

INSPECTION REPORT

**DOWNHAM FEOFFEES VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

LITTLE DOWNHAM, ELY

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110799

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Burry

Reporting inspector: Mrs Pat King - 7853

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th March 2000

Inspection number: 188806

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Main Street
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Ely
Cambridgeshire
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Postcode:

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Taylor

Date of previous inspection: 8th July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|-------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| Mrs P. King | Registered inspector | Art; Mathematics; Religious education Under-fives | The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? Leadership and management. |
| Mrs J. Darrington | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; Partnership with parents; How well does the school care for its pupils? |
| Mr B. Emery | | Information technology; Design and technology; English as an additional language; Equality of opportunity; Music; Physical education; Science; Special educational needs. | |
| Mr M. Woods | Team inspector | English; Geography; History; | Assessment; How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

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REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 6 |
| Information about the school | |
| How good the school is | |
| What the school does well | |
| What could be improved | |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection | |
| Standards | |
| Pupils' attitudes and values | |
| Teaching and learning | |
| Other aspects of the school | |
| How well the school is led and managed | |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school | |
| | |
| PART B: COMMENTARY | |
| | |
| HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS? | 13 |
| The school's results and achievements | |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development | |
| | |
| HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT? | 16 |
| | |
| HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS? | 18 |
| | |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS? | 20 |
| | |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS | 22 |
| | |
| HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED? | 23 |
| | |
| WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? | 25 |
| | |
| PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS | 26 |
| | |
| PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES | 31 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Downham Feoffees Voluntary Controlled Primary School is in the village of Little Downham in which the majority of pupils live but a significant number travel from the surrounding areas. It is smaller than most primary schools, with 157 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are of West European culture. Two pupils currently have English as an additional language, lower than in most schools. 25 pupils have special educational needs broadly in line with the national average and 12 of these pupils require significant support with their learning. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need and receive additional adult support within class. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Attainment on entry this year is in line with what is expected for the children's age overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Downham Feoffees is an effective school. It achieves largely appropriate standards in most of its work. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved in English and mathematics since the last inspection in 1996. Teaching is good and is promoting some improvement in standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy across the school. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and generally work hard. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall and have shown improvement recently. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides good educational leadership.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school.
- Teachers implement the national literacy and numeracy strategies well.
- The school promotes good attitudes, values and behaviour.
- The quality of the activities that take place outside of lessons is good.
- The school shows a commitment to involving parents and members of the community in pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- There is no whole school procedure for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
- Strategies for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are not sufficiently in place.
- Planning and provision for pupils' spiritual development are not addressed enough.
- School development planning does not include how the school is to meet the new requirements for the curriculum for pupils in the Reception Year.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1996. Since that time standards have risen in the national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced effectively and are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. An information technology suite has been established which is very well equipped and is used to provide pupils with good quality experiences. Religious education, which was given insufficient emphasis in 1996, now has an appropriate allocation of time within the curriculum.

Some of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been addressed successfully. For example there has been some improvement in school development planning and its links with financial planning. Most improvements have been made only recently, such as the extension of the amount of teaching time so that it meets Government recommendations and the introduction of a whole school approach to teachers' curriculum planning. Some issues related to the assessment of pupils' progress and to establishing a quieter working environment have not yet been tackled fully enough. However, the leadership of the school is giving a clear sense of direction to future developments and all members of staff are committed to improving the school. The capacity to improve further is judged to be good.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 |
| English | A | E | C | E |
| Mathematics | B | C | C | E |
| Science | B | C | E | E* |

Key

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

Whilst there have been fluctuations from year to year, standards have risen in the national tests in English and mathematics from below the national average in 1996 at the time of the last inspection to reach the national average in 1999. In 1999 pupils' attainment in science was in the lowest five

per cent nationally when compared to schools taking pupils from similar social backgrounds. Currently in Year 6, the majority of pupils are on line to achieve the national expectation in English, mathematics and science. There are indications that standards are to rise this year, when account is taken of the percentage of pupils who are to achieve what is expected for their age, particularly in science. In information technology pupils have made good progress since the introduction of the information technology suite and standards are in line with the national expectation. In religious education pupils' attainment overall is in line with the local expectations. Attainment in the other subjects is in line with national expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils are keen to learn and show a good level of interest in their work. They work hard to complete the tasks set but some pupils have difficulty in working quietly. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour is good overall. They are courteous and trustworthy. Pupils know and understand the school rules and appreciate why they are needed. |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils are polite, caring and friendly towards one another, staff and adults. They are willing to take responsibility within class and when involved in such activities as fundraising. |
| Attendance | Attendance levels are broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is above the national average. A few pupils are late regularly. The headteacher has recently introduced effective systems to check pupils' attendance more accurately. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of the teaching is good overall for the under fives and in Key Stages 1 and 2. 97 per cent of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better, 27 per cent was very good and almost 50 per cent was good. 3 per cent was unsatisfactory. Teaching is good in literacy, numeracy, science and information technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The school meets statutory requirements in covering all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The curriculum promotes good learning in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The personal, social and health education programme gives appropriate attention to sex education and drug misuse education. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The organisation of work to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The most severe needs are met with the help of learning support assistants. Some withdrawal from class takes place for these pupils but they participate fully in all aspects of the curriculum. They receive particularly good additional adult support in the basic skills of literacy. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Two pupils in the school currently have English as an additional language, although they are not at an early stage of language acquisition. They are fully integrated and no special support is needed or provided |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The school promotes pupils' moral and social development well and their cultural development satisfactorily. The provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory overall. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school's provision for pupils' welfare and health and safety is satisfactory overall. The school is a safe environment but some health and safety procedures are in need of review. All members of staff know pupils well and show a high level of concern for their welfare. |

The school does everything it can to establish a good working relationship with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The recently appointed headteacher is clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and has identified the right tasks for making improvements. Subject co-ordinators have not been able since the last inspection to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in raising attainment across the school. They are very responsive to working with the new senior management team in order to put in place the necessary strategies for doing so. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors are committed to working with the headteacher in the development of the school. They are actively involved in some aspects of school development, such as the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies but are not meeting all their statutory responsibilities fully. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school is beginning to evaluate its performance through analysis of the national tests results. However, procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and attainment are under developed. |
| The strategic use of resources | The governors have managed the financial resources very carefully since the last inspection in order to reduce costs because of the decrease in the numbers of pupils in the school. Spending decisions are linked to priorities for school development from year to year and governors apply the principles of best value satisfactorily. |

Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach this age group. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. They are very good in the information technology suite and good in English, and physical education and for the under-fives. The accommodation, although limited in some respects, enables the school to deliver an appropriate curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality teaching; • The good progress that their children make; • Their children like school; • The good attitudes and values that the school promotes; • The approachability of the school in dealing with parental questions and problems; • The information that they receive about the work their children are to do each year; • The school's expectations that their children will work hard and do their best. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of teachers so that classes are smaller and of single age; • The information which they receive about their children's progress; • The arrangements for the start of the day; • The links with parents; • The range of activities outside of lessons. |

The inspectors' judgements broadly support the parents' positive views of the school as listed above. The number of teachers in the school is average for a school of this size. The teachers generally match the work to the range of needs of pupils in each class. The school provides parents with appropriate information about their children's progress. The recently introduced changes to the arrangements for the start of the school day provide for a punctual, calm and purposeful beginning to the lessons and yet maintain provision for informal access to class teachers by parents if necessary. The range of activities out of school is about average for a school of this size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Children make good progress on entry to the school in language and literacy and mathematics and by the age of five achieve above what is expected for their age in these two aspects of learning when taking account of the government's guidance for young children's learning. In their personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development they make satisfactory progress and achieve what is expected for their age.

2 At the end of Key Stage 1, whilst there have been fluctuations from year to year, standards have largely been maintained in the national tests in reading, writing mathematics since the time of the last inspection in 1996. In reading, pupils' attainment has been consistently below the national average, in writing it has been in line with the national average or above and in mathematics it has been mainly in line with the national average. Standards dropped in the national tests in 1999 when compared to all schools nationally in reading, writing, and mathematics but the small number in the cohort means that there are likely to be marked fluctuations from year to year. In science in the formal teachers' assessments pupils' attainment was well below the national average. When comparing this school's results in 1999 with schools taking pupils from similar social backgrounds based on the number eligible for free school meals, standards were well below the national average in reading and writing and in the lowest five per cent nationally in mathematics. Currently, the majority of pupils in Year 2 are on line to achieve the national expectation in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of the Key Stage. This shows standards that are higher in reading, mathematics and science than the previous year, which is due to changes in the nature of the cohort and also to the impact of some good teaching.

3 At the end of Key Stage 2 standards have risen more than the national average in the national tests in English, mathematics since the last inspection in 1996. However, slight improvements made in standards in science in end of Year 6 national tests have not kept pace with improvements in standards nationally in the subject. In the national tests in 1999 when compared to all schools nationally, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was in line with the national average. In science it was well below average. When compared to schools taking pupils from similar social backgrounds, attainment was well below average in English and mathematics and in the lowest five per cent nationally in science. Currently in Year 6, the majority of pupils are on line to achieve the national expectation in English, mathematics and science. There are indications that standards are to rise this year, when account is taken of the percentage of pupils who are to achieve what is expected for their age, particularly in science. Improvement in standards is reflected in the appropriately challenging targets that the school has set for pupils in English and mathematics for the Year 2000. There are also indications of rising standards in mathematics and science in the current Year 5.

4 Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory for their age at the end of both key stages. They are confident and enthusiastic speakers and generally attentive listeners. Standards in reading are in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1 and rising above at the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2 pupils read with appropriate understanding and a good level of accuracy. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have made good progress and are able to show an in-depth appreciation of texts and good reference skills. In writing, the majority of pupils achieve the national expectation at the end of both key stages and are able to write for a variety of purposes. Some expressive writing in Year 6 is above the national expectation. Spelling and punctuation are satisfactory but there are some weaknesses in handwriting in Key Stage 2. Pupils are able to write independently to express their ideas across the curriculum but have too few opportunities to develop the style of their writing in subjects such as history and religious education.

5 In mathematics pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation at the end of both key stages. Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory overall but good in some respects. They show good mathematical reasoning and are able to find their own methods of calculating mentally and different ways of recording. They are able to carry out written calculations more formally when appropriate, showing secure understanding of place value. They use mathematical language accurately in whole class discussion. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils do not have rapid enough recall of number facts. Pupils are able to use their numeracy skills effectively across the curriculum, such as when measuring in design and technology and using co-ordinates in geography.

6 Pupils' attainment in science at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the required areas of study. Pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory ability to predict, observe and to explain what they have been doing. By the end of Year 6 pupils use a wider range of scientific vocabulary and increase their confidence and accuracy when undertaking scientific investigations.

7 Pupils' attainment in information technology at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. Since the recent installation of the information technology suite, pupils have made rapid progress in the range of skills, knowledge and understanding that they acquire. At the end of both key stages pupils demonstrate good keyboard skills when using the computer. In Year 2 pupils can load programmes and enter, store and retrieve information. They can also use programmes to generate a design. By the end of Year 6 pupils show satisfactory skills in the use of logo, in word processing and in control and modelling. They are able to use their skills effectively to support work in other subjects.

8 In religious education pupils' attainment is mainly in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus and has shown improvement since the time of the last inspection when the subject was under-emphasised. By the end of Year 2 pupils have good knowledge of Bible stories and are beginning to be aware of the significance of some of these in their own lives. By Year 6, pupils have good knowledge of the traditions and customs of several world faiths. They are beginning to understand the significance of belief in people's lives.

9 In all other subjects except music pupils' attainment is in line with national expectation, which is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. In design and technology and physical education there are some significant strengths in pupils' attainment which are due to the consistently good teaching and some specialist input in physical education. For example in design and technology, pupils make models of good quality. In physical education in Key Stage 2 pupils achieve high standards in dance and develop some good skills in games. In art, whilst attainment is satisfactory at the end of each key stage, pupils' progress across the school is variable because not all teachers have similarly appropriate expectations of pupils. Where work is of good quality the teacher places appropriate emphasis on the skills, knowledge and understanding to be addressed. In history pupils do not always have access to a suitable range of experiences because in the time available for the subject, the emphasis is placed on the acquisition and recording of knowledge. Insufficient lessons were seen in music to make a judgement about standards. The school is aware of these areas for improvement and has included in the school development plan a review of the curriculum for the foundation subjects to make the best use of the time available.

