

INSPECTION REPORT

**Holy Trinity C of E Primary School
Cuckfield**

LEA area : West Sussex

Unique Reference Number : 126054

**Headteacher : Mr R Shepherd
Acting headteacher: Mrs G Pedersen
Consultant headteacher: Mrs Olivia Izzard**

Reporting inspector : R Peter J McGregor

Dates of inspection : 13 – 17 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707882

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Infant and junior
Type of control :	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils :	4 - 11
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Glebe Road Cuckfield West Sussex RH17 5BE
Telephone number :	01444 454295
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Appropriate authority :	Governing body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr Paul Goldfinch
Date of previous inspection :	May 1996

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Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr R Peter J McGregor RgI	Science; Design and technology; Physical education	Attainment and progress; Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Teaching; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources; Efficiency
Mrs Susan Cash Lay		Attendance; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs Jo Harris	Areas of learning for children under five; Special educational needs; Equal opportunities; English; Art; Music; English as an additional language	Leadership and management
Mr Adrian Everix	Mathematics; Information technology; History; Geography	Curriculum and assessment

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Very strong staff team spirit; a willingness to work to resolve problems and weaknesses
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are much higher than national averages
- 16% of teaching is very good
- Very good breadth and quality of pupils' writing
- Good teaching and learning in the Reception classes
- Good, well used information technology resources, resulting in good pupil progress
- Very good and popular clubs and activities provided after school

Where the school has weaknesses

- Ineffective or non-existent policies and guidance for important areas of school life: pupil behaviour, assessment, staff appraisal, the roles of support staff, monitoring the quality of teaching, and the roles of subject co-ordinators
- Unsatisfactory behaviour by a minority of pupils; their learning skills are weak, particularly listening and concentration
- 12% of teaching is unsatisfactory
- Teaching does not stretch the brighter pupils sufficiently and marking is weak
- Long term curriculum planning is ineffective because of the school's unsatisfactory arrangements for mixed age classes
- Teaching time is less than that recommended
- Parents do not receive all the information they need to help their children at home

The strengths are significant but so are the weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school is currently managed by the senior deputy headteacher, as the acting headteacher, supported for a day a week by an experienced consultant headteacher. The partnership is proving very successful and has already had an impact on the school in the few weeks it has been operating. There is a determination and willingness to improve.

Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Good progress has been made in improving the quality and range of work in music and information technology. The teaching of reading was a concern four years ago and this still requires clarification. Schemes of work have been prepared recently for most subjects and these have improved continuity in learning. Variation in the arrangements of the mixed year group classes from year to year, however, results in curriculum repetition and inequality of opportunity for pupils. Insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place since the last inspection and the quality of teaching is lower than reported in the last inspection.

The last report judged the school to be very good. Current judgements are lower in important areas, although standards have remained high. The greatest weaknesses have been in school management but current arrangements are resulting in rapid and successful progress. The school's capacity to improve under the present leadership arrangements is good.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p> <p><i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E</p>
English	C	D	
Mathematics	C	E	
Science	B	D	

This information shows that, although standards in English and mathematics were similar to national averages in 1998, when compared with similar schools, (those with a similar proportion of pupils receiving free school meals) results in English were below average and in mathematics well below average. Science standards were above national averages but below average when compared with similar schools. 1998 results are given as this is the last year for which there is comparable national data. In 1999, results in the tests were higher in all three subjects. At the start of this current year, pupils are achieving above the standards expected for their ages.

Pupils enter the school with average standards and by the time they are five, many achieve or exceed the expected Desirable Learning Outcomes in the six areas of learning. Key Stage 1 results have been well above national averages in writing and mathematics, and above those of similar schools. Reading standards have been above average and similar to those of like schools. In teacher assessments of science, standards are well above average.

Standards in information technology are improving – they are similar to national expectations in Key Stage 1 and a little below in Key Stage 2. Standards in art, history and physical education are above those expected.

Quality of teaching

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

The quality of teaching is sound overall. Nearly nine in every ten lessons observed were satisfactory or better. In just under half the lessons seen the majority of pupils made good progress as a result of effective teaching. The greatest teaching strengths were in Reception classes where the overall quality was good. In Key Stages 1 and 2 there was also some very good teaching and much that was sound, but there was some unsatisfactory practice which resulted in pupils not learning enough in lessons. High attainers were insufficiently challenged. The greatest weaknesses were in large, mixed age classes of middle juniors. The variation in the quality of teaching leads to some pupils in an age range receiving a richer curriculum than others of the same age in a different class.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Unsatisfactory from a minority, both in lessons and around the school, which affects others
Attendance	Above average; no unauthorised absence. Too many parents take their children out of school for holidays
Ethos*	Good. Effective staff team, working for high standards. Most pupils have positive attitudes, but not all.
Leadership and management	Very effective partnership of acting headteacher and consultant headteacher, establishing appropriate and clear direction for the school. Supportive effective governors. Weaknesses in management systems – school development plan, monitoring, subject co-ordination, assessment.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced. Good joint planning by staff teams. Unsatisfactory long term plans because arrangements of mixed age classes change each year
Pupils with special educational needs	Sound progress. Well managed with good monitoring of achievements. Very generous number of support staff
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Sound provision overall. Good in social development and appreciation of Western cultural traditions, weakness in pupils' knowledge of other cultures
Staffing, resources and accommodation	High number of class assistants, but with unclear roles. Insufficient administrative staff time. Good induction programme for teachers. Appraisal not happening. Good resources and accommodation. Some small classrooms
Value for money	Sound. Good use of resources, except for library. Some inefficiencies in administration and the use of support staff. Average expenditure per pupil.

* *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"> • the good range of extra-curricular clubs • their children like school • good infant department • a friendly school atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' behaviour and no clear policies on how unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with • the headteacher ignoring their complaints • a lack of curriculum information, which would enable them to help their children more • insufficient homework • unsatisfactory junior department • the quality and amount of mathematics teaching in the juniors

Inspectors confirm many of the parents' views, but the school is changing rapidly under new management and several areas of weakness are now much improved or are improving. A very good range of extra-curricular clubs is

available. The pupils do like their school and staff generate a friendly school atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour is improving as appropriate policies are implemented, but it is not yet acceptable. The acting headteacher deals quickly and effectively with parental complaints and parents are happy with this. Insufficient curriculum information is going home. Too little homework is set, but a new homework policy is being implemented. A large number of staff changes and management changes this year mean that the distinction between a good infant department and unsatisfactory junior department no longer holds. There are important areas for improvement in both key stages. The amount and quality of mathematics teaching has improved this year as a result of the national Numeracy Strategy implementation, although high attainers are insufficiently stretched.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve further the standards of work and the learning of pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- * Improve the process of preparing the school development plan and ensure clear success criteria for each target. Issues identified in this inspection report should be incorporated into the plan. (paragraph 78)
- * Improve the effectiveness of school policies and guidance, in order that greater consistency and higher standards can be achieved. These are:
 - the behaviour policy - in order that the behaviour of a small minority of pupils in lessons and around the school improves and all concerned have a clear idea of what is acceptable
 - the roles of subject co-ordinators - in order that there is clear understanding of responsibilities. Where there are two co-ordinators, overall responsibility must be known
 - personal development - in order that pupils' listening skills and concentration improve and they are more able to take responsibility for their own learning
 - the assessment policy - so that manageable records are kept of pupils' achievements in all subjects, and that assessment records are used to inform what is taught next. Analysis and interpretation of national test results have an important part to play (paragraphs 24, 26, 27, 48, 49, 59, 75)
- * Improve the quality of teaching through:
 - ensuring that teacher appraisal is carried out based on agreed job descriptions
 - systematically monitoring lessons and providing constructive feedback to staff
 - providing guidance on the role of classroom support staff in helping pupils learn
 - matching the work better to pupils' capabilities, particularly high attainers
 - more effective marking
 - a whole school approach to reading (paragraphs 36, 38, 40, 75, 82, 85, 88, 112, 116)
- * Review the mixed age class arrangements and long term curriculum planning to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity (paragraph 80)
- * Ensure that the available curriculum time is at least the minimum recommended for each key stage (paragraph 44)
- * Implement a home school agreement to ensure that:
 - parents receive better curriculum information so that they can support their children at home
 - more homeworks are set and of a better quality, to reinforce pupils' learning
 - parents no longer take it for granted that they can withdraw their children for holidays during term time (paragraphs 30, 39, 60, 68, 69)

(The numbers in brackets refer to paragraphs in the report in which these issues are discussed)

Minor issues

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

- rationalise medium and short term planning to avoid repetition and reduce teacher's work loads (46)
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to begin to understand the cultures of the world (55)
 - provide greater opportunities for pupils to reflect, for example on meanings of stories and events, developing their spiritual and moral understanding (52)
- improve the quality of the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents and make sure both include national test information (69, 77)
- review school aims and ensure they reflect the school's current commitment to high standards (79)
- ensure that staff development procedures are fully implemented (88)
- ensure that when future teaching staff appointments are made consideration is given to the balance of staff experience currently employed (84, 93)
- review the number of classroom assistants to ensure that their number and roles are appropriate for the size of class and the needs of the pupils (85, 93)
- review and increase the amount of administrative support in order that senior managers are released from such tasks (94)
- ensure that office staff each have access to a computer (94)
- work to improve the small classrooms so that they provide a better learning environment for the pupils (89)
- greater emphasis on children under fives' selection of meaningful, focused activities, to enhance their personal development (106)
- provide more opportunities for pupils to use the library (112)
- review the current degree of implementation of the literacy strategy in the light of staff and class changes (114)
- ensure investigative work is better integrated into curriculum planning in science (133)
- make better use of class based computers (140)
- improve staff knowledge, in Key Stage 2, of science and information technology (132, 140)
- greater awareness of the differing needs of boys and girls (109,111, 128,132)
- use every opportunity to increase pupils' awareness of music, and to celebrate individual pupils' musical talents (154)
- ensure that those pupils who do not take part in physical education lessons are purposefully engaged in worthwhile activities during these lessons (156)

(The numbers in brackets refer to paragraphs in the report in which these issues are discussed)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Holy Trinity is bigger than other primary schools nationally, having 274 pupils on roll. Numbers have increased as the school has grown from a village school over the past 10 years. The number of children under the age of five in the two Reception classes at the time of the inspection was 29. Most pupils come from the villages of Cuckfield and Ansty. The proportion of pupils claiming entitlement to free school meals is approximately 5%, below average compared with schools nationwide. Overall, the area from which the pupils come is economically advantaged and socially average. A very small number of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. 27% of the school's pupils are on the register of special educational needs, an above average figure but most of these pupils are at stage 1 of the register. The overall academic standard of pupils on entry to the school is average, and below average in social development.

