesson has finished.

46. The promotion of pupils' cultural development is sound. The school enriches its pupils' knowledge of their own cultural traditions both in the curriculum and through visits, clubs and activities. In history pupils have opportunities to appreciate life and culture in other times and this is sometimes enhanced by visits to museums. Recently a visit to Caerleon enriched Year 4 pupils' study of Roman life. There are few opportunities for pupils to work with artists and authors. The school is successful in its promotion of Christian heritage and culture; for example in the use of advent candles and the Christingle service at church. Multi-cultural experiences for pupils are also satisfactory but the school does not provide sufficient opportunities across the curriculum to ensure that pupils appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures. A wide range of songs and music is performed from other countries and a visitor from South America introduced pupils to world music instruments

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

47. The school provides good support and guidance for its pupils. This is an apparent decline since the last inspection when support and guidance were reported as excellent.
48. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are good and inform effective support and advice. Secure relationships have been developed between all staff and pupils. This has created a happy, caring school. The youngest pupils are supported by good induction procedures including home visits. Staff know their pupils very well and are responsive to their needs. Immediate informal support is given to children showing distress during daily routines, such as registration or play. The head teacher is accessible to all pupils, and is most approachable even to the youngest children. A reception child was secure enough to give the head teacher a spontaneous hug in the library corridor. Consequently, pupils feel that they are cared for and have confidence in staff for advice and support. The safe and very caring climate created by all staff and voluntary helpers has a positive effect on pupils' progress, confidence and ability to cope in school. Academic progress is appropriately monitored through the use of various tests and a system of individual profiles has just been started. Records of achievement are not kept but achievements are valued and celebrated in school, for example through various awards in assembly. Pupils, who have special educational needs, are adequately supported within their class group. The lack of rigour and focus in individual education plans means that this support is not always as effective as it could be.
49. The school monitors pupils' behaviour well, but expectations of discipline and good behaviour are not consistent. The management of behaviour for under-fives is very good, but in Year 2 expectations of behaviour are too low and this has a negative effect on educational standards achieved. Nearly all parents have signed a contract with the school that covers what is regarded as appropriate behaviour. Pupils' achievements are rewarded through consistent use of house points, stickers, praise and a wide variety of special award cups. Lunchtime staff work well as part of the school team and make a significant

contribution to the support of pupils. They encourage good helpful behaviour through their lunchtime award system. Teachers consistently record incidents of improved or unacceptable behaviour in their planners and the head teacher is told of particularly significant events. Individual pupils are given personal interviews to discuss their behaviour and set and helped to meet appropriate targets, for example through the use of "smiley face" charts to record, monitor and reward behaviour. In the case of persistent offenders or particularly serious incidents, parents are invited to discuss their children's actions and encouraged to give support at home. A very small number of parents reported an incident of inappropriate behaviour on the playground. Inspection findings confirm that the school followed agreed procedures. Appropriate measures to deal with bullying and harassment are fully in place and publicised in outline in school documents for pupils, staff and parents.

50. The school has effective procedures for monitoring absences. These are used to ensure the support, care and safety of pupils. The school or educational welfare officer supports individual pupils, who have difficulty in attending school. Inconsistent rigour in initial follow up and recording of unauthorised absences account for the apparently unsatisfactory levels of unauthorised absence in the records.
51. The school successfully promotes the health, safety and general well being of its pupils. Pupils' well being is paramount in the school. The school does all that it reasonably can to protect the pupils in its charge from harm. Effective child protection procedures have been established and all staff have been made aware of their responsibilities. The curriculum is used help pupils protect themselves, for example through the use of good personal social and health education. Staff and voluntary helpers are fully aware of appropriate procedures for looking after the pupils. The school promotes pupils' well being through its day-to-day procedures, such as rigorous challenge and identification of visitors to the premises. It also teaches pupils awareness of health and safety issues such as health, drugs, and road safety education. There are appropriate arrangements for first aid and sick pupils are cared for well. The head teacher and cleaner-in-charge carry out regular health and safety checks to identify concerns and take any necessary action. However, some working practises are hazardous to health or safety such as insufficient warm up in a strenuous Year 6 physical education lesson and trailing leads in a Year 3 music lesson and a Year 5 numeracy lesson.

Partnership with parents and the community

52. The school's partnership with parents and the community is good. Parents are supportive and are welcomed into the school. There are very good links with the community and these are a strength of the school. These findings broadly reflect those of the last inspection.
53. Parents' involvement in the life and work of the school is good. It is encouraged and appreciated. A satisfactory number of parents regularly contribute directly to pupils' learning throughout the school. They help in classrooms and in the library and also help with extra curricular activities such as the football club. Parental expertise is used to improve learning resources and environment. Parents created story sacks, developed a pond and painted magnificent murals for the library. These parental links make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The well-established Parent Teacher Association provides social activities and welcomes additional resources, such as books and sports equipment. It also subsidises the cost of visits and the coach for swimming lessons. Parents are encouraged to help their children at home with reading, spellings, tables and other homework. When parents are involved, this partnership improves their children's progress.

54. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters are regularly produced. Parents report that they find staff very approachable. They have many informal opportunities and three formal meetings a year to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress. These sessions are well attended. Written reports on pupils' attainment and progress are produced annually. These clearly describe what pupils can do but do not give sufficient information on what pupils need to do to improve. Reception reports do not comply with requirements in that they neither report on the early years' desirable learning outcomes or the National Curriculum. The school's prospectus is satisfactory but has minor omissions. The governors' annual report to parents is interesting but has major omissions including detailed Key Stage 2 results and national comparisons. Most parents are satisfied with the information that they are given but a small number indicated dissatisfaction with information given about what is taught. The school gladly supplies any information requested but is insufficiently active in provision of curriculum information. For example, the school provided an opportunity for parents to observe their children in literacy and numeracy lessons. Very few parents attended, and no alternative provision was made for an evening meeting or written information. Regular topic information is not provided in advance for parents. To this extent, parents' concerns are justified.
55. The range of very good links enriches the life of the school with the community. There are particularly strong links with the local church. The vicar regularly leads worship; the church is used for special services, such as Christingle; and Year 6 pupils write for the parish magazine. Visitors share their expertise and experience. For example 'Mr Rotavator' enhanced the study of plant growth in Year 3 science. Other visitors not only enrich curriculum provision but also make strong contributions to pupils' personal development. A local police officer supports older pupils in their understanding of self-esteem, decision making skills and drug abuse. The local fire service increases younger pupils' awareness of fire safety and the local dentist teaches pupils about dental hygiene. The school has a particularly good link with local business in the form of the Young Engineers Club run by local engineers. Well-established links with local elderly people's homes contribute to pupils' social awareness. The locality is well used as a resource for learning. Visits are made to Malvern Common, the local museum and the local field centre. The school is itself a pre-school provider but it has also had very good links with a voluntary playgroup, which uses the school premises. Links with the partner secondary school, to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 6, are also effective. Regular visits support subjects such as information technology and dance and also contribute to a smooth transfer for pupils. All of these contacts make a valuable contribution to pupils' intellectual and personal development.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

56. Overall, the leadership and management are satisfactory and have coped well with the demands of an expanding school. The governors and headteacher have made a positive contribution to the generally good standards of behaviour and the above average level of attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. They have been less successful in raising standards for seven year olds in writing, mathematics and science and in information technology for 11-year-olds; a decline in this aspect of their performance since the last inspection.
57. The governing body has not drawn up a long-term view for the future of the school. It has only agreed priorities for the current school year, focusing mainly on establishing the numeracy and literacy strategies and preparing for the national information and communication technology initiative.