10 In the lessons seen pupils make mostly satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, with much progress that is good, particularly in literacy, numeracy and information technology. In these subjects teachers match the work well to the range of pupils' needs and focus their teaching on the skills, knowledge and understanding to be acquired. The highest attaining are generally suitably challenged but in numeracy in Key Stage 2 these pupils are not always extended enough in decision making when problem solving or in speed of mental recall. Pupils with special educational make good progress when withdrawn for literacy work. A significant number of pupils on the special needs register make good gains in their reading ability.

11 In the foundation subjects and religious education, there is not always enough challenge for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in history, pupils are not extended to use their research skills enough and in most of these subjects pupils are not using a wide range of styles of writing to promote their ability to write for different purposes. Pupils with special educational needs make mainly satisfactory and some good progress when taking account of work across the subjects of the curriculum. They achieve well against the targets set for them in their individual education plans and in statements of special educational need. The progress that the few pupils with English as an additional language make is the same as that of the other pupils. The results of the national tests over the last four years show that girls have achieved higher standards than boys in English and mathematics at the end of both key stages and in science at the end of Key Stage 2. This gender difference in attainment is very similar to the national picture. During the inspection, boys made similar progress to girls overall, although the limited ability of a few older boys to work well independently reduced their progress on some occasions.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 Pupils are generally keen to attend school and eager to learn. Almost all pupils work hard, completing work set, and many pupils take part in the satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities available to them.

13 Pupils' behaviour is good overall. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy and demonstrate respect for their own and the school's property. Bullying does not occur often, but if it does, there is a swift and appropriate response, which almost always resolves the problem immediately in an acceptable manner for all concerned. The overall noise level remains high across the school since the last inspection, however, and is particularly evident when pupils settle to an individual task or upon entering and leaving assembly. Pupils are aware of the school rules and the need for rules in society and are involved in drawing up class rules. In the main pupils are polite, caring and friendly towards one another, staff and other adults. They know the difference between right and wrong and are taught to be aware of, and respect, other people's differences, feelings and beliefs. In line with recent years there have been no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection.

14 Pupils show initiative when given the opportunity, such as in fundraising ventures for charity, and are willing to take increasing responsibility as they move up through the school. A very good opportunity for growth in independence and personal development is provided for Year 6 pupils during an annual residential visit.

15 There is no change in the pattern of attendance since the last inspection and it is broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is above the national average. A few pupils are regularly late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16 The quality of the teaching is good overall in all key stages. It is less consistently good in the lower part of Key Stage 2. 97 per cent of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. Almost 50 per cent was good and 27 per cent was very good. 3 per cent was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching overall is similar to that at the time of the last inspection, although there is evidence of improvement in teaching in literacy, numeracy, science, and information technology in Key Stages 1 and 2. The good teaching in these subjects is resulting in better pupil progress and rising standards.

17 The teaching of the under fives is good overall. It is particularly good in literacy and numeracy when children are taught the basic skills effectively to enable the highest attaining children to progress to working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The adults work together well and provide a secure environment for the children so that relationships are good. They promote very attentive listening and confidence in responding to questions from adults. Assessment procedures are not developed sufficiently to enable the adults match the work to the needs of all pupils across the areas of experience recommended nationally for the age group. As a result, some work is not appropriate for children of average ability or below, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development.

18 Teaching is good in literacy, numeracy, science, information technology and design and technology in both key stages and in physical education in Key Stage 2 because teachers have good subject knowledge and know what pupils are to gain from lessons in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding. They teach the necessary skills effectively and help pupils to improve their work through regular discussions with them, either individually or as a class. In this way pupils are helped to make models of good quality in design and technology, to develop their investigative skills in science and to evaluate their work in physical education.

19 Teachers address the Literacy Framework well. They teach phonic skills systematically and their approach ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress with the accuracy of their spelling and reading. One of the strengths of the teaching of literacy is the teachers' very skilful questioning of pupils, which helps pupils to acquire new learning at a good rate.

20 Teachers implement the Numeracy Strategy effectively. They are particularly good at promoting pupils' mathematical thinking by encouraging them to look for patterns in numbers and to explain their ways of working. As a result, pupils are confident to explore different methods and to find their own ways of recording their ideas, as well as using more formal approaches when most appropriate. They make good progress with their mathematical reasoning. Teachers' approach to the teaching of mental recall of number facts is not as consistent across the school and some teachers do not have high enough expectations in terms of the speed of pupils' response, which is often too slow, particularly in Key Stage 2.

21 Almost half the teaching observed was in literacy and numeracy. Fewer lessons were observed in the other subjects, but when taking account of all evidence, teaching was found to be satisfactory in art, geography, history and religious education. The teaching is less effective in these subjects because teachers do not focus as much on teaching the necessary skills, such as in a combined art and design and technology lesson when the pupils did not extend their drawing skills enough. In history and religious education there is good emphasis on pupils acquiring knowledge, which they do very effectively. However, teachers do not stress the skills of enquiry as much or promote pupils' understanding as fully through the use of a wide range of stimulating resources. It was not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in music because only one lesson was seen.

22 In all subjects teachers prepare lessons thoroughly so that activities are interesting and often build satisfactorily on previous learning. They are able to offer clear explanations to pupils so that they understand what it is they have to do. They have suitably high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which they communicate to them. These positive features of the teaching mean that pupils generally work hard and at a good pace. They are well motivated and are able to work independently of the teacher when required. Some pupils have difficulty in working without much teacher direction. When asked to work individually or in a group, they become restless and noisy and this limits the amount that they produce. Teachers work very hard to break this pattern of working for these pupils but their success in doing so is inconsistent as it was at the time of the last inspection.

23 Teachers question pupils well and listen carefully to their responses to assess their progress. In literacy and numeracy they often record these observations and use the information to plan appropriate future work. Generally in these subjects there is a suitable level of challenge for pupils of all abilities, including the highest attaining pupils, so that they have equality of access to the activities planned. However, in numeracy on a few occasions the highest attaining pupils could be stretched more. In design and technology, information technology and in physical education in Key Stage 2, teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils across the ability range although formal assessment procedures are not in place. In other subjects work does not always build enough on pupils' past experience to take them forward sufficiently in their learning. Teachers generally mark pupils work carefully and some teachers make very detailed comments to help pupils to know how to improve. Teachers also use discussion effectively to support pupils in knowing what they have to do to improve. However, most pupils are not aware of specific target areas for improvement.