2. The school has aims which state that it will meet the needs of the children in a Christian setting. The intention is to aid each child to fulfil its potential, to develop academically and artistically and to grow spiritually. The school aims to do this through the strength of the partnership between the home, the school and the church, and by always conveying positive messages to the children. Each child is treated as an individual with needs to be met and skills to be enhanced through meaningful first hand experiences. The overall aims are supported by a series of specific statements covering the ethos and curriculum.

3. The school development plan is for the current year and covers the areas of curriculum, organisation and management, staff, resources, the community and finance. Previous years' plans are reviewed and result in the current targets. Specific tasks, the outcomes, and responsible staff, are stated.

4. Entry into the school is at the age of four or above in September and January. A clear admissions policy states the criteria for entry if the school is oversubscribed. The criteria are

- active members of the parish church
- siblings of children at Holy Trinity
- active members of other churches in the parish
- children with medical or social needs
- where the pupils live, with identified streets
- connections with the parish and other churches

Key Indicators

5. Attainment at Key Stage 1¹²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1

For latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	25	21	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	(19) 22 [22]	(19) 23 [23]	(20) 23 [24]
	Girls	(11) 20 [18]	(11) 20 [19]	(11) 19 [18]
	Total	(30) 42 [40]	(30) 43 [42]	(31) 42 [42]
Percentage at NC	School	(94) 91 [88]	(94) 93 [93]	(97) 91 [93]

¹ Figures in parentheses (x) refer to 1997 ² Figures in parentheses [y] refer to 1999

Level 2 or above	National	(81) 80 [n/a]	(78) 81 [n/a]	(82) 84 [n/a]
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Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	(19) 23 [22]	(20) 23 [24]	(20) 24 [24]
	Girls	(11) 20 [18]	(11) 19 [19]	(11) 20 [18]
	Total	(30) 43 [40]	(31) 42 [43]	(31) 44 [42]
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	(94) 93 [89]	(97) 91 [96]	(97) 96 [93]
	National	(80) 81 [n/a]	(84) 85 [n/a]	(86) 86 [n/a]

6. Attainment at Key Stage 2^{1 2}

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	15	20	35

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	(12) 9 [13]	(12) 10 [15]	(13) 12 [15]
	Girls	(13) 16 [13]	(12) 9 [13]	(19) 13 [14]
	Total	(25) 25 [26]	(24) 19 [28]	(32) 25 [29]
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	(74) 71 [72]	(72) 54 [78]	(97) 71 [81]
	National	(58) 65 [n/a]	(54) 59 [n/a]	(62) 69 [n/a]

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	(12) 11 [13]	(12) 11 [15]	(13) 12 [15]
	Girls	(10) 17 [14]	(11) 12 [13]	(19) 14 [14]
	Total	(22) 28 [27]	(23) 23 [28]	(32) 26 [29]
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	(66) 80 [75]	(69) 66 [77]	(97) 74 [81]
	National	(60) 65 [n/a]	(60) 65 [n/a]	(65) 72 [n/a]

Attendance

7.

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

		%
Authorised	School	4.7
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised	School	0

¹ Figures in parentheses (x) refer to 1997 ² Figures in parentheses [y] refer to 1999

Absence	National comparative data	0.5
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Exclusions

8.

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

	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

9.

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	16
Satisfactory or better	88
Less than satisfactory	12

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

10. Overall attainment of **Under Fives** on entry to the Reception classes is average. The children make good progress overall and by the time they are of statutory school age, many will achieve or exceed the expected Desirable Learning Outcomes in the six areas of learning. The children engage in many speaking and listening activities, write their own names and enjoy a quiet reading time daily. They are making good progress in language and literacy development. The understanding of number is developing well, with high attainers beginning to add on or take away single digit numbers correctly. They learn numbers to twenty, while the lower attainers reinforce numbers to five. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops particularly well. They all use computers and their current focus on the family involves discussing events in their own lives. The children's physical skills develop satisfactorily. Children have many varied experiences to develop their creative skills and make good progress, painting and singing enthusiastically.

11. Pupils' results in the 1998 end of **Key Stage 2 national assessments** were close to the national average in English and below those of similar schools. English results over the past three years have been above the national average overall and in 1999 results improved significantly. In mathematics, attainment of pupils was close to the national average in 1998 but well below that expected for similar schools. The 1999 results are significantly better. High scores were achieved in tests prior to 1998. Pupils' attainment in 1998 for science was above national averages for all schools, but below results for similar schools. Attainment shows a trend of well above average results over the three years up to 1998. In 1999 the proportion achieving the expected level increased significantly on the 1998 figure.

12. At the end of **Key Stage 1** in **national assessments** in 1998, English test results were above the national average for reading and well above in writing. Compared with similar schools, pupils' reading results were average and

writing well above average. Results in 1999 are similar. The 1998 test results in mathematics were well above the national average and above that for similar schools. These high scores were maintained in 1999 and continue a trend of well above average scores since 1996. The 1998 teacher assessments of science show pupils' attainment was above or well above national standards in all areas. 1999 results were higher still. Boys achieved higher science marks than girls in 1998 in both key stages.

13. **Attainment overall** at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 was above national expectations. Pupils' progress was sound over the year. In the lessons observed during the inspection pupils made sound progress and pupils were achieving standards above those expected for their ages. Several changes of teachers have contributed to the different standards in key stages, as shown by the assessment data. The school is generally sustaining high levels of attainment.

14. Evidence of previously completed work shows that attainment in **English** at the end of Key Stage 1 was above national expectations in 1999 and pupils made good progress. In Key Stage 2, pupils had made satisfactory progress and the standard of work was above expectations at the end of the key stage. Current attainment in lessons throughout the school, at this very early stage in the year, is not as high as indicated by previous years' national test results. In the lessons observed pupils made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress overall in Key Stage 2. Standards are above average in speaking, but below average in listening as a significant number of pupils find this more difficult. Pupils enjoy reading and standards are above average in both key stages. The range and standard of writing in both key stages are particular strengths and are well above average. Great care is taken with the presentation of work.

15. From evidence of previously completed work in **mathematics**, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 was above national expectations; at the end of Key Stage 1, standards were well above expectations. For pupils just beginning Year 6 and Year 2, current attainment in mathematics is above that expected for their ages. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is good for all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. Past work shows pupils building well on what they know. In the lessons observed pupils made sound progress as several teachers new to the school were becoming acquainted with pupils' capabilities. Progress in lessons at Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. Work from last year shows that between classes progress was too variable. In several classes there was little extra challenge for the most able pupils and consequently their progress was unsatisfactory.

16. In the lessons and work seen at the start of this academic year, overall standards in **science** were similar to national expectations and lower than those reported in the end of key stage assessments. Investigative science skills were of a lower standard than the pupils' knowledge of science. Progress was sound in both key stages. From the evidence of scrutinised work standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average in 1999 and above average in Key Stage 2. Progress seen in the pupils' work has been good in Key Stage 1, for pupils of all abilities. In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress has been sound overall. Higher attaining pupils have made good progress .

17. **Literacy** is effectively promoted throughout the school and pupils make good progress. There are many opportunities for speaking and listening, such as sharing news, circle times, and collaboration in groups in practical subjects. Appropriate subject terminology is used across the curriculum, increasing pupils' knowledge and use of vocabulary. The range of writing is very good with many opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills across a range of subjects, particularly history.

18. Pupils make satisfactory use of **numeracy** skills in other subjects. The most able pupils, however, are not always challenged. In science, for example, they do not interpret trends and patterns in their data or graphs. Pupils make sound use of numeracy skills in geography.

19. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in **information technology** is in line with national expectations and at the end of Key Stage 2 it is a little below. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils operate computers confidently. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can combine text with pictures and confidently use the "menus" to change their work. Attainment is a little below expectation because pupils do not reach the required standards in data handling, control and the use of information technology to make decisions. Progress in both key stages is good due to the effective teaching and use of the very good facilities in the new computer suite. Insufficient use is made of the class based computers in supporting teaching of other subjects.

20. Pupils achieve high standards in **art** and make good progress in both key stages. They work in a wide range of media as they develop different skills and techniques. Pupils' observational drawings and clay mosaic designs were of a particularly high standard. **Design and technology** standards are as expected for their ages, working with a limited range of materials and tools. Pupils' skills in designing and making are better than in evaluating.

21. In both key stages standards in **geography** are similar to those expected for the pupils' ages, and higher in **history**. A wide range of educational visits significantly enhances pupils' understanding in both subjects

22. Pupils attain standards appropriate for their ages in **music**. Pupils who attend the many extra-curricular activities often attain high standards. Pupils sing tunefully throughout the school. Pupils' attainment in **physical education** is above that expected for the pupils' ages in both key stages. Some show very high order abilities. Almost all achieve the expected 25 metres swimming by the time they leave. In observed lessons pupils made good progress overall in gymnastics and games as a result of effective teaching.

23. Pupils with **special educational needs** make satisfactory progress overall towards achieving the targets set for them. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in specialist lessons and usually in class lessons. Occasionally their progress in class was unsatisfactory when tasks were too difficult or classroom support was not effective. Progress was good at times when support staff provided appropriate and effective help.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

24. Most pupils show effort in lessons and enjoy their work but a minority have short concentration spans and do not listen. Several of these pupils are over-confident and silly whenever there are teaching weaknesses, or they are given some responsibility for their own learning, for example in group or practical work. In about a quarter of observed lessons a minority of pupils gave unsatisfactory responses, making insufficient progress themselves and often disrupting the work of others. This is an unacceptable proportion of such lessons. The issue was much greater in Key Stage 2 than in Reception and Key Stage 1 classes.

25. The baseline assessment results of pupils in the Reception classes are below average in social development for the current year, and teachers indicate that this has been true for some years, although there is no baseline assessment data. The personal and social development of children under five is a major focus early in the school year and they make good progress. Children begin to understand school routines and rules and to develop independence as a result. A number still find sharing or persevering with activities difficult, but most achieve the expected standard of personal and social development by the time they are five.