58. For several years the governors have been occupied with issues relating to the numbers of pupils on role rising from 130 to 226. The buildings have been extended twice and classrooms and other areas refurbished. Five of the eight teachers, including the deputy head, have been appointed since the last inspection as well as additional support staff. Governors have successfully achieved their aim of an eight-class school with single age groups for pupils from three to 11-years-old. The emphasis has been on creating a caring and supportive learning environment where pupils are secure and enjoy coming to school. In this they have also succeeded. Although the current carry forward of funds in the budget is large, this is appropriately earmarked to complete building work.
59. While very supportive of the headteacher and senior staff, governors are not fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in raising standards. They have not paid sufficient attention to the decline in national assessment results over the past five years at the end of Key Stage 1. As a consequence, they have not been effective in tackling the weaknesses in the teaching and learning of seven-year-olds.
60. The headteacher has given strong leadership in creating an enlarged school with a supportive ethos. She has a long-term view of how to improve standards further but has not yet drawn up a strategic plan which details how this goal will be achieved. Together with her deputy, she has begun to prepare the ground by enabling subject co-ordinators to give more support to colleagues in the classroom. This has already had an impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in literacy, mathematics and science in most classes. However, as yet, staff with management responsibilities are not sufficiently skilled in monitoring to recognise specific areas for development in teaching and give appropriate support to less confident and inexperienced colleagues. As a consequence important aspects of the teaching of seven-year-olds have not been identified and improved.
61. The school has clear, stated aims that have been developed by staff and governors to provide a calm, secure learning environment where pupils learn respect for others and themselves; in this the school has been very successful. There is less focus on promoting high standards. The school's development plan, whilst identifying curriculum areas for review and development, is not providing specific direction for improving pupils' attainment and progress either in the short or long term.
62. The governing body through an appropriate committee structure considers all policies. These policies and guidelines are comprehensive and discussed with all staff. Teachers who are new to the school find this guidance useful in understanding the day-to-day running of the school. The policies support the caring and orderly ethos of the school.
63. Curriculum co-ordinators have produced action plans, which are useful documents for identifying areas for development in each subject. They have realistic and achievable targets. They have been particularly effective in raising standards in reading and spelling for pupils with special educational needs, numeracy in Key Stage 2 and in scientific investigation and enquiry across the school. Current priorities for improving writing and information technology have not yet had time to take effect.
64. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum but the management of special educational needs is not always effective. The co-ordinator has too wide a remit, which limits the time she can give to statemented pupils. As a result, individual education plans are in place but there is insufficient detail recorded to be of value to other staff. However, support for special educational needs pupils is good because of the informal contact between the co-ordinator and teachers. For example, pupils with special educational needs in Year 3 and

4 are identified for additional support through the literacy strategy and there is a booster programme in Year 6. As a result, these pupils are making good progress.

65. Pupils' behaviour is well managed in most classes and around the school. Consequently, pupils generally have positive attitudes to both learning and each other and most lessons are calm and well ordered.
66. The school meets nearly all statutory requirements; there are a few minor health and safety issues and omissions from the annual report to parents.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

67. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are generally satisfactory. The Year 3 classroom is inadequate but this will be refurbished in the spring term 2000.
68. There are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers. They have the knowledge and experience to teach the National Curriculum. The teachers in the nursery and reception classes have a very good understanding of the requirements for early years' education. The secure specialist knowledge of the co-ordinators for mathematics, science, music and special educational needs has been particularly effective in supporting colleagues and raising standards.
69. Classroom assistants are deployed throughout the school. They work well with all teachers and have been particularly effective when working with groups of pupils to support the National Literacy Strategy or individual pupils with special educational needs. Lunchtime supervisors are well supported. When required, they attend staff meetings; they are informed of specific issues relating to pupils and have knowledge of first aid. This training and support have given the lunchtime supervisors increased skills and confidence, which is reflected in the orderly way the indoor lunch period and the more active sessions in the playground are controlled.
70. The administrative staff is appropriately qualified and experienced. The cleaner-in-charge and staff maintain the school in good order, which enhances the learning environment.
71. The school has an effective induction programme for teachers and assistants new to the school. A comprehensive and helpful booklet supports this. There is a programme for newly qualified teachers that meets statutory requirements. The teacher, who is currently receiving support, reported that she found this guidance most useful.
72. Procedures for teacher appraisal meet current requirements. Appraisal interviews lead to in-service training, which is focused on identified staff need. For example, the work of the science co-ordinator in training and demonstrating lessons has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching in Year 1 and through out Key Stage 2.
73. Much work has been done since the last inspection to improve the accommodation. The purpose-built early years' unit is very good, as are the classrooms and work areas for Key Stage 1. Year 3 is housed in a room with tiled walls and poor acoustics, making teaching and learning difficult. Forthcoming building work will remedy these deficiencies.
74. The school has small corridors and this causes congestion at the start and end of sessions. The need for pupils to carry chairs to the hall for the lunch period is not an ideal situation. However, these occasions are safely managed.
75. The school makes good use of the accommodation to promote pupils' learning. All classrooms are well organised for practical work and group and class teaching. The

space adjacent to classes 4 and 5 is well used by groups engaged in additional literacy activities and special educational needs teaching. The library is centrally sited, accessible, and well integrated into the life of the school.

76. Pupils' work is attractively displayed in classrooms and around the school. It has a clear purpose, pupils' achievements are acknowledged and the learning environment improved considerably. This is most evident with displays and explanation of science experiments, which have and are taking place in Key Stage 2.
77. The outdoor areas are appropriately laid-out and maintained. The fenced area for the under-fives is particularly good and well used. Sufficient space is available for large equipment and practical work. The two playgrounds are secure and large enough for pupils to engage in a range of activities for quiet and active play. Older pupils have access to bats and balls and skipping ropes during lunchtimes, which provides opportunities to engage in a range of creative games. Lack of play space was a concern of a few parents, not upheld by the inspection.
78. A green field area is next to the school and well used in the late spring and summer. The school has recently created an area for environmental studies and future developments are planned. The external environment is clean and well maintained with no graffiti and litter. There is suitable access for pupils and adults with physical disabilities.
79. Resources are good for the under-fives and in mathematics, science and music and are improving in information technology, although some of the computers are out-of-date. Resources in other subject areas are satisfactory. The school library is well stocked and used regularly by pupils.
80. The school makes good use of resources beyond the school in the locality and further afield. For example, pupils have opportunities to attend residential camps and to go on educational visits, which support their learning, as well as visiting the parish church and town.