24 Pupils with special educational needs receive some good teaching in literacy sessions. Throughout the curriculum teachers are aware of their needs and use learning support assistants effectively. Teaching focuses on meeting pupils' learning and behavioural needs but is usually planned informally. Few lesson plans specifically focus on pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they make consistently good progress across the curriculum. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language ensures that they make the same progress as other pupils.

25 Teachers use homework very effectively to support and extend the work of the classroom in literacy, numeracy and a range of other subject areas.

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

26 The quality and range of learning opportunities for children under five and for pupils in both key stages is satisfactory overall and good in some areas. All subjects have schemes of work, and long-term planning ensures a broad and generally balanced coverage of curriculum content over the school year. The needs of all pupils are catered for, including children under five and those with special educational needs, although some aspects of the provision are weak. Statutory requirements are met. This is a similar picture to the last inspection, with which direct comparison is difficult, due to the major changes that have taken place in curriculum requirements since that time.

27 The school has chosen to provide for children under five with a programme of study based upon National Curriculum subjects. Within that framework, many stimulating experiences are given that offer these children opportunities to attain the national expectations for the age group and, in the cases of some children, opportunities to work towards levels of attainment of the National Curriculum. The chosen provision imposes limits upon personal and social development and upon some aspects of physical development.

28 Members of staff have put much energy and time into implementing the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and an effective programme is delivered. In the school as a whole, English and mathematics are given priority and are taught for half or more of the curriculum time available. The slowly rising standards in these subjects demonstrate that this is an effective arrangement. Similar time and effort has been put into many of the other subjects and all policies are being reviewed currently in preparation for the Curriculum 2000. However, the emphasis on literacy and numeracy puts pressure on the teaching of some other subjects. The range of work and the teaching of skills is limited in some classes in art and history and as a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could across the school. Information technology teaching is provided through very effective whole-class lessons, but the school's decision to place all the computers in one room, limits the natural use of information technology in other lessons.

29 Equality of access to the curriculum is good in general terms. All pupils are supported as necessary to enable them to achieve in lessons. There is a difficulty in ensuring that pupils of the same year group have the same curriculum experience over time. Much of the foundation curriculum is delivered through a rolling programme of two-year cycles, and there are some pupils who do not receive the same curriculum as the majority of their peers. The current Year 4 pupils are split between the Years 3 and 4 programmes of study in Class 3 and the Years 5 and 6 programme of study in Class 4. The school is to address this as part of its planning for the introduction of Curriculum 2000 at the beginning of the next academic year. Traveller children and pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated. The organisation of work to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The most severe needs are met with the help of learning support assistants. Some withdrawal takes place for pupils with specific needs in basic skills but pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. When they are withdrawn, arrangements are in place to ensure that they do not regularly miss the same curriculum experience.

30 The curriculum is enriched by several very high quality club activities, all of which are led by one teacher. Music tuition in brass and woodwind is facilitated by the school and provided by an outside agency. This brings an extra dimension into school music.

Homework is provided in every class and promotes both consolidation and extension of classroom work.

31 Since the last inspection the school has continued to maintain good links with the local and the wider community, which enhance and support pupils' learning and understanding. This is evident in regular involvement in community and parish events, such as the whole school participation in the Christingle service and the village fête. Pupils are encouraged to take part in, and be supportive of, local fundraising events for charity, such as the community 'Big Breakfast', which raised funds for cancer research. They are given opportunities to consider the needs of the wider world through such ventures as the sale of Harvest celebration produce for the Cambodia appeal. Pupils perform annually at a regional arts festival, which provides them with a very good opportunity to aspire to and achieve high standards in the performing arts. Satisfactory links are made with other schools so that pupils are able to take part in competitive sporting activities. Opportunities to further pupils' links with local industry are not well developed. A considerable number of volunteers from the local community help regularly in the school to support pupils' learning within the classrooms. The school is not involved in initial teacher training.

32 The use of the school premises by youth groups organised by the Guiding and Scouting associations provide very good opportunities for pupils to extend and enhance learning through community involvement. All classes make at least one visit each term to places of interest such as Ely Cathedral and Grafham Water. One class was preparing for a visit to the local church during the inspection. These first-hand experiences make an important contribution to pupils' learning.

33 The school promotes pupils' moral and social development well. A personal, social and health education programme is taught, which pays appropriate attention to sex education and drugs misuse education. Pupils have good social attitudes and work and play well together as a community. They demonstrate clear understanding of what is right and wrong in their school and in the wider community. The school's behaviour code has been developed with the help of the pupils and they have a positive attitude towards it. They carry out small tasks to help the school run smoothly. They also co-operate well within group situations in lessons, but the contraction of the foundation curriculum has resulted in fewer opportunities to collaborate over joint ventures.

34 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. There are occasions across the curriculum when spiritual experience may develop out of an activity, but teachers are not overtly planning for this, and there is no guarantee that it will happen. Assemblies meet statutory requirements in that they include a brief period of reflection or prayer, but those seen did not create a 'special' atmosphere nor catch pupils' imagination.

35 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. As a result of religious education teaching, pupils show a strong appreciation of, and respect for, the customs of other cultures. They are also developing an appreciation of their own and other cultures through lessons in subjects such as English, art and history. They have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities with a cultural content. The school participates in local events and festivals. A policy for multi-cultural education has not been produced since the last inspection and this aspect of the curriculum has not been developed well. The under-representation of non-European cultures is very evident in resources such as fiction, art and music books.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 Satisfactory arrangements are in place for ensuring pupils' overall welfare. Child protection procedures are good and all members of staff are fully informed of the procedures to follow in the event of any concern. The class teachers, with very good support from midday and administrative staff, show a high level of care for the pupils. The school is aware of the need to review and update some procedures in respect of health and safety. It is planned that the health and safety committee will be reconvened and will address areas of weakness, which include some aspects of first-aid provision, the safe storage of hazardous substances and equipment and the regular checking and maintenance of the fire alarm system. Facilities for dealing with sick or injured pupils continue to be in need of development, although some sound systems have been put in place to record incidents and the course of action taken. Parents are advised very promptly of any health concerns. Pupils are made aware of safe practice and safe working procedures.

37 An effective whole school approach to discipline and the promotion of positive behaviour is in place. Pupils report that the few isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Until very recently the monitoring of attendance was not rigorous, and this combined with non-compliance with the prescribed system for marking registers, resulted in inaccurate overall recording of attendance figures. The school has introduced a very thorough monitoring of attendance and now ensures that the prescribed marking system is followed. This approach shows accurate assessment of attendance patterns.