26. Over a third of the parents responding to the questionnaire about the school were unhappy with children's behaviour in school, an unacceptably high proportion. A very small number of parents said their children did not like school but about one in seven were unhappy with the impact of the school's attitudes and values on the children. Several parents mentioned that their children had lost expensive items in school, but the school did not follow up parental complaints effectively. Parents wrote, and said at their meeting, that behaviour had improved significantly under the much firmer discipline of the acting headteacher and values were more positive and clear cut. Pupils themselves said that, although there is no bullying, some rough and, at times, spiteful play is tolerated to too great an extent during breaks.

27. Inspectors' evidence confirms the views of parents and pupils. Movement of pupils around the school has been unsatisfactory, with some running in corridors, but recent important changes, such as insisting that pupils discuss rules and dealing promptly with incidents, are improving the situation. Pupils are not used to taking responsibility for their own actions, and for the actions of others within the school. Year 6 prefects have been appointed for the first time, however, and trained to help teachers enforce behaviour rules during break periods. They are taking their responsibilities very seriously. The school is aware that procedures for end-of-day dismissal of Key Stage 2 pupils result in unacceptable behaviour. Senior staff are imposing much tighter controls, pointing out to parents, staff and pupils when conduct is unacceptable and this is resulting in improvements. During break periods staff supervision is sometimes too lax and pupils' behaviour - mainly boys' - is too loud and boisterous. A few pupils do not behave well in assemblies, chattering and being silly, but most are well behaved and sensitive to the occasion. Pupils are obedient and polite in the hall during lunch-time.

28. Behaviour was described in the last report as orderly and courteous, pupils had good levels of concentration, and rewards and sanctions were well defined. The school as described by parents last year did not show these characteristics. The current situation is better than that described by parents, with significant improvements now taking place. At this early stage in the term the school is orderly but conduct in a significant minority of lessons and behaviour around the school is not yet acceptable.

29. Points for improvement:

- focus on pupils' personal development to improve their behaviour in lessons and increase their listening skills.
- improve behaviour around the school during break periods and at the end of the day

Attendance

30. Attendance last year was above the national average and there was no unauthorised absence. However, too many parents are taking their children out of school in term-time - almost a quarter of the school. This disrupts pupils' learning. Attendance is higher than reported at the time of the last inspection.

31. Registers are promptly and efficiently marked. Good use is made of registration time to develop pupils' number and speaking skills and to support their personal development. Pupils' punctuality in the mornings is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

32. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Nearly nine in every ten lessons observed were satisfactory or better. In just under half the lessons seen the majority of pupils made good progress as a result of effective teaching. The greatest teaching strengths were in Reception classes where the overall quality was good, with no unsatisfactory lessons and some sessions where children made very good progress. In Key Stages 1 and 2, where most teaching was sound and some very good, occasional unsatisfactory practice resulted in pupils not learning enough. The greatest weaknesses were in large, mixed age classes of middle juniors. The variation in the quality of teaching leads to some pupils in an age range receiving a richer curriculum than others of the same age in a different class.

33. Visiting teachers, who support Statemented pupils, provide an effective programme and achieve good relationships with the pupils. Specialist teaching provided for other pupils with special educational needs, through in-class support and by withdrawal of pupils from lessons, is generally effective. Classroom assistants are deployed with varying success; some, who work with Statemented pupils, provide good support. Not all classroom assistants have been trained to work with pupils who have special educational needs and this is apparent in their work.

34. Good staff knowledge of the Under Fives curriculum and continuous assessment, result in effective planning and work suitably matched to the needs of children. Teachers plan together in detail and fully involve classroom assistants. When social development was given a high priority, in addition to the subject focus of the session, progress was very good. Stimulating displays motivated the pupils to learn. High expectations usually resulted in good progress for the majority. When pupils had too much freedom to select their own tasks, the pace of work reduced and progress was affected.

35. Teachers' knowledge of most subjects is good in Key Stages 1 and 2. In English and mathematics, the national strategy documentation is understood and used to provide teachers with good subject knowledge. In art and physical education, skilled teachers demonstrated techniques which provided very good examples for the pupils to replicate. Several staff have musical expertise which enabled pupils to learn very effectively and with great enjoyment, but this was not true for all. Some staff do not know well enough the physical processes programme of study in Key Stage 2 science; pupils, as a result, are developing a few incorrect ideas. Some staff new to the school do not have a full understanding of the requirements of the information technology programmes of study.

36. Expectations of the quality and quantity of work pupils should complete were usually sound. High expectations in several Key Stage 2 English lessons resulted in good work. Careful planning was shared with the pupils so that they knew what had to be done. Well-planned, interesting tasks set in mathematics resulted in good progress. In some lessons, work was not well enough matched to the pupils' abilities, both high and low attainers. Work from the previous year in mathematics indicated that some tasks were insufficiently demanding for high attainers, and in science, teachers did not match work well enough to the abilities of the year groups taught. In a few lessons observed, a slow pace led to insufficient work being completed, usually as a result of late starts to lessons, too lengthy an introduction from the teacher, or insufficient focus or clarity of expectation during group work. Summary sessions were usually held at the ends of lessons, which enabled teachers to assess the progress made and to plan ahead. Most teachers question the pupils well, expecting extended answers to develop the pupils' oral skills. Substantial amounts of written work are required in several subjects; literacy teaching across the curriculum is effective. There is less of a whole school approach to numeracy, but teachers do make use of opportunities to reinforce number work in science and geography. Opportunities in other subjects were often not used, such as in physical education when classes were split into groups.

37. Firm control by most staff helped keep pupils involved in their work. In a few classes, where teachers were unaware of useful strategies to use when pupils misbehaved, a disruptive minority did insufficient work and reduced the progress made by others.

38. Classroom assistants and teachers work very well together in teaching information technology. The computer expert assistant guides the learning of each class in turn as they visit the computer room. Some classroom assistants are not effective, however, spending too long sitting listening to the teacher.

39. About a quarter of parents responding to the questionnaire about the school said that their children did not receive enough homework. Evidence from last year's work supports these parents' views, but this year a new policy should lead to a steady flow of work in mathematics as well as English to carry out at home. In the past, homework has been insufficiently stimulating for the most able.

40. Some teachers mark effectively but marking is superficial in several subjects in Key Stage 2; work is often 'ticked' which does not provide pupils with the guidance they need to improve. Pupils' expectations of their own performances are reduced through lack of constructive criticism. Few records are kept of pupils' work in lessons, except in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed using the targets on their individual education plans and their successes are used to plan future work.

41. The quality of teaching as reported in the last inspection was a strength in the school. Higher proportions of good and very good lessons were observed at that time and the quality is currently significantly lower. The characteristics of the best teaching three years ago - well planned lessons with clear learning objectives, thorough assessment, and challenging work taught at a brisk pace - are present today, but in fewer lessons. Weaknesses identified are also present, including irregular homeworks and insufficiently challenging tasks.

42. Points for improvement:
improve behaviour management
improve marking of pupils' work
ensure work is better matched to the needs of higher attaining pupils
make better use of classroom assistants
improve staff knowledge in Key Stage 2 of science and information technology

The curriculum and assessment

43. Teachers of pupils under five plan together and produce detailed schemes for each of the six areas of learning, based on the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The curriculum is relevant and appropriate for children of their ages. Clear connections are made with the programme for pupils in Key Stage 1, resulting in good continuity.

44. The school offers a balanced curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 which includes all National Curriculum subjects. The curriculum is relevant to the pupils. The teaching of history and geography is particularly meaningful as it is

based on several educational visits, both local and further afield. Science, on the other hand, is planned within termly topics, many based on history or geography. This often leads to inappropriate links between the subjects and the fragmentation of science teaching. This is not helpful to pupils' learning. For example, in pupils' topic books on The Ancient Greeks a study of the circulatory system appears alongside work on the Trojan Horse. The curriculum has sufficient breadth. Enough time is given to the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology. However, valuable teaching time is lost when pupils are late starting lessons or when clearing up starts early. The curriculum time available each week for teaching is significantly below the recommended minimum times of 21 hours in Key Stage 1 and 23.5 hours in Key Stage 2.

45. The school's own sound literacy strategy results from an adaptation of national guidance. A particularly good feature is the range of writing pupils experience across the curriculum, particularly in history. The school has made a sound start to implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Satisfactory use is made of numeracy in subjects but there is no overall plan to ensure that opportunities are fully exploited. Sex education and issues relating to personal safety, including awareness of substance misuse, are appropriately planned within personal, social, health and science lessons. Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include sport, drama, music and other indoor pursuits such as chess. Residential trips in Years 5 and 6 provide good curriculum enrichment.

46. Medium and short term curriculum planning have been improved during recent months. Teachers meet weekly in planning teams to discuss the following week's programme. This is good practice. Helpful detail is included in curriculum planning, but much of the content of half-termly plans is repeated on the weekly sheets, which makes the process unnecessarily time consuming. All levels of planning are satisfactory in Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, where there is a combination of mixed age and single age classes, long term planning is unsatisfactory. It does not enable all pupils to have the same access to the curriculum at an appropriate level, nor does it ensure that there is continuity or progression in learning through the key stage. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 in one class are taught a different content in literacy hour to those in the others. It is unclear from planning how the future teaching of literacy will avoid repetition and ensure the required coverage. In some subjects pupils are taught the same content throughout the key stage. This is particularly evident in science where much of the past year's work is very similar in all years in Key Stage 2. For example, all pupils learn about the human life cycle at the same level. Some of the vocabulary used is inappropriate for the pupils, both able pupils and those with learning difficulties.

47. Most of the targets in the individual education plans drawn up termly for pupils with special educational needs are specific and meet the criteria in the school policy. A few are too imprecise. Appropriate group plans are devised for Stage 1 pupils. When pupils are taught by specialist staff as well as the class teacher, each writes an individual education plan with different targets; this is not usually appropriate.

48. Under Fives are assessed continually by teaching and support staff. Good records are kept of observations and pupils' progress and these are used carefully to plan future work. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 in several foundation subjects. In literacy and numeracy teachers regularly assess pupils. The recent practice of noting on lesson plans the progress of groups of pupils and, where appropriate, individuals, is very helpful in guiding future lessons. The voluntary national tests are used in each year group at Key Stage 2 to track progress. An analysis of end of key stage test results in mathematics has highlighted areas of weakness, and planning has consequently been adapted. In other tested subjects there is not this level of analysis. Portfolios of graded work assist teacher assessment in English and science. Suitable assessment procedures are being introduced in information technology but for science they do not provide concise information.