The efficiency of the school

81. Overall, the school has made good use of its finances, as numbers have increased, to improve the accommodation and learning environment, establish single year classes and create a supportive and caring climate. In recent years, staff appointments have been well thought out to ensure identified gaps in subject expertise have been filled. This has had a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching through school-based training and support, especially in investigating and experimental science and music at both key stages, in numeracy at Key Stage 2 and in special educational needs. The school has been less effective in tackling unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1.
82. Currently, insufficient attention has been given to linking expenditure directly to raising standards, particularly at Key Stage 1 in literacy, numeracy and science and at Key Stage 2 in writing and information technology. This limits the governing body's capacity for long-term financial planning to support school improvement. In addition, as there are no reliable measures in place to assess progress, governors are not able to judge the effectiveness of their spending decisions.
83. The school generally makes sound use of learning resources to support teaching and learning across the curriculum, particularly in literacy and numeracy and for the under-fives and special educational needs. While the provision for information technology is in the process of being improved, teachers make good use of what is already available. The central library is used appropriately for browsing and independent research. The potential

of the recently opened extension has been extremely well developed by teachers and staff for pupils in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers, through good organisation and management, have successfully overcome the relatively cramped conditions in corridors and some classrooms. This is particularly true of the newly qualified teacher, whose classroom is a converted kitchen. The school makes good use of its grounds for recreational and educational use. Opportunities in the local community and further afield also are used effectively to extend pupils' learning.

84. Financial control and school administration are good. The last external audit was over two years ago and found that records and procedures were mainly sound and well managed. All the minor recommendations have been implemented. The day-to-day running of the school's administration is smooth and efficient and allows the headteacher to carry out her professional duties with out interruption.
85. Taking into account the high proportion of pupils with attainment below the county average on entry, the overall, good progress most pupils make in reading and mathematics, their self-assurance and confidence on leaving, the school is generally giving them a sound foundation to their education. However, despite just over half the teaching being good or better, there are still too many shortcomings in the teaching at Key Stage 1 and standards of attainment for seven-year-olds are below average. The governing body has done a good job in improving the learning environment but has not been rigorous enough in dealing with these known weaknesses. Consequently the school, at this time, is giving satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

86. The provision for the 43 pupils who were under-five at the time of the inspection, is strength of the school. It includes a new nursery class providing part-time places for 24 three and four-year-olds and a reception class for children who are five years old between 1st September 1999 and August 2000. Generally the attainment of almost a third of pupils starting school in the reception class is below expectation in language and personal and social development. They make good progress and most are on course to reach the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five years old. This is because the teaching and the support from classroom assistants are consistently good. However, a minority still have difficulties with reading by the time they are five-years-old as they have so much catching up to do.
87. At the time of the inspection, children who have their fifth birthday between September and February were attending full time in the reception class. Others, including some pupils from the nursery class will start school in January. Pupils are accommodated in a new purpose built early years unit, which includes a reception classroom, nursery class and fenced outside play area. Pupils come to school happily and confidently and quickly adapt to school routines. This is because of the good induction programme of visits and the warm welcome pupils receive when arriving at school.
88. The curriculum provided in both the nursery and reception class is rich and varied and covers the nationally recommended six areas of learning. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' personal and social development and the acquisition of language, literacy and numeracy skills. Throughout the year, the work is based around topical and interesting themes. Currently pupils in the reception class are studying sound and Christmas. Good links are made in planning to ensure that children are given stimulating practical activities, which encourage them to explore and learn new skills

Personal & Social

89. The quality and range of opportunities for pupils to develop personally and socially are good. Teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils well and successfully help them to acquire self-esteem and confidence. They praise their efforts and take time to talk to them individually at the start of the day. Consequently, pupils have good relationships with each other and adults. They have a growing awareness of right and wrong because they are well managed and know what is expected of them. When they come into the classroom in the morning, they show initiative and independence as the teachers have established clear routines. Children in the nursery select from a range of prepared activities whilst an adult is in the story area to support less secure children. Pupils in the reception class independently hang up their coats and put their belongings away before joining the teacher to talk about their own interests. Good opportunities are provided for children to share and co-operate with each other through play. When playing with construction toys, they work independently and in pairs; they praise each other's attempts and play happily together to complete their models. While making Christmas cards, pupils took turns and shared fairly using materials, such as scissors and glue, sensibly and properly. Pupils are appreciative of each other's feelings and are often kind to each other. They are eager and enthusiastic learners because the teachers introduce an appropriate variety of learning tasks, which motivate them to want to learn new things.

Language & Literacy

90. The provision for developing language and literacy is very good. Teachers and classroom assistants place a strong emphasis on speaking and listening and take every opportunity to engage children in conversation. Questioning is used particularly well to help children extend their vocabulary and express themselves clearly. Their spoken language is further enriched in purposeful play activities. In the nursery, children played in the designated area, which had been converted to a stable. They dressed up as characters from the nativity and imaginatively made up their own stories. Pupils enjoy books and handle them carefully. In the nursery, they know that print carries meaning and understand how books are organised. After sharing a big book about school, pupils were helped to make their own signs for the classroom tracing carefully over the teacher's writing. They learn to hear letter sounds and decorate large letter shapes, which are surrounded by an appropriate collection of objects matched to the sound. In the reception class, pupils are introduced to a wide range of reading activities. They are developing different skills to work out new words, including using initial sounds and looking at pictures. In a shared reading session, they identified some words and enthusiastically joined in reading with the teacher. At the end of the story, the majority could retell the main events in order. Pupils are given many opportunities to practise and experiment with writing. In the nursery, they have made bean shaped diaries which are displayed on a beanstalk. Many pupils have written letters or shapes to represent words. In the reception class, pupils are confident in their attempts to write in play and more formal situations. They are beginning to use key words to write simple sentences and letters are formed with increasing control. Pupils in both the nursery and reception class make good progress in developing reading and writing skills. This is because teachers plan appropriate activities, which are carefully matched to children's stage and rate of learning. They provide a language rich environment where pupils' work is valued and celebrated.

Mathematics

91. Basic numeracy is a key focus in both classes and provision is good. In the nursery, mathematical skills are being developed through a wide range of practical activities. Children play number games, count, sort and make patterns. A practical area is provided where children decorate numerals and match the correct number of objects. In the reception class, the teacher concentrates on mental and practical mathematics. Pupils are required to respond quickly to the teacher's questions, which are used effectively to make them think. They are confidently learning to use mathematical vocabulary, which is well modelled by the teacher. High attaining pupils are beginning to add two numbers together and can explain how they arrived at their answers. Low attaining pupils are well supported by the classroom assistant in practical activities, which involve them in playing in the Post Office counting coins to buy 1p and 2p stamps.

Knowledge & Understanding

92. The curriculum provides a wide variety of rich experiences for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils in nursery and reception are developing a good foundation in their understanding of the place of technology in their lives. In the nursery, pupils have regular access to the computer and in reception, they are well supported by a student teacher in using a programmable toy to develop their understanding of how to control machines. In reception, pupils are beginning to understand the past and have compared their favourite toy to that of their grandparents. Their interest is stimulated through appropriate books and a display of old toys. Nursery children are very interested in the aquatic frogs in their classroom and they learn through caring for them and know what they need to survive. In both classes, there are many opportunities for pupils to select appropriate materials and equipment when taking part in

teacher directed and independently chosen activities. There is a good range of high quality resources, which are used effectively to support children in their learning.