38 Teachers know pupils well and this ensures that pupils with special educational needs are recognised and their needs are addressed. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Overall the school provides satisfactory support and advice for all its pupils and maintains regular and effective links with appropriate support services and agencies.

39 The previous inspection found assessment and recording arrangements to be appropriate but inconsistent across the school and this was an area for improvement. The school has made some changes during the last four years since the last inspection but the present provision is unsatisfactory.

40 Baseline assessment is carried out in the Reception class shortly after the children enter school when they are under five. Thereafter, quite detailed recording is concerned mainly with progress in English and mathematics. There is no record of the social and skill development that underpins all other learning.

41 In Key Stages 1 and 2 individual teachers have devised their own different ways of keeping track of pupils' attainment, progress and personal development. Some do more than others and therefore the information available varies from class to class. There are no consistent systems agreed across the school, apart from the commercially produced booklet in which National Curriculum records are kept, and this was a key issue for development at the time of the last inspection. Teachers often keep records of pupils' progress through the reading programme and scores from spelling and mathematics tests, which they use when planning for the next step in the children's learning. However, there is no structured approach to assessing pupils' progress within the key objectives of the Literacy and

Numeracy Strategies to influence longer-term planning when areas for study are returned to, either during a year or in a subsequent year. The assessments that are in place give insufficient attention to the processes by which pupils learn and their personal development. Assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory because there is a consistent approach across the school. All pupils have individual education plans that are regularly reviewed. These often include targets for pupils' personal and social development as well as those to meet their academic needs.

42 The governors, headteacher and staff are beginning to analyse national test results to see if there is information to be gained about the achievement of different groups of pupils or aspects of subjects that require improvement. This information is not used as yet to determine curriculum developments. Statutory requirements have been met for setting targets for pupils to achieve at the end of Year 6 in mathematics and English in the Year 2000. However, teachers do not yet set short-term individual or group targets for pupils which are shared with parents and pupils so that all those involved know what they are striving to achieve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43 The school continues to maintain a good partnership with the parents and carers of its pupils. This partnership is established at a very early stage before the children start school as under fives. A full induction programme has been established to support the under fives in making a positive start to school. This involves regular contact with the local playgroup. Parents of these children are offered opportunities to support their children at home and a notebook passes between home and school each day.

44 Most parents are happy with the quality of individual pupil reports and find the letters and newsletters informative and interesting. The recently introduced new format for the autumn term open evening, when information is provided about what is to be taught during the year, is welcomed by parents and found to be very useful. A few parents are dissatisfied with the decision to change the arrangements for the start of the school day. These arrangements provide for a punctual, calm and purposeful beginning to the school day yet maintain provision for informal access to class teachers by parents if necessary. Some parents feel that there is too long between the autumn term open evening and the next parent consultation evening in the spring term. However, the school does offer parents the opportunity to make an appointment during this period if they wish to have further information about their children's progress.

45 The school does everything that it can to establish a good working relationship with parents through detailed and informative letters and newsletters, information evenings and the provision of consultative documents, such as the good quality home-school agreement, in order that parents and carers may be fully informed. The homework policy sets out clearly for parents the purpose of homework and the partnership role that parents may play in the support of homework activities. Reading books are taken home regularly. Mathematics activities and spellings are undertaken according to year group and additional work is set as pupils progress through the school. Parents are fully involved when pupils are identified as having special educational needs and have regular opportunities to discuss progress, both formally and informally. The support that the majority of parents give their children with their homework and that a large number of parents and volunteers provide by helping in school makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

46 Annual reports for pupils provide detailed information on pupils' achievements and progress but are very limited in respect of targets for pupils to achieve. They do not comply with statutory requirements in that attendance information is omitted. Likewise the annual governors' report to parents does not fully comply with statutory requirements in a number of areas and does not actively promote partnership in education with parents. The school prospectus, although detailed in some respects, provides very little information on the curriculum and the need for regular and punctual attendance.

47 The Parent Staff Association raises very considerable amounts of money each year, through a wide range of social and fundraising events, which are very well supported both by parents and the local community. The funds raised enable the extension and enhancement of resource provision.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48 The headteacher, who has only been in post since the beginning of the academic year, offers good leadership. Since the last inspection few of the key issues have been addressed fully. However, the current headteacher is clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and has identified the right tasks for its development and improvement. Recent steps taken to meet the key issues in the last inspection report have been very effective.

49 The school's aims have been reviewed since the last inspection when this was a recommendation. Whilst they have been clarified, they are not yet explicit enough or used fully to underpin the work of the school. They include a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all, which the school largely meets in practice. Many school policies have not been reviewed for a number of years, although recently a programme of review has been put in place. There is thus insufficient guidance for the staff in approaches to teaching and learning, apart from those for literacy and numeracy, which have been introduced nationally in the last two years and no job descriptions to define the roles and responsibilities of the teaching staff.

50 The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well as a senior management team and are setting up strategies to involve all staff in evaluating the school's performance and in decision making. The curriculum co-ordinators have not been given the opportunities to undertake their roles fully in respect of promoting higher standards, which was a weakness identified in the last inspection report. They have had no job descriptions to make clear their responsibilities. The headteacher is delegating responsibilities to them more through the preparation of subject development plans to be completed by the end of this educational year. There is a shared commitment to school improvement and within the school a good capacity to succeed. Some members of staff have been involved in setting targets for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. These are realistic and achievable and represent a significant increase in attainment projected for the Year 2000. However, there is not yet a whole school approach to raising attainment over time in all year groups by setting targets and clear strategies for meeting them. The headteacher is aware of this weakness and intends to address it with the staff as a priority.

51 The co-ordinator for special educational needs is efficient and effective and all Code of Practice arrangements are in place. The procedures for maintaining the special educational needs register are good. Pupils on the register are monitored carefully by class teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs.

52 The governing body has worked with the school to improve the school development plan since the last inspection and to ensure the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The school development plan prepared recently by the headteacher and staff is a useful document for addressing many of the areas in need of improvement in the short-term. Appropriate committees are in place to keep the governors suitably informed about issues, such as the action plan for information technology and setting for mathematics. They are committed to working with the new headteacher in the development of the school. However, their involvement in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, particularly in relation to teaching, learning and standards is in an early stage of development. They are

not meeting their statutory requirements fully. They have no governor responsible for special educational needs. The annual report for parents does not include details relating to school security, staff professional development, the policy for special educational needs and rates of authorised and authorised absence. Performance management procedures have not been introduced and procedures for meeting health and safety policy have not been implemented fully.