49. Apart from teachers' individual methods of recording progress, there are no agreed systems for assessing pupils or recording their progress in most foundation subjects. Teachers use assessment satisfactorily to assist curriculum planning at Key Stage 1. A good feature is the precise learning targets set for these younger pupils. At Key Stage 2 there are few assessment records for foundation subjects and information has not been used sufficiently to plan for different levels of attainment.

50. The two key issues related to curriculum from the last inspection have been addressed. The quality and range of work in information technology and music have been improved and there are schemes of work in almost all subjects. The situation is similar to that described four years ago although assessment is less consistent and continuity in learning, even with the evolving schemes of work, is now an issue.

51. Points for improvement:

improve time-keeping in lessons and provide at least the minimum weekly curriculum time in both key stages
improve planning for numeracy across the curriculum
rationalise medium and short term planning to avoid repetition and reduce teacher's work loads
improve long term curriculum planning in Key Stage 2
make greater use of assessment in deciding what should next be taught in Key Stage 2, particularly in science
ensure that individual education plan targets are appropriately expressed and the same (where two are written independently) for the same pupil

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

52. As at the time of the last report, the school maintains strong links with local churches and has an overt Christian ethos. Pupils' spiritual development is effectively promoted through assemblies, grace before lunch, and prayers at the end of the day in some classes. Assemblies have been carefully planned to follow weekly themes during the coming year and topics will support pupils' moral and social development. Good use is made of visiting clergy, governors and other speakers in assemblies, to provide a range of perspectives. However, insufficient time is allowed for pupils to reflect and there is no visual focus to aid worship. Too few opportunities are provided in lessons when pupils can reflect on meanings of stories and events, developing their spiritual and moral understanding. In a few lessons there were remarkable moments, for example younger pupils were entranced by a visiting family covering three generations - including a new born baby - and pupils were given the opportunity to appreciate the human life cycle. There is no policy for this area of the school's work, however, and few references to the development of spirituality are included in planning. Overall, provision is sound.

53. Provision for pupils' moral development is also sound. Assemblies and circle times are both used to discuss issues such as stealing and telling lies. Pupils are being given the opportunity to understand the difference between right and wrong. Class rules are discussed so that pupils are aware of the moral framework within which an orderly society must work. However, there are some inconsistent expectations about standards of behaviour during break periods as well as in lessons. Pupils are usually encouraged to show respect by listening to each other, though some find this difficult. Pupils expressed confidence that there is little or no bullying. The school promotes a keen interest in environmental issues, though the home farm is not now as extensive as it has been.

54. Good provision is made for pupils' social development. Older pupils enjoy residential visits and many pupils are involved in team sports and various music groups. The oldest pupils have recently been given responsibility as prefects and have been trained for their new role. This is a good development. Older pupils help to look after the younger ones and all pupils are encouraged to show care and concern for their peers. Successful visits to and from the nearby school for pupils with special educational needs have been a part of the school week for several years. The very good range of extra-curricular clubs enables pupils from different classes and of different ages to interact together. Pupils also have the opportunity to support a number of charities and to entertain the elderly.

55. Pupils' cultural development is promoted through several aspects of the curriculum but particularly well through music and art. Pupils play a wide range of instruments in a variety of groups and perform to a high standard. Parents appreciate the very good plays and concerts which the school produces. Art work is also of a high standard and pupils learn about the work of a number of artists and musicians. A good range of visits to places of historical interest, for example Preston Park and Bodiam Castle, enhance the curriculum. However, there is a significant weakness in the lack of opportunities for pupils to learn about and appreciate other cultures. A useful recent development has been contact with a teacher in Bangladesh, which has resulted in her writing to the pupils about experiences there.

56. At the time of the last inspection spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was reported as a strength. Current provision although sound is not as strong. The school makes sound provision for pupils' personal development, with strengths in social development and appreciation of Western cultural traditions, and a weakness in the promotion of pupils' knowledge of other world cultures.

57. Points for improvement:

provide opportunities for pupils to begin to understand the cultures of the world
provide greater opportunities for pupils to reflect on meanings of stories and events, developing their spiritual and moral understanding

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

58. The school has sound procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development, of a similar standard to those reported in the last inspection. Teachers know their pupils well and raise any concerns they may have with parents, particularly for younger pupils. Effective target setting is helping to improve pupils' attainment. Older pupils, their parents and teachers agree targets to improve work and these are regularly reviewed. Younger pupils are given short term objectives, particularly in English, which contribute to the good progress these pupils make. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored. There are termly meetings where the progress of each pupil on the register is discussed with all those involved. Outside specialist agencies, particularly the educational psychology service, are involved and provide useful guidance.

59. The behaviour policy does not give sufficient guidance to teachers on how to manage pupils. The expectation that 'three words of praise should be awarded for every word of censure' is unrealistic and unhelpful. Misdemeanours are not linked with sanctions, leaving inexperienced staff uncertain of school expectations when pupils' conduct is unacceptable. Negative aspects of behaviour are accentuated in the way the policy is laid out. These weaknesses lead to inconsistencies in implementation. Class rules are discussed and agreed by pupils with their teachers, however, so that all are aware of what behaviour is expected during lessons. Younger pupils are reminded, for example, to put their hands up rather than call out and are quickly learning school conventions. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are unsatisfactory and much less effective than reported four years ago. A new policy has been drafted which addresses many of these issues.

60. The school has efficient systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Up until this term, parents who have asked that their children accompany them on holiday in term time have automatically received authorisation. The acting headteacher and governors are aware that this is disrupting the education of quite a high number of pupils and a letter has now been sent asking parents to plan holidays only in school vacations.

61. Effective child protection procedures are in place. Staff are trained in identifying signs of abuse and know the procedures they must follow. The acting headteacher has had appropriate training and is the designated person responsible for child protection. Procedures for caring for pupils who become ill or hurt during the day are good. Due attention is paid to the health and safety of pupils, both in school and on visits. Appropriate drugs and sex education is provided. Pupils are very well supported as they come into the Reception classes, with home visits offered by the teachers and the opportunity for several visits to the classroom in the term before pupils start. Older pupils are supported as they move on to secondary school through visits from secondary school staff and by pupils visiting their new school during their final term. The acting headteacher, supported by the consultant headteacher and governors, has ensured that the well-being of the pupils has had the highest priority during the recent period of uncertainty over the management of the school.

62. Since the last inspection many of the strengths in support, guidance and pupils' welfare have been maintained, with the exception of behaviour management.

63. Points for improvement:

complete and implement the new behaviour policy so that staff are better supported when dealing with misbehaviour both in lessons and at other times

ensure that parents no longer take it for granted that they can withdraw their children for holidays during term time

Partnership with parents and the community

64. The school has good links with parents and the local community. Almost all parents expressed their support for

current staff and commented on their dedication and work for the children. Many parents help in the classrooms, with clubs and on visits. Most parents of younger children regularly hear them read at home, which helps improve standards. The parents' and teachers' association raises large sums of money for the benefit of pupils, as well as providing very good opportunities for social gatherings.

65. The quality of information for parents is sound overall, although there are both strengths and weaknesses in current arrangements. About a quarter of parents who returned the questionnaire about the school said they did not feel well informed about their children's progress. Key Stage 1 reports on pupils' work and progress, however, are excellent and those for pupils in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. The three opportunities parents have to discuss their children's progress during the year are similar to those found in other schools.

66. Home visits to many families whose children are about to start Reception classes provide an excellent introduction, and a booklet for parents of children in these classes is helpful and informative. Liaison with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good.

67. All members of staff make themselves readily available to speak with parents at the end of the day. The acting headteacher and consultant headteacher welcome parents and their children as they are delivered and collected from school. About a third of those parents who returned the questionnaire, however, felt that the school did not handle complaints well. This very negative response referred to incidents in the past year when the headteacher was considered to be unsympathetic to parents' serious concerns. The acting headteacher, with the support of the consultant headteacher, is working successfully to address issues as they arise.

68. About a third of parents in their questionnaire responses said they do not have a clear understanding of what is taught. The school prospectus provides some good subject information but little other material is given to parents. The Reception class teachers have started to send letters home each week outlining the work they will do and information about the literacy hour has been shared with parents. This is good practice but parents do need more Key Stage 1 and 2 subject information, in order that they can provide support for their children at home.

69. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are dull documents which do not do the school justice. They do not reflect the successes of the school. The annual report is not self-critical or analytical, nor does it indicate important future developments. Worthwhile newsletters are sent home fortnightly and these are appreciated by parents. A home-school agreement has been sent to all families. Some parts duplicate the prospectus in style and content but others, such as the homework policy, provide clear helpful guidance for parents.

70. The school maintains very close links with the church and local community. Pupils take part in many community events, and the school hosts the village bonfire and lets the hall to community organisations. Pupils benefit from these arrangements, not least as a result of the funds received.

71. Teaching staff visit local nurseries, from which children are taken into the school, to develop a clear understanding of their achievements and needs. Good curriculum liaison has been established between Key Stage 2 teachers and those in the secondary schools to which most Holy Trinity pupils transfer.

72. The strong partnership between parents and the school reported at the time of the last inspection is not as effective today. There are strengths, but the acting headteacher is having to build relationships with parents who felt that their concerns were ignored. The issue of insufficient curriculum information for parents remains but rich and varied links with the community have been maintained.

73. Points for improvement:

ensure that parents have sufficient curriculum information to support their children's learning
implement a home-school agreement and ensure that parents know what homework their children are expected to do
improve the quality of the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

74. The school is currently managed by the senior deputy headteacher, acting as headteacher, supported for a day a week by an experienced headteacher from a local primary school, as consultant. A significant number of parents expressed concerns about the substantive headteacher's leadership and management of the school. Concerns include poor communication at many levels, lack of a rational strategy in allocating pupils to classes and an unwillingness to discuss points with parents and follow through issues. Evidence available to inspectors confirmed the accuracy of these weaknesses. Many parents commented that since the acting and consultant headteachers have been working together, the whole atmosphere has improved greatly. The partnership is proving very successful and has already had an impact on the school in the few weeks it has been operating, with a much more open, consultative style. Communication with parents is now said to be very good. An appropriate and clear educational direction is being established for the school.