Physical Development

93. There is good provision for pupils' physical development. Classrooms are spacious and have easy access to a secure enclosed play area, which is particularly well used by the nursery as an extension to their classroom. A range of outdoor activities and effective support from the nursery nurse make a significant contribution to pupils' overall physical development. Pupils move confidently and are aware of their own and others' space. They all have regular use of the hall. They are introduced to an appropriate range of large and small equipment, which they use with increasing skill and co-ordination. Their fine motor skills are developed well through activities, such as cutting, sticking drawing and painting. They learn to use scissors, brushes and pencils and construction materials with increasing control.

Creative development

94. Teachers give great importance to developing pupils' creative skills and a wide range of appropriate activities is provided. Consequently, the children make sound progress. Children in the nursery help to prepare sandwiches for their mid-morning snack and learn to spread, fold and cut bread. Reception pupils responded to music with enjoyment when practising their Christmas play. They sang well and enthusiastically. In both classes, children's drawing and paintings show an appropriate level of maturity.

Teaching

95. The teaching of the under fives is consistently good and sometimes very good in the nursery. The classroom assistants and teachers work together as a strong team and share a very secure knowledge of education in the early years. This has resulted in lessons that are well planned and very well organised. Pupils' attainment is well monitored and assessed. The information gained is successfully used to plan the next stage in learning. Good questioning by the teachers and classroom assistants helps them to effectively extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. The teaching is confident and enthusiastic and motivates pupils to want to learn. The early years' environment is stimulating and a good range of resources is used well.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

96. Standards of attainment are well below average for seven-year-olds but by the time pupils are 11-years-old, standards are about the same in most schools. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and good progress through Key Stage 2. This represents a decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, when levels of attainment were around the national average.
97. At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and in elements of speaking and listening. This is because teachers use the Literacy framework well to support their planning and pupils are taught a range of basic skills. Whilst most pupils are enthusiastic and confident speakers, their vocabulary is limited. For example, Year 1 pupils talking about models they had made did not have the technical vocabulary to describe the process effectively. The majority of pupils listen attentively but significant minorities of pupils in Year 2 are restless and interrupt during discussions. As a number of pupils start Key Stage 1 with attainment in reading well below their expected level, they have a great

deal of catching up to do. Even though they make sound progress and are helped by staff to become keen and enthusiastic readers, they have a limited range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words independently. This is because the pace of phonic teaching is too slow. As books become more demanding in Year 2, pupils find it difficult to use context to tackle new words and are over-dependent on adult help. However, effective use is made of parental support through a “home/school” book and detailed records of pupils’ reading are kept. This means that books are carefully matched to pupils’ reading level as they progress.

98. In Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in writing. The teacher’s expectations are high and pupils are beginning to write simple sentences and sometimes use full stops. They are encouraged by the teacher to write for different purposes by being presented with interesting ideas. They imagined they were giving advice to Joseph preparing for his trip with Mary to Bethlehem and wrote him a list of things he might need. In addition, pupils regularly record their personal views in the style of a recount. By the end of the key stage, progress is unsatisfactory. This is because expectations of pupils in Year 2 are not high enough. As a consequence, work is poorly presented, letters are not clearly shaped or correctly positioned and writing is difficult to read. Pupils are not helped to learn from their mistakes and errors in spelling and punctuation are continually repeated.
99. The 1999 assessment tests and tasks at the end of Key Stage 1 and inspection findings confirm this slowing down in progress. Results indicate that standards are well below average in reading and writing. These results are very low in comparison to those in similar schools. Overall, the number of pupils not reaching the level expected for their age is more than found nationally, whilst the proportion achieving the higher level 3 is also below the national average. While results have fluctuated over the past three years, they have generally been below average and are continuing to decline. This can only partially be accounted for by the higher proportion of pupils entering the school with attainment in language development well below the county average. The varying quality of experiences and provision is a more significant factor. At Key Stage 1, the performance of boys is better than girls, which is against the national trend.
100. At the beginning of Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. In Year 3, the teacher ensures work is matched to pupils’ capabilities and this helps pupils systematically build on their previous learning. Expectations of pupils are high and good quality marking of writing and helpful comments in discussions and reading, by the teacher, encourage pupils to learn from their mistakes. While pupils continue to be confident speakers, they are inclined to still be poor listeners and the Year 3 teacher has consistently to remind a significant number of pupils to be more attentive. By Year 4, pupils’ listening skills have improved and the teacher provides plenty of opportunities for them to participate in discussions, not only in English lessons but, as an important part of their learning, in other subjects. In history, they took part in a Roman feast giving speeches. In Years 5 and 6, discussion remains a principal feature of lessons and discussions are well managed by the teachers to ensure all pupils can make a valued contribution. By the time they are 11-years-old, most pupils are confident and enthusiastic speakers and listeners. For example in Year 6 debate, pupils thought carefully about what they wanted to say when giving their reasons for and against school uniform. However, whilst they are keen to answer questions and argue a point of view, many still have a limited vocabulary, which impairs the quality of their explanations.
101. Pupils make good progress in reading throughout Key Stage 2. They read with enjoyment and increasing accuracy and expression. They can explain how reading skills are used differently depending on the purpose of the reading. When reading non-fiction, most pupils know how to use contents, index and glossary and can confidently locate relevant information. By Year 6, most pupils read confidently with enjoyment. They use a range of

strategies to work out unfamiliar words and read a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction.

In a guided reading session, pupils learnt to identify the author, purpose and audience for the text. They referred to the book to support and explain their views in a discussion with the teacher. Most pupils understand the significant ideas in a fiction book but find it difficult to infer meaning from the text. This has been recognised by the school and targets are being set for individual pupils to improve their comprehension skills.

102. Whilst progress in writing is satisfactory overall there are areas in which it is unsatisfactory. Handwriting and presentation does not improve sufficiently until Year 6, where it becomes neat, well joined and carefully presented. Although pupils make good progress in learning spelling conventions and rules in the literacy hour throughout the key stage, these skills are not consistently applied to their independent writing. Too often, progress in structuring narrative writing is unsatisfactory because endings of stories are under developed and vocabulary choices are limited. However by Year 6, most pupils write satisfactorily for a wide range of audiences and purposes. . For example, pupils wrote to the Prime Minister about issues of concern. This is an improvement since the last inspection when too much time was spent on commercial material and work sheets. Their work is planned, drafted and improved before they write a final copy. Some aspects of writing remain unsatisfactory. Pupils still do not consistently apply spelling rules and there are gaps in their phonic knowledge. Their narrative writing continues to have shortcomings. Vocabulary is not used sufficiently imaginatively to create atmosphere and, whilst pupils use speech marks correctly, punctuation and layout of dialogue are underdeveloped.
103. At the end of Key Stage 2, 1999 assessment results show that standards are below the national average and below those found in similar schools. The number reaching a higher level is well below that found nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Key Stage 2 are overall as expected nationally. This is because the current Year 6 class has more high attaining pupils who are likely to exceed the national expectations for 11-year-olds than in 1999. Standards in writing of average attaining pupils are just below the level expected for their age, as aspects of spelling, punctuation and narrative writing are unsatisfactory.
104. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress particularly in spelling and reading. They benefit from carefully targeted teaching, which clearly focuses on their specific areas of difficulty. Classroom assistants effectively support low attaining pupils' learning. As they have good relationships with these pupils, they know the best approaches to make to encourage them to work hard.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1. An example of good teaching in a Year 1 class was balanced by unsatisfactory teaching in some Year 2 lessons. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good overall.
106. Good teaching at both key stages is characterised by detailed planning, which provides a balance of whole class and independent work. Questioning is well used to ensure comprehension and to develop pupils' thinking. Lessons are purposeful because teachers have high expectations and the pace of the lessons is brisk. There is a good balance of teacher demonstration and active involvement of pupils in whole class teaching sessions. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3 lesson in which pupils explored how words are used to convey meaning in calligram. Pupils presented words for the rest of the class explaining reasons for their choice. Time is not ways managed effectively. The introduction is sometimes too long and the plenary too short to be effective in assessing learning. Tasks are appropriate and challenging. Pupils work hard with sustained concentration because they are clear of what is expected of them. They are keen to learn and show interest in their work in most lessons.

107. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, expectations of independence when starting group work are not high enough. For example in a Year 4 class after a brisk and well-focused class introduction, pupils waited while tasks were explained to each group. As a consequence pupils had less time for independent work and did not finish their tasks. Whilst there is a detailed marking policy, it is not consistently applied throughout the school.
108. Where there are shortcomings in the teaching of English, expectations of pupils are not high enough and there is an uncritical approach to pupils' work. Consequently, they are not helped to improve and do not develop key skills at an appropriate rate. Pupils are not given enough guidance at the start of an extended writing session to enable them to successfully complete the task. Behaviour is managed inconsistently and pupils become restless and lack concentration.
109. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced effectively. Teachers have been well supported through a structured training programme in different aspects of literacy. They are confident with the content and planning for Literacy Hours and are well supported by the co-ordinator. Teachers ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced programme of work and skills in reading and writing are now systematically taught. Pupils usually make good progress within the Literacy Hour but the strategy has not yet had time to improve pupils' independent writing at both key stages. The Literacy framework provides a scheme of work for reading and writing but speaking and listening skills are not yet planned as systematically or explicitly. A good range of resources is used in the Literacy Hours including high quality big books and multiple copies of texts for guided reading.
110. English is effectively managed by the co-ordinator, who has good subject knowledge and a clear sense of direction. She has monitored the implementation of the Literacy Hour through classroom observations. There is a realistic action plan for the subject but it is not yet specifically linked to raising pupils' attainment. There are effective and thorough procedures for assessment, which include regular spelling and reading tests, and optional standard assessments. Results are used successfully to devise individual targets for pupils but are not yet used to inform overall curriculum planning to a sufficient degree. Samples of pupils' unaided writing are regularly collected but teachers do not discuss these samples to ensure consistency of judgements throughout the school.
111. The school has set realistic targets and is on course to raise standards of literacy by 2002 to 77% of the oldest pupils achieving or exceeding the level expected for their age.

Mathematics

112. Standards of attainment are well below the national average for seven-year-olds but above for eleven-year-olds. Overall, pupils make unsatisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and good progress through Key Stage 2.
113. Pupils start compulsory school with a good foundation of knowledge and understanding in mathematics. Many recognise and use numbers up to 10 correctly and can sort objects into sets. They use basic mathematical language appropriately, such as "larger than" and "smaller than". They make good progress through Year R and Year 1 primarily because of the consistently good teaching. Pupils learn to handle numbers mentally and are quick to recall number facts when making simple addition and subtraction calculations using units. This is because teachers provide plenty of opportunities to explore and investigate patterns and sequences. Questions are well matched to pupils' stage and rate of learning, which ensure individuals have to make an appropriate effort to think about their answers. Low and average attaining pupils are generally productive, particularly in group work, where they practise and consolidate their learning, for example in Year 1 when sorting

data about colour preferences and drawing bar graphs. Some talented pupils, however, are not sufficiently challenged by the mathematical content of activities. In one session, they spent too much time colouring in tally marks when analysing a nursery rhyme to check the different numbers of letters in words rather than exploring different graphical ways of representing their findings. In Year 2, progress is generally less than satisfactory and sometimes poor as the teacher is inexperienced and lacks confidence. The mathematical content of lessons is not sufficient and is often not pitched at an appropriate level for the majority of pupils. The commercial scheme being used to complement the National Numeracy Strategy is not easy to manage. There is repetition, with Year 2 pupils covering the same ground as in Year 1. In a Year 2 data handling lesson, the only difference with the Year 1 session was the choice of house points to illustrate bar graphs. The teacher's expectations are too low and work is generally too easy and many pupils make little effort. Their recorded work is untidy and often not completed; the teacher's marking does not indicate what they need to do to improve. A small number of difficult pupils also are inattentive. They are not managed well and are allowed to behave inappropriately and disrupt the learning of others.

114. This slow-down in their progress means that by the end of Key Stage 1, the results of national assessment tests and tasks were well below average when compared to similar schools and below in comparison to all schools in 1998 and 1999. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are remaining low for the current Year 2. This is a significant decline since the last inspection in 1996, when standards of attainment in mathematics were around average. Most seven-year-olds do not confidently carry out mental number calculations. They rely heavily on adult support and external aids, such as number lines, cubes and blocks, to work out simple additions and subtractions. They count in number multiples using 1, 2 and 5 up to 20 but only the high attaining pupils go much further before making mistakes. They sort and classify objects and use pictures to present and record their findings. However, they do not readily use appropriate mathematical language to describe what they have done. Many can recognise and make halves and quarters when sectioning squares and rectangles.
115. Overall, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is sound and at Key Stage 2 good. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching is satisfactory and in Years 5 and 6 good. Progress through Year 3 is sound, with particular improvement in numeracy. Pupils learn to apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding, as they did in a lesson on telling the time. The teacher, through a quiz using a clock face and hands developed their mental recall of multiples of five effectively. Satisfactory progress is maintained through Year 4, helped considerably by the new format of the Numeracy Strategy. Pupils are becoming more confident in explaining how they arrive at answers. In the introductory session of a numeracy lesson, they multiplied and divided by 6 and then used this skill to sort and classify data. The teacher is also making good use of new technologies to assist pupils in their learning. In the same lesson when presenting graphical information, she effectively demonstrated the range of possibilities through the use of an overhead projector and appropriate computer program. In Year 5, most pupils make good progress because they are constantly challenged by the enthusiasm of the teacher. She provides interesting and stimulating activities and keeps the class focused by good questioning of individuals. In a lively lesson on the use of multiples in calculating perimeters and area, she planned a range of very suitable challenges for pupils who learn at different rates. While the low attaining pupils worked on simple regular geometric shapes, high attainers discovered the algebraic formula and presented it in different forms, depending on the unknown dimension. This teacher makes very good use of the plenary session to check and reinforce learning; a shortcoming in lessons in other classes throughout the school as teachers leave insufficient time and do not plan this activity thoroughly enough. In Year 6, good progress is maintained as the teacher is confident and has very good relationships with her class. Most pupils are adept at mental calculations and enjoy playing with

numbers. They quickly recognise sequences and patterns and are able to make up their own problems. In a lesson on identification of factors, all pupils were sufficiently challenged by the careful questioning of the teacher as she constantly monitored their progress; she made sure everyone worked hard at their appropriate level. The high attainers identified cube and square numbers and the average attainers built up strings of factors in increasingly higher numbers, recognising the sequences of multiples. The low attainers consolidated their knowledge of 2, 3, 4 and 5 multiples by identifying factors on a number square, although they needed some plastic counters to help them get started.