53 The governors are very active in managing the school's finances. They have done so very carefully since the last inspection in order to reduce costs because of the decrease in the numbers of pupils in the school. They link priorities for expenditure to the school development plan but mainly within each year. This shows sound progress since the last inspection, although the system for prioritising spending on books and equipment remains not efficient enough to ensure the best use of available resources. Governors use all specific grants well for their intended purpose and apply the principle of best value satisfactorily. They monitor expenditure regularly and thoroughly. Administrative procedures are very good and support the smooth running of the school. Satisfactory use is made of technology, such as the internet and E-mail.

54 The school has adequate levels of staffing, including the nursery nurse and learning support assistants, for the number of pupils on roll. Members of staff are suitably experienced by their training and qualifications to teach in the primary phase and to undertake the particular responsibilities that they hold. The arrangements for in-service training are very well organised and include both school-based training and external courses.

55 The overall amounts, range and quality of resources for subjects are satisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Resources in the information suite are good. Resources in English and physical education are good and have been improved since the last inspection. In other subjects the resources are satisfactory. The system of all teachers ordering the resources for their own classrooms means that there is some variability in the resources across the school within subjects.

56 The accommodation for the under fives is arranged to offer all children a secure, welcoming and very well organised environment. At present the class uses a pair of linked rooms and there is sufficient space for activities to be undertaken. The class is well resourced, with everything but a secure outdoor play area and a selection of large play apparatus and equipment.

57 The accommodation has been improved since the last inspection. Temporary classrooms have been replaced with a new attractive teaching block. The older part of the building still has some shortcomings but generally the accommodation is satisfactory and enables the school to deliver the National Curriculum. Specialist rooms enhance learning in information technology and music and for withdrawal groups. Outside facilities are very good and include a range of play areas, a large field and the use of an all-weather sports pitch. However, the hard play area is too small. The entrance hall is large but the main hall is inadequate in size for use for physical education and the library areas and administration rooms are attractive but small. The accommodation is well maintained and the displays provide an attractive environment for learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58 In order to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

improve the approach to assessment of pupils' attainment and progress so that work is well matched to pupils' needs in all subjects of the curriculum by:

- 1) establishing a whole-school approach to assessment that makes use of some of the best practice already available in the school;
- 2) putting in place procedures for assessing pupils' progress against the key objectives in literacy and numeracy;
- 3) ensuring that assessment and record keeping include pupils' personal development as well as pupils' approaches to learning.

(paragraphs 10,23,24,39,41,80,89,95,101,105)

develop the roles of the curriculum co-ordinators to enable them to monitor teaching, learning, pupils' progress and attainment by:

- 1) providing subject co-ordinators with detailed job descriptions which map out their roles and responsibilities clearly;
- 2) giving subject co-ordinators training in the strategies needed for classroom observations and work sampling;
- 3) planning regular opportunities systematically for subject co-ordinators to observe classroom practice and scrutinise curriculum planning and pupils' work.

(paragraphs 50,80,89,95,101,111)

improve the planning and provision for pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum and in collective worship; (paragraph 34)

ensure that all children in the Reception Year receive the full range of appropriate experiences relevant to their age and prepare for the introduction of the foundation stage by:

- 1) appointing a co-ordinator with a job description;
- 2) establishing a foundation stage policy and introducing a foundation stage curriculum and planning and assessments systems based on the Early Learning Goals.

(paragraphs 17,26,27,40,61,65,66,67,69)

The first two key issues are included in the school's development plan for 1999/2000.

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

increasing the opportunities that pupils have for developing their independent writing and research skills across the curriculum;(paragraphs 11,76,110,132)

preparing a whole-school approach to ensuring that some pupils to work more quietly so that they develop more independence and responsibility when working individually or as a group;(paragraphs 13,22)

reviewing and updating health and safety procedures;(paragraph 36)

ensuring that statutory requirements are met by appointing a governor for special educational needs, including all the required information in the governors' annual report for parents and establishing management performance procedures.(paragraphs 46,52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 31 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 24 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| | 26.7 | 50.0 | 20.0 | 3.3 | | |

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | | 157 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | | 10 |

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | 3 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | | 25 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 2 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 13 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 19 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.1 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | | | | |
|--|---------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 1999(8) | 10 | 14 | 24 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| | Girls | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| | Total | 19 | 20 | 20 |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above | School | 79 (82) | 83 (71) | 83 (88) |
| | National | 82 (77) | 83 (81) | 87 (84) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| | Girls | 13 | 13 | 12 |
| | Total | 20 | 20 | 18 |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above | School | 83 (82) | 83 (82) | 75 (100) |
| | National | 82 (81) | 86 (85) | 87 (86) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | | | | |
|--|---------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 1999(8) | 11 | 15 | 26 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| | Girls | 10 | 10 | 9 |
| | Total | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above | School | 61(52) | 61(50) | 61(70) |
| | National | 70 (65) | 69 (59) | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| | Girls | 11 | 10 | 9 |
| | Total | 17 | 14 | 14 |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above | School | 74 (70) | 61 (63) | 61 (81) |
| | National | 68 (65) | 69 (65) | 78 (71) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | |
| Black – African heritage | |
| Black – other | 2 |
| Indian | |
| Pakistani | |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | |
| White | 155 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 6.1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 25.7 |
| Average class size | 31.4 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 70.5 |

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Financial year | 1998/9 |
|----------------|--------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 286,319 |
| Total expenditure | 283,773 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,819 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 10,009 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 12,555 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

157

Number of questionnaires returned

60

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 45.8 | 47.5 | 6.8 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 20.3 | 64.4 | 5.1 | 1.7 | 8.5 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 13.6 | 62.7 | 11.9 | 6.8 | 5.1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 15.5 | 65.5 | 13.8 | 3.4 | 1.7 |
| The teaching is good. | 31.0 | 51.7 | 6.9 | 1.7 | 8.6 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 22.4 | 25.9 | 31.0 | 13.8 | 6.9 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 35.6 | 39.0 | 13.6 | 8.5 | 3.4 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 25.9 | 58.6 | 5.2 | 3.4 | 6.9 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 16.9 | 32.2 | 32.2 | 11.9 | 6.8 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 15.5 | 46.6 | 10.3 | 1.7 | 25.9 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 13.8 | 62.1 | 10.3 | 3.4 | 10.3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 10.5 | 22.8 | 56.1 | 7.0 | 3.5 |