75. The school's two deputy headteachers were insufficiently consulted over management issues in the past. Both are now more involved, however, holding responsibilities across the whole school. Although the school does not have co-ordinators for some subjects, for most there are separate co-ordinators in each key stage. The leadership role of co-ordinators is unclear, though all are enthusiastic and supportive of colleagues. There is no overall plan for senior managers and subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning, but a little classroom observation has been carried out of mathematics and geography.

76. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed, with a comprehensive, useful policy. The co-ordinator reads all individual education plans and holds weekly meetings to discuss pupils and support strategies. The governor for special educational needs is fully informed and involved.

77. The governors are very supportive and keen to be involved. They attend training and visit the school during the working day. However, there is seldom a specific focus for the visit, for example to monitor in practice a policy they have ratified. Governors recognise that they have not been kept fully informed in the past but now have a much clearer picture. They are very pleased with how the school is moving forward. The annual governors' report for parents is brief and does not include some important requirements, such as national assessment results and progress in implementing the last inspection report key issues. The appraisal system does not involve all staff and there is no planned timetable of appraisals.

78. The school development plan is unsatisfactory. It deals with just one year and does not identify priorities for development in the future. The targets are listed under various headings, some of which are inappropriate as they cover the same issues. Many of the targets are relevant, but the inclusion of annual events, such as harvest festival, as targets for development is inappropriate. The action plans are insufficiently focused and lack success criteria by which the initiative can be monitored and evaluated in terms of benefits for the pupils. There has been insufficient involvement of staff and governors in the process of drawing up the plan and the reports of progress have tended to be idealistic.

79. The school aims have not been reviewed for some time and do not refer to the school's commitment to high achievement. Some policies and schemes are still in draft form and are not yet reflected in school life. There is now a commitment to raising standards, a welcoming atmosphere and the ethos is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, though at times a few pupils' relationships and behaviour are unsatisfactory.

80. The school has a detailed and worthwhile equal opportunities policy, formulated some time ago with a local cluster of schools. However, the current variation in class size from 23 to 33 pupils, the lack of a rational strategy for allocation of pupils to classes, particularly in Key Stage 2, and significant differences in the quality of teaching, create issues of equality of opportunity.

81. The overall leadership and management of the school is unsatisfactory, although there are significant strengths in the current leadership arrangements. Shortcomings result from weaknesses in management systems developed over past years. The current staff are enthusiastic, industrious, and united as an effective team under the leadership of the acting headteacher.

82. Progress has been reasonably effective in some of the issues identified in the last report, but not in all, and

improvement since the last inspection has not been satisfactory. Good progress has been made in improving the quality and range of work in music and information technology. The teaching of reading was a concern four years ago and this still requires clarification for a number of teachers new to the school. Although the curriculum targets identified in the school development plan have not been systematically addressed over time, schemes of work have been prepared recently for most subjects. These have improved continuity in learning, but variation in the arrangements of the mixed year group classes from year to year results in repetition and inequality of opportunity for pupils. Because of these class arrangements curriculum planning remains a key issue. Insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place since the last inspection and this also remains a key issue. The last report judged as very good, management, pupils' standards, the climate for learning, and the quality of teaching and curriculum. Current judgements are lower in all areas, although standards in the end of key stage assessments on average over the four years have been high. The greatest weaknesses have been in school management but current arrangements are resulting in rapid and successful progress. The school's capacity to improve under the present leadership arrangements is good.

83. Points for improvement:

clarify roles and responsibilities of the deputy headteachers and subject co-ordinators

establish systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning

ensure statutory requirements are met – what is included in the governors' annual report to parents and the appraisal system

improve the process of preparing the school development plan and ensure that there are clear success criteria for each target. Issues identified in this inspection report should be incorporated into the plan.

review school aims and ensure that they reflect the school's current commitment to high standards

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

84. In addition to the acting and consultant headteachers, Holy Trinity has eleven class teachers and a part-time teacher of pupils with special educational needs. This is sufficient for the current class arrangement. Two of the class teachers carry out a job share arrangement. Staff are very in-experienced, however. No Key Stage 2 teacher has substantial experience of any other school. Six staff left in the past year, some to pursue other careers, others for promotion. The current lack of experience and high turn-over of staff is inhibiting developments and placing additional work and responsibility on senior staff.

85. A high number of classroom assistants is employed. Their effectiveness in the classroom varies greatly. Some are actively engaged whenever they are working in classrooms; others sometimes passively listen and observe, lacking teaching and support skills. Senior managers are aware that there is no clear rationale for the current deployment of support staff, except when they are to assist pupils with special educational needs. Some have been trained to support these pupils, others have not. Teachers and support staff do, however, relate well to one another.

86. The number of hours of administrative support was reduced last year and is too low. The result is that, unless these staff are willing to work additional hours, senior managers have to carry out inappropriate administrative tasks, such as typing letters. This detracts from their key management tasks associated with teaching and learning.

87. Newly qualified staff are provided with good support. A thorough induction policy specifies the entitlement of newly qualified teachers and the role of the supporting mentors. Each has some non-contact time away from her class to prepare, discuss issues and observe other teachers. They appreciate the professional and supportive working atmosphere in which they are working this year.

88. Some teaching staff do not have job descriptions and others are out of date. The procedure states that staff write their own, which are then agreed following discussion with the headteacher. This has not been implemented at least for the past year. Only two staff have been appraised in the past year and there is no timetabled structure to complete the process. The acting headteacher is currently ensuring that job descriptions for all staff are up-to-date. A good staff development policy was agreed three years ago which focuses on the needs of the school and the individual. Staff are asked to identify personal needs through a self audit, from which development opportunities follow. This has fallen into disuse and records of staff in-service training are out of date. Several staff, however, have attended useful courses in areas such as teaching numeracy and information technology.

89. The school has some facilities of very high quality, from which the pupils benefit. The good sized hall, field, playgrounds and changing rooms provide very good accommodation for physical education. The school site is large, providing excellent facilities for outside studies in science and geography, and stabling for two goats which the school manages. Other home farm animals, mentioned in the last report, have gone. A gardening club makes good use of the school grounds in the summer term, but, as a result of vandalism, the school pond and greenhouse have fallen into disrepair. A computer room and special needs support room both provide a very good facility. The library is a potentially good resource but is little used. Displays, just two weeks into the start of a new year are stimulating and the buildings are well maintained. In four of the classrooms, the space available is insufficient for classes of 30 or over, because of study areas and large sinks. It is impossible for all pupils to congregate on the carpet or to sit in a reasonable table arrangement – some sit with their backs to the teacher or out of view, and working conditions are very cramped. This is most unhelpful when teachers are working hard to improve pupils' behaviour and learning skills.

90. Computer resources are very good. The number of books available is sound and resources for all curriculum areas are sound or better. Good use is made of local resources through history and geography visits and weekly swimming at the local pool.

91. As stated in the last report, staff work very well as a team, but staff development and appraisal are no longer effective. Resources have been maintained at a good level, with great improvements in information technology. The grounds and buildings are of the same high quality but the issue of small classrooms affecting learning still applies.

92. Points for improvement:

ensure that, when future teaching staff appointments are made, consideration is given to the balance of staff experience currently employed

review classroom assistants and their work to ensure that their number and roles are appropriate for the size of class and the needs of the pupils

review and increase the amount of administrative support in order that senior managers are released from such tasks

ensure that job descriptions are updated

ensure that staff development procedures are fully implemented

work to improve the small classrooms so that they provide a better learning environment for the pupils.

The efficiency of the school

93. Financial planning is based mainly on historical precedent; there is none for the long term. Governors debate the annual budget although the headteacher's views on important budgetary considerations have always been accepted, such as the appointment of two deputy headteachers in a school with only ten classes. Current budget proportions reflect a policy of appointing a high number of classroom assistants, a low number of administrative staff, and inexperienced teaching staff. This has not led to an efficient school. There is no clear rationale for the number of classroom support staff and their roles are unclear. The high number of inexperienced staff in Key Stage 2 is restricting developments as there is limited knowledge of other schools when important management, curriculum and teaching issues are discussed.

94. The school's administrative procedures and financial systems are not well recorded but bursarial and secretarial staff are fully aware of their tasks. Office staff are welcoming and provide a very good first point of contact at the school. They are effective and appreciated by pupils, parents and staff. Their efficiency is reduced by the lack of a second office computer. The headteacher has insisted on carrying out a number of administrative tasks in the past and so a second computer was not considered necessary. The acting headteacher is reviewing the number of administrative staff hours and office computer facilities to ensure that her time is efficiently and effectively used, dealing with teaching and learning issues and not office administration. This is good practice

95. Governors monitor expenditure under agreed headings. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is spent as it is intended to be. Regular reports are considered by a governors' committee as well as by the full governing body. Governors' terms of reference are clear and well understood. The school had a financial audit last year which found the school's systems to be appropriate. This audit was not, however, reported to the governors, as it should

have been.

96. The school's good resources for all subject areas are efficiently used, particularly the computer suite. The library, however, is too little used. The school is very well supported by an active parent-teacher association which accrues about £10,000 each year for resources of the school's choice.

97. The school provides sound value for money. Expenditure per pupil is near the median for county primary schools. Standards are above or well above average and have remained high for several years, although only average or above when compared with similar schools. Over time progress has been good. Currently it is sound. Teaching is sound overall but less effective than it was at the time of the last inspection. The deployment of all staff is not efficient. Good progress has been made in some areas since the last inspection but not in others.

98. Points for improvement:

review the number of classroom assistants employed and ensure that current arrangements result in the best deal for the pupils

ensure that office staff each have access to a computer

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

99. Overall attainment of children on entry to the reception classes is average, though below the local education authority average as shown in the baseline assessments. The children make good progress overall. By the time they are of statutory school age, many will achieve or exceed the expected Desirable Learning Outcomes in the six areas of learning. There is a very thorough induction programme, with home visits by teachers, informative literature for parents and five visits to school for the children before they officially start. There are two starting times, according to age, with some younger children attending on a part-time basis initially. Parents report that their children settle happily in school.

100. The personal and social development of the children is a major focus early in the school year and progress is good. The baseline assessment results are below average in social development. Good emphasis is given to understanding school routines and rules, for example not to interrupt when someone else is speaking, to share equipment and to develop independence. This is evident as children are encouraged to select an activity from a range, change for physical education and put on their own art overalls. There are a number of children who, at this early stage of school life, still find sharing or persevering with activities difficult, but most are making good progress in this area. The daily time for having a drink and biscuit provides a useful opportunity to develop the children's social awareness.