116. So by the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment in national assessment tests and tasks have shown considerable improvement over the last two years. In 1998, standards were well below when compared to similar schools and below in comparison to all schools. In 1999, standards were above when compared with similar and all schools and inspection evidence indicates that they are on course to be as good, if not better this year. This is also an improvement since the last inspection in 1996, when standards were about average. Pupils are competent in handling numbers and use their numeracy skills to solve problems, not only in mathematics but across the curriculum. In science, they measure and record accurately, using tables and graphs; in technology and geography, they draw to scale; in history, they calculate time periods, using mathematical language, such as century, decade and millennium correctly. Their learning is consolidated through homework as they undertake individual investigations, such as finding out "Who has the strongest finger in their family and amongst friends?" "What really big numbers can I find". Pupils know about rotational symmetry, add and subtract decimals to two places and competently devise general algebraic formula to describe simple patterns and relationships.
117. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress through Key Stage 1, as despite the barriers to learning in Year 2, they are given appropriate additional attention from support assistants working in and outside the classroom. In Key Stage 2, work is well matched to their rate and stage of learning and both in group and class sessions. They are sensitively enabled to make a valuable contribution to lessons by being helped to think carefully through each stage of a problem. The informal links between the co-ordinator, classroom assistants and teachers is the crucial factor in ensuring this effective support.
118. The mathematics co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. She has been effective in leading school-based training and supporting colleagues in the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. She has been particularly effective in improving the teaching and learning of using and applying mathematics. She looks at teachers' half-term plans and gives advice to ensure the programmes of study in the National Curriculum are covered. She has recognised the difficulties some teachers are having using the commercial scheme in Key Stage 1 and she is currently researching other possibilities but has not yet been able to overcome shortcomings in the teaching.
119. The school has made a positive start with the Numeracy Strategy through the readiness and hard work of staff to make changes. As a result, progress across the school overall is good and standards are continuing to improve. Realistic targets have been set to raise standards of numeracy by 2002 to 82% of the oldest pupils achieving or exceeding the level expected for their age. The school is on course to realise this target.

Science

120. Standards of attainment are below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and about the same as in similar schools for 11-year-olds. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. This is a reversal to the last inspection for findings at the end of Key Stage 1, when standards for seven-year-olds

were above average; in 1996, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were still around average.

121. When pupils enter Key Stage 1 they make good progress but this dips in Year 2. However, the teaching overall is satisfactory at this key stage. In Year 1, pupils are appropriately challenged in their scientific thinking by the teacher's careful questioning. She introduces and explains scientific words and reinforces pupils' understanding by using these terms consistently. She encourages them to experiment and learn from their mistakes. In a lesson sorting materials to identify those that are magnetic, the class investigation was well managed so that pupils were able to test their predictions. The words "repel" and "attract" were learnt and used appropriately. When incorrect guesses were made, the teacher challenged pupils to find out for themselves what happened. They all worked hard, were fully engaged and by the end of the lesson were confidently classifying magnetic materials. In Year 2, the progress of pupils is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities to discuss possibilities and try our ideas. The teacher or worksheet often prescribes experiments. The scientific thinking required is not extensive. When working with circuits, pupils were confronted with a repetitive undemanding task that they easily completed. Opportunities to extend their thinking to more complex arrangements of circuits through practical experience were not taken. Pupils became restless and their behaviour deteriorated.
122. Teacher assessment in 1998 show that standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in all aspects of science are below average, apart from in materials and their properties, where they are above. Results in 1999 showed an improvement with attainment generally being around the levels expected. However, inspection findings indicate that standards are generally below average for the current Year 2. Most seven-year old pupils are able to follow simple instructions satisfactorily and communicate their findings by talking and drawings and charts. They correctly identify and name the external parts of plants and describe features of common animals. They know about seasons and how these effect the weather. They can describe the cycle of day and night and know that the sun is a source of light and heat. They have studied their bodies, can name some of the major features and talk about the importance of personal hygiene. They complete simple electric circuits and understand that batteries are a source of power.
123. In Key Stage 2, progress is generally good. While the teaching is generally sound at this key stage, it is improving. Teachers have a sound grasp of the subject knowledge and are well supported by the science co-ordinator. This has been particularly effective in helping teachers be more confident in teaching experimental and investigative science. In all year groups, pupils are being encouraged to adopt a systematic approach to their consideration and testing of hypotheses. In Year 3 during a follow-up lesson on plant growth, the science co-ordinator took a demonstration lesson for the newly qualified class teacher. She used the introductory class session very effectively to review pupils' understanding of what helps plants grow. Pupils were fully engaged in describing experiments they had set up to put plants in different environments. High attaining pupils were able to identify and name "oxygen, water and light" as essentials and average and low attaining pupils carefully described their observations and noticed the differences. While progress in Year 4 is sound, it is not better as often pupils are not given the opportunity to contribute their own ideas before carrying out controlled tests. In a lesson on the effects of wind on running, the teacher made a good link between previous work on water resistance. However, she gave the class the experimental design without involving them in discussion. As a result, when they carried out a test in the playground using sheets of card to increase their body surface area while running, they were more interested in having races.
124. In 1999, results of national assessment tests and tasks in Key Stage 2 were below average compared with all schools but about the same as similar schools. Results have

fluctuated since the last inspection reflecting the composition of year groups having a larger proportion of low attaining pupils. However, since the appointment of a specialist science co-ordinator two years ago, standards have started to rise. Inspection findings confirm that the current Year 6 is on course to at least reach the national average standard. By the time pupils are 11 years old, most have acquired knowledge and understanding of science appropriate for their age. They know about fair tests and the need to control variables. They put forward ideas and make sensible predictions. They are systematic in their investigation and observe and record their findings accurately. They are less confident in refining their experimental methods.

125. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Work is well planned and builds on previous experiences and pupils' rate of learning. They are well supported in their learning by both teachers and support assistants, who work effectively together. In particular, practical work is broken down into manageable steps. In a Year 3 session, the low attaining group was given a range of scientific words and explanations to help them make appropriate choices.
126. The science co-ordinator has made an effective contribution to raising standards. As well as contributing to staff training she advises on the scheme of work and monitors both teaching and planning. Resources are of high quality; well organised and sufficient to allow all pupils to have appropriate opportunity to carry out investigations.
127. The school does not use national assessment data to set targets to raise standards in science as no detailed analysis of current performance has yet taken place. The teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 are not moderated and as a consequence lack reliability. The science co-ordinator is developing a portfolio of assessed work.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

128. During the inspection only one lesson of information technology could be observed. Judgements have been made using this lesson and evidence gained by observations of the use of information technology in a other subjects; talking to pupils; examining their work; discussions with teachers and looking at teachers' plans. This evidence indicates that most pupils, by the time they are seven-years-old, have information technologyskills which are expected for their age. However, the current Year 6 have not had sufficient opportunities throughout their time at school to acquire an appropriate range of skills and, as a result, nearly all have attainment below that found in most schools. This is a similar picture as found at the last inspection in 1996.
129. At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are familiar with the layout and functions of a computer keyboard. They enjoy their turn working on their own or with a friend using an appropriate program to support their learning, usually in literacy and numeracy. They type in, store and retrieve text and use a range of programs to investigate and explore properties, such as design, colour and pattern. They have a good knowledge of the uses of information technology in their lives.
130. Throughout Key Stage 2, there are an increasing number of opportunities for pupils to use new technologies as part of their learning experiences. Teachers have made it a priority to improve their own knowledge and understanding and try out different ideas in their teaching. This has had a beneficial effect in most subjects. Teachers' plans show, that as well as games and exercises in literacy and numeracy, data handling has been developed to support investigations in mathematics and science. The internet is being researched for geography and history projects; and appropriate programs are available in music for

exploring and manipulating sound; in art and technology for creating and testing ideas, and control and modelling.