Other issues raised by parents

The inaccessibility of teachers because of recent changes made to the start of the school day.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60 Children are admitted to school in the Autumn Term after their fourth birthday. They start on a part-time basis and by the end of October the majority receive full-time education. All pupils must receive full time education from the beginning of the term in which they become five. At the time of the inspection there were 17 children in the Reception Year and 10 of these children were under five. The class also contained 11 Year 1 pupils. Records of attainment for most children are received from the local playgroup and baseline assessments are carried out shortly after admission. These show an average spread of attainment in the current intake. By the age of five the great majority are on line to achieve what is expected of pupils of that age when taking account of the government's 's guidance for young children's learning.

61 The Reception Year group is mostly made up of children who are under five. However, there is no Early Years policy and no teacher has responsibility for developing Early Years provision. Planning and provision for the new Foundation Stage, which must be introduced in September, are not included in the school development plan. The class teacher and the nursery nurse have created a good quality unit for the age group and meet the needs of the under-fives and the Year 1 pupils effectively in some aspects of literacy and numeracy, in which the children make good progress. However, in other areas of learning they have some difficulty in balancing the needs of the two age groups within the class.

Language and literacy

62 Children make good progress in language and literacy and attain above what is expected nationally by the age of five because of the good teaching. They listen attentively to adults and to each other, both in discussion times, and when stories are being shared. The teacher has made a 'good listening' chart which, with the aid of photographs, encourages good habits. The children are happy to talk about what they have heard, seen or experienced when in small groups. In role-play, they can use appropriate language which, during the inspection, involved fitting and buying shoes in the 'shoe shop'. The majority of children have made a good start in learning to read. They are learning the shape, sound and name of individual letters and can read words from memory. Some are already readers and are able to talk about the content and characters of their stories. Children are introduced to reading through a structured reading scheme and are able to take their books home to share with their parents. Every child settled happily during a short period of silent reading with books of their own choice. Some 'talked' their way through a well known story and others read words which they had remembered from a shared reading time. They are learning to form letters correctly and are encouraged to write their own sentences in emerging script with the support of an adult.

Mathematics

62 Children make good progress in mathematics and attain above the national expectation by the age of five. Teaching in this aspect is good. In the one lesson seen children demonstrated confident use of mathematical language and the ordering and counting of numbers up to 20 by placing cards on a washing line. They are beginning to write numbers and to understand simple adding and taking away. They can create repeating patterns by threading beads and count the number of beads in each pattern. They have experience of and can talk about solid shapes and are currently working on cylinder collages.

63 The children are included in the time allocated to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and many of them are benefiting from the challenging activities involving word and sentence analysis and mental and oral number work. There are, however, younger or lower attaining children who become restless during the extended periods of concentration required for some aspects of the literacy work. In numeracy, they remain interested in the whole-class introduction when the tasks are practical. However, in literacy and numeracy they have not developed the confidence to speak much, beyond brief answers to questions, in these whole class sessions because the work is too challenging. Some of this daily activity is not appropriate for all the under fives. In numeracy, when they work separately from the Year 1 pupils, they are able to show independence of the adult involved when asked to do so. They can choose from a range of activities offered, work collaboratively and concentrate to complete the task set. Adults are used to promote language and literacy and mathematical skills' development in play activities but this opportunity is not available to the children often enough. The assessment and record system is not comprehensive enough to keep account of children's difficulties and successes as they use language and mathematics across the curriculum in practical situations.

Personal and social development

65 Children make satisfactory progress in their personal and social development and their attainment is in line with national recommendations by the age of five. They are well settled in the class and are confident in daily routines. They sit quietly and attentively for quite long periods of time in assemblies and in formal literacy hour sessions. They are confident generally when answering questions during whole-class discussions. They persevere with teacher directed tasks and concentrate well on self-selected activities. They interact well with each other and share sensibly. They understand and adhere to the agreed rules for behaviour in the classroom. They are learning to look after their own and the school's property. The emphasis is upon adult directed tasks, however, and this is resulting in pupils having too few opportunities to develop independence in selecting their own activities and resources. Teaching is sound in this aspect.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66 Teaching is sound in this aspect of learning and children make satisfactory progress overall in their knowledge and understanding of the world and by the age of five attain what is expected for their age. Evidence of pupils' attainment and progress was drawn from classroom displays and other past work. The children had handled and used different materials and had experimented with magnets. They are encouraged to talk about their families and where they live in a regular 'VIP of the Week' feature. They have taken part in Chinese New Year celebrations and experienced food, festival and calligraphy. They all have exercise books in which they record historical, geographical and scientific experiences that they have shared. This recording is very formal and serves well to illustrate how some of the work is beyond the understanding of the under-fives. For example the copying of circuit diagrams is too advanced for the needs of many children of this age group. Children were not seen during the inspection using information technology skills as part of their activities as there was no computer in the classroom.

Physical development

67 Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development and attain in line with what is expected for their age. Their attainment is good for their age in terms of developing manipulative skills. They use tools, pencils, paints and small construction apparatus with increasing confidence. When building junk models, children are willing to try out their own ideas and discuss their success with an adult. Physical development involving whole body movement is not planned for as often as it should. Whole class physical education lessons were not seen but take place. Occasionally one of the adults takes a small group to use bicycles in the school hall or the playground. There is a limitation placed on the use of large apparatus and equipment through the class not having an outside play area. Teaching is sound in this aspect of learning.

Creative development

68 Children make satisfactory progress in their creative development and attain the national expectation by the age of five. They are given a wide variety of tasks in two- and three-dimensions. The tendency is for adults to direct the activities, thus limiting children's freedom to explore. Two children who were seen contributing to their own chalk drawing on a blackboard, were producing more lively and individual work than much of that exhibited in the room. Music was not seen, although it takes place as planned on the timetable. Imaginative play is promoted during certain times in the week. Teaching is satisfactory.