101. Children engage in many speaking and listening activities, such as circle times and role play, and adults interact with them effectively, extending their range of vocabulary. Some children are articulate and speak confidently in front of the class, while others are more reticent. Most of the children can write their own names, though some lower attaining children do not use any recognisable letters. Two letters of the alphabet are introduced each week, using varied activities, and this approach helps progress in both reading and writing. The children enjoy a quiet reading time daily and take books home to share with parents each evening. From the evidence of last year's work, by the end of the Reception year, higher attaining pupils write sentences under pictures on their own and start to use full stops correctly. Pupils make good progress in language and literacy development.

102. Good progress is made in early mathematical development. Children learn the correct language, for example when discussing the three bears' bowls as 'bigger than', 'biggest' and 'smaller than'. Higher attainers sequence five bowls and spoons according to size, while the less able put two in the correct order and justify their decision. The understanding of number is developing well, with high attainers beginning to add on or take away single digit numbers correctly. They learn numbers to twenty, while the lower attainers reinforce numbers to five. Last year the children engaged in an investigation to see how many ways they could place two counters in six spaces.

103. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops particularly well. They all use computers, sometimes in the classroom to reinforce teaching points such as initial sounds or number recognition. In addition, they go to the computer room each week, where they learn the correct terminology such as keyboard, mouse and screen and all enjoy success as they dress a teddy, demonstrating good control of the mouse. The current focus on the family involves discussing events in their own lives and sharing photographs. They look after the rabbit and hamster, learning how to care for them. While cooking teddy bear biscuits, they made good progress in preparing the ingredients and recognising how the mixture changed as it cooked. Last year's work shows how pairs of pupils designed and made a model bird table, with good results.

104. Physical skills develop satisfactorily as children move in different ways in physical education lessons. They are beginning to find a space alone and move without bumping into their friends. Some throw and catch well. Fine motor skills develop as they practise cutting, sticking, making models, completing puzzles and using the computer mouse.

105. Children have many varied experiences to develop their creative skills. Last year's work shows that they paint, draw, sew, print and make collages well. Observational drawing of birds was of a high standard. During the inspection, children were painting images of themselves and the more able painted facial features very successfully, while the less mature children were not able to distinguish features at all. Children enjoy singing and do so with actions very enthusiastically.

106. The quality of teaching for children under five is good overall, with some that is very good. Teachers plan together, in detail, for each area of learning. This is a new approach and provides a relevant curriculum for children under five. Following baseline assessments, teachers set appropriate targets for individual children and assess continually, keeping careful records of progress. Classroom assistants have copies of the plans and are fully and effectively involved with groups or individual children. The teachers present their rooms very well, with many stimulating displays and resources available and accessible. Very good teaching seen showed a lively approach, clear instructions, emphasis on appropriate behaviour and high expectations, leading to very good progress. The selection of on-going activities is good, and many of the children settle well to a chosen area. However, some children still find this difficult and either wander or monopolise one activity.

107. The accommodation for Under Fives is very good, with two classrooms, one newly extended shared room for practical activities and a recently developed outdoor area. The latter is small and, although not yet fully used, a number of activities are taking place with adult support. The leadership of the early years is very good. There have been a number of very worthwhile developments recently and since the last report, including improved home/school communication and revised approaches to planning.

108. Points for improvement:
greater emphasis on pupils' selection of meaningful, focused activities, to enhance their personal development

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

109. Pupils' results in the 1998 national assessments were close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 2, and below those of similar schools. Results over the past three years have been above the national average overall. In 1999, results improved significantly, with the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 double that of the previous year. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 were above the national average for reading – girls' results were higher than boys' - and well above in writing. Compared with similar schools, pupils' reading results were average and writing results well above average. Results in 1999 are similar to those of 1998.

110. The evidence of previously completed work shows that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average last year and pupils made good progress. In Key Stage 2, pupils had made satisfactory progress and achieved above average attainment at the end of the Key Stage. Current attainment in lessons throughout the school, at this very early stage in the new year, is not as high as indicated by previous years' national test results. Pupils were still settling into their new mixed age classes, and teachers and pupils were coming to terms with these changes

at the time of the inspection. In the lessons observed pupils, including those with special educational needs, made satisfactory progress overall, although good progress was seen in a few lessons in Key Stage 2.

111. Many pupils are confident and articulate and contribute well to class discussion. Standards of speaking are above average. For example, pupils in Year 1 used very good terminology such as 'shocked', 'surprised' and 'disappointed' when referring to feelings. Standards of listening are below average, however, as a significant number of pupils find this more difficult, particularly the boys. This is lower than reported in the last inspection. There are many opportunities for speaking and listening, such as sharing news in Key Stage 1, circle times in both key stages and plenary times at the end of lessons. Opportunities for collaboration in groups were seen, for example in a science lesson when groups of three used non-fiction books for research and then reported on an important aspect of electricity that they had discovered. Appropriate subject terminology is used across the curriculum, increasing pupils' knowledge and use of vocabulary.

112. Pupils enjoy reading and standards are above average in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have favourite books and authors, justifying opinions sensibly. Higher attaining pupils read fluently, with good expression, from a wide range of literature. Parental support for pupils' reading at home has a very positive effect on standards. The previous inspection report stressed the need to continue monitoring the effectiveness of the school's approach to teaching reading and this still requires clarification, with a number of teachers new to the school. Issues to clarify include, for example, ensuring that all pupils read books at an appropriate level, when to hear pupils read and the apprenticeship approach adopted in Key Stage 1. Some parents expressed concerns over a number of these issues. Book areas in some classrooms are insufficiently stimulating and the library is an underused resource.

113. The range and standard of writing in both key stages are particular strengths and well above average. From the evidence of last year's work, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils were joining their letters well and taking great care with the presentation of their work. The structured approach to teaching spelling is effective and teachers' use of individual targets helps each pupil to progress well at an appropriate level. The quality of the presentation of work at the end of Key Stage 2 varied, according to the class. The range, however, was impressive, with opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills often used in other subjects, particularly history. Higher attaining pupils were using paragraphs and apostrophes correctly.

114. The school has decided not to follow the literacy strategy fully, particularly in Key Stage 1, because standards have been high. In Key Stage 2, it is more successfully implemented in some classes than others. In some, the whole class word or sentence level work is given far less time than suggested, the teacher gives insufficient focus to one group on guided text work and the plenary is not used effectively to reinforce the teaching points. However, pupils are being introduced to a wide range of literature as a result of the strategy.

115. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 it is good overall, although occasionally the negative attitudes of a few pupils reduced the impact of the teaching. In a good lesson with Year 3 pupils, effective use of the overhead projector, firm class control, clear questioning and a lively approach enabled the pupils to make good progress in writing a verse with rhyming couplets. The oldest pupils made good progress as they learnt how to write a play script and discussed the difference between the book and film of *The Railway Children*. The teacher had carefully planned the lesson, shared the objectives with the class, maintained a brisk pace throughout and varied the activities appropriately to sustain interest. When the teaching was unsatisfactory, there was insufficient challenge, teaching points were not clear and some pupils took too long to settle to work, resulting in unsatisfactory progress. All teachers have usefully displayed guidance to help pupils as they write.

116. English policies have not yet been updated in the light of the literacy strategy. Leadership of the subject is enthusiastic in Key Stage 1, but the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator has left and not yet been replaced. There has been no monitoring of the implementation of the literacy hour. The plan to teach on a two-year cycle is made very difficult in Key Stage 2 with the current class organisation. Teachers assess speaking and listening well, through talks presented by individual pupils. There is too great a variation in the assessment and recording of pupils' progress in reading. The marking of written work, particularly in Key Stage 2, shows little reference to the objectives, nor does it address points for improvement. Recent acquisition of big books for the younger pupils, sets of group readers particularly for Key Stage 2 pupils and fiction and non-fiction for classrooms and libraries is helping to improve reading standards.

117. In comparison with the last report there have been improvements, for example in presentation of work, but

standards are lower in some areas, such as pupils' ability to listen.

118. Points for improvement:

improve pupils' standards of listening

introduce a whole school approach to teaching and assessing reading

provide more opportunities for pupils to use the library

review the current degree of implementation of the literacy strategy in the light of staff and class changes

improve co-ordination and management of English, including: more effective monitoring of the quality of teaching;

updating English policies to take account of recent initiatives; and improving the quality of marking in Key Stage

2

Mathematics

119. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the attainment of pupils was close to the national average but well below that for similar schools. The 1999 results are significantly better with over three-quarters of pupils attaining national standards and a third achieving higher. High scores were achieved in tests prior to 1998. The 1998 test results at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average and above that for similar schools. These high scores were maintained in 1999 and continue a trend of well above average scores since 1996. For pupils just beginning Year 6 and Year 2, current attainment is above that expected for their age. Variations in the range of pupils' abilities in different cohorts of pupils and several changes of teachers have contributed to the different standards in key stages.

120. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils experience a good range of investigative work, for example discovering the different ways of arranging eggs in boxes. Pupils present their work systematically and explain their thinking. They are confident in their number work and nearly all can add and subtract mentally to ten. Most understand the value of individual figures in numbers up to and beyond a hundred. Many higher attaining pupils successfully use their multiplication tables to 10 x 10. In their work on shape and measure, pupils use centimetres accurately.

121. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show competence in calculating and have quick mental recall. Higher attainers multiply and divide whole and decimal numbers by 10 or 100. The most able pupils do not develop high enough standards in their use and application of mathematics. This was evident in investigative work, for example, where pupils studied the relationships between numbers of people and possible handshakes. Higher attaining pupils did not develop the work to identify number patterns and make predictions. Pupils make satisfactory use of numeracy skills in other subjects. The most able pupils, however, are not always challenged. In science, for example, they do not interpret trends and patterns in their data or graphs.

122. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is good for all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. Past work shows pupils building well on what they know in all aspects of the subject. However, in the lessons observed pupils made only sound progress as several teachers new to the school were becoming acquainted with pupils' capabilities. Progress in lessons at Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. Work was usually well matched to pupils' attainment and this enabled them to make sound progress. However, work from last year shows that between classes progress was too variable, reflecting parental concerns about Key Stage 2 mathematics. In several classes there was little extra challenge for the most able pupils and consequently their progress was unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in specialist lessons and in class lessons. Occasionally, their progress is unsatisfactory, where the tasks are too difficult or classroom support is not effective.

123. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to mathematics. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 discuss strategies well when solving problems. This aids their progress. Pupils concentrate and persevere with tasks in Key Stage 1. In a few lessons in Key Stage 2 pupils were noisy and their level of application was below that expected for their age. This reduced the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' progress slowed. The unsatisfactory quality of pupils' written presentation in the middle years of Key Stage 2 reflects a lack of pride in work and insufficient emphasis on teaching the skills needed.

124. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in both key stages. It ranged from good to unsatisfactory. In the most successful lessons, pupils were challenged by interesting tasks matched to their ability. This was evident in a lesson

at the upper end of Key Stage 2 where tasks combined problem solving with the use of multiplication tables, resulting in well-motivated pupils making good progress in estimating numbers. Teachers were usually effective in assessing pupils during lessons and gave sympathetic help. In a few lessons, introductions were too long and pupils began to lose interest. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, in Key Stage 2, the tasks were not matched to the pupils' attainment. For example, pupils were given problems relating to buying food; whilst this was initially motivating, a number of average and lower attaining pupils did not understand how to record and complete the calculations, and they made insufficient progress. The quality of marking at Key Stage 2 varies between teachers but is unsatisfactory overall. Poor practice includes one tick for a whole page of work, some of which was incorrect; pupils are not always helped to learn from their mistakes. Good quality mathematics homeworks are not used sufficiently at Key Stage 2 to reinforce pupils' knowledge.

125. The numeracy strategy has been satisfactorily introduced, ensuring that the curriculum has breadth and balance. Lesson planning is sound with clear learning objectives. To help ensure consistency between the mixed aged classes, teachers plan regularly together. However, the organisation of large mixed age classes at Key Stage 2 makes good teaching difficult, particularly for inexperienced staff. Optional National Curriculum tests throughout Key Stage 2 are helpful in tracking pupils' progress; a good analysis of national test results identified weaknesses in learning such as long multiplication. The recent introduction of weekly assessments is good practice and is used to inform planning in most classes. There is no moderated file of work, however, to guide teachers when assessing pupils.

126. The enthusiastic co-ordinators are keen to develop their roles. They have recently undertaken a numeracy audit and produced an action plan which gives clear direction for the subject. Their past involvement in monitoring standards of teaching and learning has been unsatisfactory. In relation to the judgements in the last report, standards in the infants have been maintained but pupils are not making as much progress in the juniors. As the numeracy action plan is implemented there is the capacity to make future improvements.

127. Points for improvement:

ensure that challenging work is set for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2

improve management of the subject to ensure greater consistency of good practice in teaching, marking and setting homework

Science

128. Pupils' attainment in the 1998 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was above national averages for all schools, but below results for similar schools. Attainment shows a trend of well above average results over the three years up to 1998. In 1999 the proportion achieving the expected level increased significantly on the 1998 figure. In the end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments in 1998, pupils' attainment was above national standards in all areas. 1999 results were higher still. Boys achieved higher marks than girls in 1998 in both key stages. In the lessons and work seen at the start of this academic year, overall standards were similar to national expectations and lower than those reported in the end of key stage assessments. Investigative science skills, not tested in the Key Stage 2 tests, were of a lower standard than the pupils' knowledge of science. A factor restricting achievement at this early point in the term was the below average level of personal development of a few pupils in both key stages.

129. The focus in the pupils' written work is on the content of science, particularly in Key Stage 2. Completed worksheets on the 'circulatory system' ensure that high attainers have a good grasp of the technical language, but these sheets are repeated in different years and are too difficult for low attaining and younger pupils. In Key Stage 1, work was made relevant to the pupils. Although the required National Curriculum areas of science are taught in both key stages, Key Stage 2 pupils do not explain their observations or identify possible causes of events. In a good investigation in Key Stage 1, pupils melting ice cubes concluded, after tabulating their results, that the hotter it is the quicker the ice cube melts. Conclusions are not always drawn from such tasks and an investigative approach is not apparent in other work.

130. Well-structured accounts show how pupils have good opportunities to write factually in science. Accurate technical vocabulary is used well: terms such as 'conductor', 'respiratory system', and 'condensation'. In lessons pupils were expected to speak clearly, and sometimes at length, about their observations. Pupils' standards in English are improved through their work in science, although the language recorded in books is too complex for some

in Key Stage 2. Results of science experiments are usually presented in tables using numbers and units of measurement and bar charts are drawn to represent data in both key stages. Other forms of representing data such as line graphs are used insufficiently. Pupils' numeracy is being improved through science.

131. Progress seen in the pupils' work has been good in Key Stage 1, for pupils of all abilities, including those few pupils with special educational needs. They are developing investigative skills, beginning to appreciate the relevance of science to their lives, and learning science knowledge. Progress was sound in lessons. In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress has been sound overall. Higher attaining pupils have made good progress in improving their knowledge. The minority of low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs sometimes copy out work which is too complex and learn little. All in Key Stage 2 have made some progress in developing their investigative skills but expectations of high attainers have not been high enough.

132. The unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes to learning of pupils in several classes restricted progress. Only a few pupils caused difficulties, but the outcome was unsatisfactory for many more. Valuable teaching time was lost through minor incidents. Boys were often the cause but their silliness affected the girls around them more than other boys. During practical activity a few boys sometimes dominated, for example by insisting on wiring up electrical circuits. This restricted girls' progress. Teaching was sound in both key stages. Teachers work hard at improving pupils' learning skills, insisting on quiet, and raised hands to ask and answer questions. Clear learning objectives for lessons, shared with the pupils, helped them to make progress. Some teachers lack subject knowledge in Key Stage 2 and not all lessons finished with a summary where pupils' progress and understanding were assessed.

133. Although there are differences in the curriculum for different ages, there is unhelpful repetition in Key Stage 2. Investigative work is insufficiently integrated into planning for both key stages. The complex mixed-age class arrangements mean that there is uncertainty over what pupils will learn during Key Stage 2. The two-yearly cycle of planning for Key Stage 1 is sound. Pupils' work is not thoroughly marked. Assessment records are kept of pupils' progress, although these are time consuming to complete. Subject co-ordinators have worked hard on curriculum planning recently and they provide good support for colleagues. Little monitoring of teaching has taken place, however, and an analysis of recent assessment results to identify strengths and weaknesses in standards and teaching has not been carried out. Some classrooms are small which causes teaching and learning difficulties.

134. Pupils' investigation skills, response in lessons and progress are lower than reported at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' subject expertise is also less secure than reported. Standards, however, as judged by the end of key stage assessments are similar to those of three years ago.

135. Points for improvement:

improve girls' achievements, through the use of appropriate teaching techniques

improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, particularly during practical activity

ensure investigative work is better integrated into curriculum planning

ensure that teachers have appropriate subject knowledge in Key Stage 2

improve curriculum continuity, ensuring work is better matched to meet the needs of high and low attaining pupils

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

136. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is in line with national expectations and at the end of Key Stage 2 it is a little below. Progress in both key stages is good due to the effective teaching and use of the very good facilities in the computer suite installed during the summer term.

137. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils operate computers confidently. They know how to log on, load a CD-ROM and use it to read information, for example to support their work on castles. With help, they transfer pictures to their own page and add personal ideas and captions. They demonstrate good mouse skills when drawing pictures with a computer generated "paint box". Pupils sort information such as the sounds made by instruments into different categories. They program a floor robot to follow a course. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils combine text with

pictures and borders to design book covers for their topics. They confidently use the “menus” to change their work such as the style, font, colour and layout. Pupils use the information stored on a CD-ROM and the Internet for research. They use an art package to design very attractive designs of Roman mosaics and a digital camera and scanner to transfer photographs to their own work. Pupils monitor outside temperatures by using a computer sensor. Attainment is a little below expectation because pupils do not reach the required standards in data handling, control and the use of information technology to make decisions. For example, although pupils sort data and print graphs they have not learnt how to “interrogate” a database by devising precise questions and to apply these skills in subjects such as geography and science.

138. In their weekly timetabled lessons most pupils made good or very good progress. For example, young Year 1 pupils learnt to load a program on to the computer, move images around to build a face and used the “bin” for unwanted items. They are quickly developing very good mouse and keyboard control. In Key Stage 2, Year 5 pupils rapidly learnt how to use “find and replace”, the spell/grammar checker and “cut and paste” in preparation for producing a class newspaper. Pupils with special educational needs made sound progress although classroom assistants do not always have sufficient knowledge of their needs to guide and support them.

139. Pupils’ attitudes in information technology lessons are satisfactory overall. Most pupils were interested in the work and valued the facilities. A few groups in Key Stage 2 found concentration difficult, were not good at taking turns and misbehaved at points during the lessons. This occasionally has a detrimental effect on progress.

140. The quality of teaching was good in both key stages. The majority of teachers were knowledgeable about the aspects they were teaching and helped pupils to overcome any difficulties. Lessons were planned well to ensure maximum use of time. The school is aware that a few recently appointed staff lack this level of expertise. A technology assistant provides excellent support to all teachers and was very effective when she took the lead in lessons. In the best lessons the two adults worked as a team. For example, in a lesson for older pupils in Key Stage 2, the teacher taught a higher attaining group how to cut and paste from a computerised encyclopædia and the assistant taught the remainder about menu options, including how to find and replace words. All pupils made good progress. On occasions, particularly in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was reduced by the poor behaviour of a few pupils and time was wasted. Not enough use was made of class based computers during the inspection.

141. The curriculum is carefully planned for the coming year to ensure a balance of all the required aspects. A sound system for assessment has recently been devised. However, until it is in regular use teachers have no recorded information to plan for the different levels of attainment. The subject has been effectively managed to ensure that the key issue from the last inspection - the need to improve the quality and range of work in Key Stage 2 - has been successfully addressed. There is good capacity to improve standards further. A knowledgeable co-ordinator, new to the school this term, plans to develop the expertise of all staff through model lessons and increased monitoring.

142. Points for improvement:

ensure that high order skills are taught to capable pupils in Key Stage 2

improve teachers’ and classroom assistants’ skills in information technology

work to improve a few pupils’ attitudes to learning in Key Stage 2

make better use of class based computers

ensure that subject assessment records are completed and used to plan future work

Art

143. Pupils achieve high standards in art, maintaining the quality reported in the last inspection. Evidence from work displayed around the school, and from lessons seen, shows that pupils make good progress in both key stages. They work in a wide range of media as they develop different skills and techniques. Much of the work forms part of pupils’ history or geography studies and many pupils say art is a favourite subject.