131. During the inspection, information technology was frequently observed being used. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils were drafting letters to Father Christmas using a word processing package. In a Year 3 numeracy session on time, pupils reinforced their understanding and use of multiples of five on the computer. In Year 4, data from friction experiments was presented graphically and images from a digital camera complemented historical accounts on events in a Roman history project. In a Year 5 numeracy lesson, an assistant appropriately supported three pupils complete a number game. She used questions and suggestions effectively to encourage the pupils to find out for themselves where they were going wrong. She reinforced their sense of achievement by appropriate praise before setting the next challenge. A small group of Year 6 boys worked effectively with the co-ordinator to improve their keyboard awareness skills. They had been correctly identified as having problems using function keys and this was holding them back from using programs to support their learning. The teacher worked with them at regular, short weekly sessions. She had broken down learning stages into smaller steps and, over the term, had successfully improved their performance. In all these activities, pupils were making good progress.
132. As the current Year 6 have not benefited of the improved programme to the same degree, they are not generally confident in the use information technology. Some, who have access to information technology at home, are better able to find their way around when using computers. However, very few identify new technologies as a useful tool for developing their learning, particularly in areas other than word processing.
133. The co-ordinator for special educational needs makes good use of information technology to help pupils. The recent focus on improving pupils' spelling and extending their vocabulary has made effective use of appropriate programs and these pupils are making good progress. There have also been considerable benefits to pupils who find identification and formation of letters difficult as they have become more familiar and practised with keyboard skills in word processing.
134. Until recently the stock of computers was generally out-of-date and programs were limited in their range and usefulness. Teachers and support staff lacked confidence and had not had sufficient training. The co-ordinator has worked hard to tackle these shortcomings. She has updated the policy, completed an audit of both hardware and software and begun to organise the upgrading of computers. She has adapted a scheme of work and produced helpful guidance to enable teachers to know what is available to support learning across the curriculum. Development plans have been drawn up to give a major impetus as part of the introduction of the national information and communication technology initiative in September 2000. The development work that has already taken place has had a significant effect on raising standards throughout the school.

Art

135. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons of art. Judgements have been made on these observations, talking to pupils and examining their work and discussions with teachers and looking at teachers' plans.
136. As a consequence, insufficient recorded evidence was available to make secure judgements about progress, attainment and teaching in the subject at either key stage. Those samples of work seen and discussions with pupils indicate that currently the attainment of most of the oldest pupils in the school is about what is expected for their age.

137. Year 6 pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the work of various artists. They confidently discuss the features of Paul Klee's work and describe their own interpretations of his style. Pupils have experienced an appropriate range of media such as wood, card, paint clay and various drawing materials. They enjoy their artwork and talk enthusiastically about their current project designing and making Victorian samplers.
138. Teachers have successfully encouraged pupils to use art to express their creative ideas in many ways. Year 3 pupils have designed Egyptian patterns using colour, space and pattern. Helpful written comments are provided by the teacher, which encourages pupils to improve and develop their designs. Pupils are taught a suitable range of techniques and skills. Year 5 pupils showed increasing control as they used fabric pens to produce line designs on acetate in the style of Charles Rennie MacKintosh's work. They are well motivated, work with care and concentration and are mutually supportive of each other.
139. Teachers make good links to other areas of the curriculum, such as history. In Year 4, pupils successfully made clay replicas of Roman pots and candleholders. Where there are shortcomings in the teaching of art at Key Stage 2, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to suggest solutions to problems they encounter. Some pupils at Key Stage 2 use blunt and round edged scissors which make it difficult for them to cut accurately. This affects the quality of their finished work and limits their progress.
140. Year 2 pupils have appropriate knowledge and understanding of art and their creative skills are developed satisfactorily. They have experienced a range of media including charcoal, paint and chalk. They successfully sketched designs for Christmas cards and chose materials of different textures to create their designs.
141. Good teaching in the Year 1 lesson observed was characterised by well-organised resources and good management. Effective organisation of groups ensured that pupils were well supported as they worked on designs for Christmas cards. They made good progress in developing practical skills and concentrated well. They successfully learnt techniques of collage as they decorated their model Christmas trees, making appropriate choices from a range of sequins. Pupils were encouraged to make simple evaluations of their finished products.

Design technology

142. During the inspection only one lesson of design technology could be observed. Judgements have been made on this, talking to pupils and examining their work and discussions with teachers and looking at their plans. As a result, insufficient recorded evidenced was available to make secure judgements about the progress, attainment and teaching of design technology at Key Stage 1 and 2. The samples of work seen and discussions with pupils indicate that currently, the attainment of most of the oldest pupils in the school is about what is expected for their age.
143. Pupils in Year 1 made pop-up Santa's requiring a slider mechanism. They marked out card and carefully cut shapes using scissors accurately and safely. They made slider mechanism and confidently demonstrated how it worked. They successfully joined materials and decorated their final product. The good teaching in this lesson was characterised by effective planning and prompting of children to find solutions to their problems as they were encountered. At the end of the practical activity, pupils were well supported in evaluating their work.
144. Year 6 pupils designed and made slippers. They confidently described the process of planning and the need to modify their plans as work progressed. They measured and

marked out their designs and selected materials, giving sensible reasons for their choice. They described problems they had in joining materials and how they overcame them.

145. Pupils have positive attitudes towards design technology. They are enthusiastic about their work and keen to talk about what they are doing. Year 2 pupils talked with pride about the coats they have made for the school production of "Joseph".
146. Year 5 pupils designed and made Aztec shields, which were carefully, decorated using a range of materials. They were well motivated by this activity. As a result, some pupils chose to make their own shields at home, which are now displayed in the classroom.