144. Pupils’ observational drawings are of a particularly high standard. In Key Stage 1, pupils have drawn sea shells and developed their work using a range of media, including sewing. They made very good progress when their study of the local environment led to some excellent drawings and paintings of local houses. In Key Stage 2, following visits to Bignor Roman Villa and Fishbourne Palace, pupils produced high quality mosaic designs. These were

initially developed using information technology. A section of the design was selected and the oldest pupils made and painted clay tiles to set in concrete, with very effective results. While studying the Ancient Greeks, the pupils successfully made Greek pottery from clay, using a coil technique.

145. The teaching seen was all satisfactory or better, with much that was good. In a very good lesson in Key Stage 2, the teacher effectively demonstrated how to undertake a detailed drawing of a leaf. This was part of the half term's work based on the style of William Morris. The pupils watched attentively and persevered with the activity, producing high quality results. A detailed scheme of work provides helpful practical ideas for staff. This, together with a wide range of resources, provides pupils with a good breadth of experiences. A popular art club is run for pupils of any age.

Design and technology

146. Pupils attain standards expected for their ages, working with a limited range of materials and tools. Standards are lower than those described in the last inspection. Pupils' skills in designing and making are better than in evaluating. Key Stage 1 pupils have designed and made model playground apparatus using string and paper, learning about the importance of a 'triangle' in building strong structures. In making sandwiches, appearance as well as flavour was considered. Pupils also have opportunities to use a range of small construction apparatus, producing imaginative structures as well as learning to follow instructions. In Key Stage 2, Victorian dolls' houses were about to be constructed, from card, fabrics and wood, using 'card corners' to produce firm three dimensional structures. Older pupils have designed and made their own boats using unwanted household objects. They evaluated their designs, deciding, for example, that their stabilisers were ineffective and how they might be improved.

147. A detailed draft policy provides useful information on the place of design and technology in the curriculum and health and safety guidelines. A very good guide has been prepared indicating the resources and equipment available. Each teacher teaches a design and technology task each term as part of the class topic. Staff plan these together and learn from one another. No scheme of work has been prepared for Key Stage 1 and the Key Stage 2 scheme does not meet the needs of the current mixed age class arrangements. As pupils progress through the school there is no planned development of their skills. Draft assessment procedures are not yet in place and few records are kept of pupils' achievements. No member of staff co-ordinated design and technology at the time of the last inspection and this is still the case. Management of the subject is weak.

Geography

148. Standards in geography are similar to those expected for the pupils' ages in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils gain a sound knowledge of their local area by mapping the school grounds and the main features of Cuckfield. In their transport topic they learnt about important local facilities such as Gatwick Airport. They compared the facilities of the local town of Haywards Heath with their own area. In Key Stage 2, older pupils consider environmental issues such as pollution in ponds and identify the main features of rivers. Younger pupils use Ordnance Survey maps to identify the main features of comparable areas. These include the town of Alfriston and places of natural interest such as Pulborough Brooks. Pupils identify countries on European and World maps in their "Water" and "Greek" topics. In both key stages very good use is made of educational visits which makes the subject meaningful to the pupils. These include a Year 6 residential trip to a centre in Sussex where pupils learn a range of map-work skills and the features of land use.

149. Pupils make sound use of numeracy skills, for example in Year 2 when graphing the destinations of passengers at Gatwick Airport and when measuring the flow of rivers in Key Stage 2. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy. Pupils use specialist vocabulary such as "destination" and "meander" appropriately. Good examples of thoughtful written work include the description of a train journey in Key Stage 1 and an evaluation of the state of a riverbank in Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator has undertaken some effective monitoring of work to ensure that it is set at the appropriate level. The results have been used to adapt the curriculum and to introduce a sound assessment system. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection.

History

150. Standards in history are higher than those expected for the pupils' ages in both key stages, as they were at the time of the last inspection. In both key stages pupils gain a good knowledge of events, people and different periods. The curriculum is based on a wide range of educational visits, which significantly enhance pupils' understanding. Literacy skills are used very well in a great variety of writing. In Key Stage 1 pupils know about famous pioneers such as Louis Bleriot. They gained a good awareness of life on board old fighting ships after visiting HMS Victory. Their lively writing includes descriptive and personal writing about diet, punishments and routines on board. In their study and visits to castles, pupils wrote about famous battles, including that of King Harold and William. In Key Stage 2, pupils gain a good knowledge of Romans, Ancient Greeks and Victorians. The pupils' work shows that they learn the factual elements of the subject and identify with past periods. Prior to a visit to Preston Manor, for example, pupils wrote letters as though to the housekeeper applying for a job as a servant. Others composed poetry about Ancient Britons' feelings when preparing for a Roman invasion. Pupils develop good historical vocabulary. They understand the difference between primary and secondary evidence and identify the legacies left behind by past civilisations.

151. In both key stages relevant time-lines and lively displays of artefacts help pupils to develop a sense of chronology. Good quality art further enhances pupils' understanding. For example, pupils' versions of Roman mosaics produced in different forms, including computer design, and clay Greek pots make impressive displays around the school.

Music

152. In those aspects of music observed, pupils attained standards appropriate for their ages. Pupils who attend the many extra-curricular activities often attain high standards. Pupils sing tunefully throughout the school. Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy hymn practice and those who attended choir made very good progress as they sang a nursery rhyme in two parts. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing rounds and in two parts with expression and appropriate dynamics. Parents comment that standards are very good, particularly evident in last summer's concert.

153. The quality of teaching varied from very good to unsatisfactory. In the very good lessons teachers ensured that the activities were varied and progressively structured. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace was slow, some pupils were disruptive and inappropriate expectations led to unsatisfactory progress. The quality of teaching in extra-curricular activities was good. Enthusiastic, knowledgeable teachers, classroom assistants and parents provide pupils with many opportunities, such as guitar and recorder clubs, orchestra and an ensemble group. Pupils have many opportunities to perform, both in school and to wider audiences.

154. Most pupils enjoy music and concentrate well. The last inspection report referred to the lack of a scheme of work and variation in provision in Key Stage 2. These issues have been addressed successfully, with training for staff and the purchase of a published scheme that is in use through the school. It provides varied activities, such as the idea of a musical sandwich to teach the rondo form of structure for Key Stage 2 pupils. Music is played as pupils come into assembly, but insufficient reference is made to this. Similarly, when some pupils played to the school, they were not visible to the majority and the opportunity to talk about their instruments was missed.

Physical education

155. Pupils' attainment in physical education is above that expected for the pupils' ages in both key stages. Some show very high order abilities, for example in ball skills in netball and football, but others struggle to throw and catch accurately. Pupils enjoyed their success in linking movements during a gymnastics session. A well-planned programme of activities ensures all pupils experience the full National Curriculum for physical education. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught to swim and almost all achieve the expected 25 metres by the time they leave. In observed lessons pupils made good progress overall in gymnastics and games as a result of effective teaching.

156. Teaching strengths observed included good warm-up and cool-down sessions, with comment on the effect of exercise on heart rates. Pupils were expected to change quickly and quietly and most did. In Key Stage 1, praise and

encouragement for those quickest to change, who then sat quietly reading, motivated others to act similarly. Firm and demanding control ensured good health and safety but in one lesson the pupils were too noisy. Pupils without the correct kit had too little to do; their behaviour was poor and there was some disruption. In a very good lesson for upper juniors, the teacher demonstrated netball skills and used pupil evaluators to identify the best practice. Good humour as well as firm control retained motivation and all pupils made very good progress.

157. Curriculum planning is very good. It provides helpful detailed guidance for each lesson taught. Resources are good and used well. Insufficient assessment records are kept. Management is effective in maintaining good standards. A very good range of popular extra-curricular sports clubs is provided and a variety of sports fixtures for boys and girls is arranged with other schools. Standards, teaching and extra-curricular provision are similar to those reported in the last inspection report.

158. Points for improvement for foundation subjects:

appoint a co-ordinator for design and technology and prepare schemes of work which lead to skill progression throughout the school

ensure that manageable assessment procedures are introduced for all foundation subjects and records are kept which help teachers plan what should next be taught

use every opportunity to increase pupils' awareness of music, and to celebrate individual pupils' musical talents

ensure that those pupils who do not take part in physical education lessons are purposefully engaged in worthwhile activities during these lessons

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

159. The inspection was carried out over a period of one week by four inspectors for a total of nineteen inspector days. A parents' meeting was held prior to the inspection and 78 parents attended. A questionnaire about the school was returned by 67 families. Information from parents was used by inspectors to guide their work. For the majority of the time in school, inspectors visited classes and talked with individuals and groups of pupils. In total about sixty lesson observations were made, taking about fifty hours. The work of a sample of pupils for the current and previous academic years was evaluated from each year group. Pupils from different year groups were heard reading. Planned discussions were held with members of the teaching staff, including the acting headteacher, a number of support staff and several governors. Policy documents, teachers' planning and assessment records were scrutinised.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

160.

	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
Y R - 6	274	3	75	13

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

161.

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

11.4

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

24

Average class size

27

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

162.

Total number of education support staff

11

Total aggregate hours worked each week

236

Financial data

163.

Financial year:

1998/1999

	£
Total Income	473203
Total Expenditure	464348
Expenditure per pupil	1647
Balance brought forward from previous year	3151
Balance carried forward to next year	12006

PARENTAL SURVEY

164.

Number of questionnaires sent out:

274

Number of questionnaires returned:

67

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

165.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	31	43	12	13	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	32	45	5	15	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	6	30	33	22	8
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	13	34	19	22	10
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	21	40	12	21	6
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	15	57	13	7	7
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	33	51	12	4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	12	45	18	18	6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	9	48	28	9	6
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	9	38	15	23	12
My child(ren) like(s) school	28	55	12	4	0

Other issues raised by parents

166. A high proportion of the parents who completed the questionnaire wrote at length about the school. There were positive comments but many were critical. Key points made were:
 children like school; the school provides a good range of extra-curricular clubs; the infant department is good; the school atmosphere is friendly; pupils' behaviour is unacceptable and the school has no clear policies on how unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with; the headteacher ignores complaints; parents have insufficient curriculum information to enable them to help their children more; insufficient homework is set; the junior department is

unsatisfactory; the quality and amount of mathematics teaching in the juniors is weak.