Geography and history

147. During the inspection no geography lessons were observed and only two of history. Judgements have been made by talking to pupils, examining their work, discussions with the co-ordinator, looking at teachers' planning and from displays around the schools. Insufficient recorded evidence was available to make secure judgements about the progress, attainment and teaching of geography at either key stage.
148. Those samples of work seen and discussions with pupils indicate that attainment of the oldest pupils is around that expected for their age in both geography and history.
149. In geography, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are able to distinguish between features of towns and country and say what they like and dislike and why. They use simple mapping skills and are able to describe in some detail simple journeys from home to school. They talk confidently about their work using appropriate geographical vocabulary.
150. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils develop a satisfactory range of geographical skills. They are able to identify the various stages of a river from source to mouth and use 2 figure grid references to identify places on a map. Pupils understand the purpose of contours and are able to explain that the closer the contours the steeper the hill. Study of Kenya enables pupils to understand that different climate conditions effect life styles, occupations and buildings. They are able to give explanation to why such differences in climate dictate how people live in and compare that with their own area.
151. In history, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are developing a sense of sequence and chronology. Pupils understand that history is about the past and understand the principle of 'then and now' using appropriate vocabulary. They understand that information about the past can be discovered by looking at photographs, books and by asking people about their experiences.
152. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have studied a range of historical periods including the Greeks, Romans, Vikings, Egyptians, Aztecs, Victorians and Britain in the 1960s. They have a sound factual knowledge about Romans and Victorians and are enthusiastic to find out more. They can identify Roman settlements by relating the spelling of the name to the area. They understand that researching primary and secondary sources, such as artefacts, reference books, photographs and CD-ROMs can discover further information about periods of history. Pupils talked enthusiastically about history and were keen to state how Victorian drama days and visits to Caerleon to become Romans had furthered their understanding and enjoyment of the subject.
153. Good planning and perceptive questioning supported sound teaching in a Year 6 class. This enabled pupils to review major events during this time and as a result pupils made good progress in their understanding of the period. Opportunities to link history with literacy were exploited when pupils had to write a newspaper article about the major

events in Victorian times to celebrate Queen Victoria's Silver Jubilee. Unsatisfactory teaching in a Year 4 class on the Roman legacy occurred when the teacher's exposition lacked clarity and questions were not sufficiently focused to enhance understanding. Pupils became confused and restless and were not appropriately challenged. This restricted their progress.

154. The co-ordinator for history has only been in post for ten weeks. She recognises that the coverage of historical topics is too wide, demanding and there is not time to investigate them all satisfactorily. A review of the history curriculum will take place in the spring and summer terms 2000 to tackle this issue.

Music

155. During the inspection only two lessons of music could be observed, one of which was a practice for a Christmas performance to parents. This was insufficient to form an overall judgement about the attainment and progress of pupils in the school.
156. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing with confidence and enthusiasm. They remember words to hymns and carols and pay attention to their articulation when singing in tune and with an awareness of pulse. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 rose to the challenge presented by songs from the musical "Joseph" under the careful guidance of the teacher. She had high expectations of their performance and behaviour, which ensured they all concentrated and tried hard. As a result, they made good progress by the end of the practice.
157. A music lesson in Year 3 was well taught by the newly qualified teacher. She introduced the concept of singing a round in manageable steps. Each stage was clearly introduced, the melody and rhythm thoroughly learnt and each group helped to develop their performance. Good use was made of the tape recorder to help the class identify areas for improvement and the keyboard to add an electronic beat. The lesson was well organised and managed so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, felt able to make a useful contribution. As a result by the time the lesson was drawing to an end, the class had worked hard enough to produce a reasonable performance of a round with four parts. To finish, the class discussed what they could do in the next lesson to refine their individual group performance and what additional instruments could be added.
158. Overall in Key Stage 2, music is well provided for. A commercial scheme has been adapted by the co-ordinator and helpful guidance given to ensure a balanced programme of activities is followed that covers all the elements of the music curriculum. Effective use is made of recorded broadcast material to help non-specialist teachers enrich their teaching. Development plans include ways to make more use of new technologies, particularly creative information technology programmes to support pupils composing and trying out new ideas. In assemblies, pupils sing well, giving expression to their performance. They listen to each other and to the piano accompaniment and adjust their tempo and dynamics accordingly.
159. Additional instrumental teaching is provided for individuals wishing to learn the clarinet, flute, recorder and violin. Teachers organise and take extra-curricular clubs to enable these instrumentalists to play and perform together. There is a well-supported choir for older pupils. These groups play and perform regularly in assemblies, support church services and take part in school productions.
160. The school is fortunate in having three staff who have musical expertise. Their combined efforts have ensured that music has a high profile. In addition to the rich and varied curriculum, visits to concerts are arranged and specialist performers hold workshops. In March, a Spanish guitarist worked with groups and classes.

Physical education

161. During the inspection only one lesson of physical education could be observed. Judgements have been made on this observation, talking to pupils, looking at articles and photographs of sporting and outdoor activities, and discussions with teachers and looking at their plans. Insufficient recorded evidence was available to make secure judgements about the overall progress and attainment and the quality of teaching in physical education.
162. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have swimming lessons in the summer term. By the time they leave school nearly all pupils swim 25 metres confidently and are aware of the principles and skills of water safety.
163. The Year 6 lesson observed focused on improving performance in skills and exercising against time targets. Health and safety issues were not considered sufficiently. The floor area of the hall had been significantly reduced by the erection of a stage for Christmas performances and the activities chosen were too rigorous for the available space. In addition, the effects on pupils of vigorous, aerobic exercise were not given enough attention.
164. The physical education curriculum is broad although pupils state that large apparatus in the hall is rarely used. Pupils engage in an appropriate variety of physical activities. These include gymnastics, rounders, football; they also have opportunities to develop, refine and practice skills and performance in dance. These lessons are often related to other areas of the curriculum, such as in history, where pupils develop dance sequences reflecting the period they are studying. Older pupils attend a residential "outward bound" camp where they have the opportunity to engage in different and more challenging activities. The physical education curriculum is enriched by a variety of extra curricular activities, including competitive games and athletics.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

165. The inspection took place between 6 – 9 December 1999. A team of four inspectors, including a lay inspector, carried it out. The team spent 14 inspection days in the school. The total time spent in classes, discussions with pupils and evaluating their work was 46 hours, representing 75% of the time allocated for the inspection.

166 The evidence includes:

- 45 lessons or parts of lessons were observed;
- discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents of the school;
- a representative sample of 27 individual pupils' work was looked at and 21 pupils heard to read;
- class registrations were attended;
- school assemblies were attended;
- extra-curricular activities were sampled;
- a range of school documents, including the previous report, the school's development plan, schemes of work and teachers' plans were examined;
- attendance records, the records kept on pupils and their reports were scrutinised;
- national assessment results for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils from 1994 - 99 were analysed, together with reading tests, entry profiles and other standardised test results;
- the budget figures and other financial records were looked at, along with minutes and policies of the governing body;
- a pre-inspection meeting for parents was attended by 42 parents;
- parents completed questionnaires and their responses were analysed.

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	200	4	21	5
Nursery Unit/School	12	0	0	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.73

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week	65.5

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

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

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week	18
Average class size:	12

Financial data

Financial year:	1998
	£
Total Income	278963
Total Expenditure	279579
Expenditure per pupil	1536.15
Balance brought forward from previous year	26462
Balance carried forward to next year	25846

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

165

Number of questionnaires returned:

61

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	48	48	5	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	66	33	0	0	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	25	56	13	4	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	48	38	7	7	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	48	46	2	3	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	42	53	3	0	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	35	53	10	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	36	54	2	8	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	52	43	3	2	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	48	48	5	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	72	25	3	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

- The progress of talented children; an issue confirmed by the inspection.
- The way bullying is dealt with; not supported by inspection findings.