69 The teacher and the nursery nurse plan and work together to deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of the mixed-age class and to extend the higher attaining pupils. They are familiar with the nationally recommended programme for under-fives and keep this in mind when adapting some of the activities provided for the older pupils to meet the needs of the youngest children. Their planning is not rooted in a comprehensive assessment system and as a result many of the activities provided are the same for the under-fives, Reception Year and Year 1. A significant number of the activities are planned by content and not to meet the identified needs of the children.

70 Overall the quality of teaching is good. During a literacy hour, the children were supported well through the sequence of activities making up that structured hour. The lively and sympathetic approach gained and retained the interest of the pupils for all but the time spent on word structure, when the content was too challenging for some. In the numeracy hour, the skilful use of resources and lively questioning holds the interest of pupils of a wide range of ability for a sustained period. Good organisation ensures that pupils are familiar and confident with routines. In a lesson that included a design and technology workshop, four other adults were used very well to support small groups of pupils. This enabled the teacher to spend an extended time with a small group and demonstrated her understanding of the needs of these young children. The children were encouraged to try their own ideas, to talk about the degree of success they were having and to take their work further.

ENGLISH

71 In the 1999 national tests in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment overall was below the national average in reading and in line with the national average in writing. In the 1999 national tests in English at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attained close to the national average. From 1996 to 1999, since the last inspection, there have been fluctuations in the standards achieved in reading at the end of Key Stage 1. However, apart from 1998 when pupils' attainment was in line with the national average, standards have been below average. In contrast, writing has been in line with the national average or above over the same period. Key Stage 2 attainment in English over the same four years shows improvement from below average in 1996 to above the national average in 1997 and 1999. When compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' attainment in 1999 was well below average. No evidence was found during the inspection to explain this difference between the standards in English in the school and those in similar schools because the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes are good.

72 Pupils' work seen during the inspection, shows levels of attainment in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages, although there is some higher attainment in some aspects of reading at the end of both key stages and in expressive writing in Year 6. This is broadly in line with the findings of the last inspection.

73 Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory at the end of both key stages with some examples of both good and very good attainment. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils listen well and are keen to share their knowledge and understanding. In a 'show and tell' session in Years 1 and 2 pupils responded to the teacher's challenge to seek information about topics being studied in the class and were confident to talk, whilst their peers listened with interest. This regular session is well managed by the teacher, who creates an atmosphere where the pupils, who are less confident speakers, feel able to make a contribution, and higher attaining pupils speak at length. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are required to express themselves with an ever-widening vocabulary, and have to listen very carefully in order to be able to take part in whole-class debate. A group of confident speakers, representing all age groups, exhibited a high level of speaking and listening in a half-hour formal discussion about their views on the school.

74 Reading standards are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and rising above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils are offered a wide range of different texts in shared reading sessions, and they listen with interest and participate enthusiastically, learning to read new vocabulary and to read aloud with greater fluency. They develop a keen interest in books. All pupils have regular and frequent individual reading experience with adults in the school, and through the home-school reading arrangements. Teachers have recruited the help of enthusiastic and capable volunteers to support this work. The importance of reading is stressed further in class through regular silent reading times. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils read simple texts with understanding and a good level of accuracy. They can talk about what is happening in stories and express opinions about characters and events. They understand alphabetical order and are beginning to be able to find words in an index.

75 In Key Stage 2, the study of texts in literacy lessons is having a very positive effect upon pupils' ability to use inference and deduction when reading. This was demonstrated well during the study of different versions of the Cinderella story, when one pupil put forward her ideas about Cinderella's vulnerability when not supported by the Fairy Godmother. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils read a good variety of texts in addition to developing in-depth appreciation of the work of selected authors. They read fluently, with obvious enjoyment, and can talk with confidence about characters and events in stories. They have good reference skills and enjoy using books to locate information, although they have insufficient opportunities to work in this way.

76 Standards of writing are satisfactory overall at the end of both key stages with pupils writing for a variety of purposes within the literacy hour, including factual accounts, description, imaginative stories, poetry and personal writing. The quantity of writing done is modest in most classes with chances being missed for pupils to record their own work. This is because too much emphasis is placed on the use of worksheets to record findings when pupils are competent in writing independently. In Key Stage 1 most writing is promoted through literacy hours and, whilst these are very valuable lessons, they promote more written exercises than chances to write freely. In Key Stage 2 this approach continues, although the drafted and re-drafted work on myths and legends in Class 4 shows that, when time can be found, these pupils can write well constructed accounts. In one class with pupils from Years 5 and 6 the teaching approach results in pupils producing some impressive, high-quality work, particularly by high attaining Year 6 pupils. In recent work, deep thinking has been promoted when pupils have written about the emotions of fear and anger. Challenging teaching has resulted in writing that is above national average standard.

77 The literacy hour structure is promoting improved performance in spelling and development of vocabulary. Handwriting is formed correctly at an early stage and grammatical awareness, the construction of sentences and the use of punctuation is improving satisfactorily. However, pupils do not have enough time to use their developing skills in drafting, re-working and editing written composition in Key Stage 2. There is some deterioration in handwriting in Key Stage 2 as pupils fail to consolidate a fluent, joined style.

78 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and mostly good, with some that is very good in both key stages. All teaching seen during the inspection was in literacy hours. Lesson planning for these is detailed and identifies very clearly what pupils are to gain from the work. In the majority of lessons teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is good; teaching is well organised and pupils respond to this with interest. Most teachers have good, natural relationships with their classes but are prepared to be firm when necessary, which results in generally good attitudes and behaviour. Teachers have to work very hard to gain and retain the attention of some pupils. Also, some pupils do not have well-developed skills as independent learners and when working independently of the teacher, engage in social chatter unrelated to the task set. Teachers know their pupils well and group them in such a way as to be able to provide tasks of a suitable level of challenge. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress, with some that is good in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when withdrawn for literacy and in their reading. All work is marked and, in the very best marking, comments are written and targets are set to help pupils to improve their work. Homework is regularly given, checked and discussed with pupils.

79 The direct teaching required by the National Literacy Strategy is being tackled well by teachers. They use good questioning techniques when working on shared texts, which is helping pupils to acquire new knowledge and understanding at a good rate. They are active throughout group work sessions as they challenge and extend pupils' thinking so that generally pupils have positive attitudes to learning, work at a good pace and show good levels of concentration. They are sympathetic and encouraging in the whole-class discussion at the end of lessons when pupils share their experiences with the rest of the class, and understanding is consolidated.

80 Subject co-ordination has ensured the effective implementation of the literacy hour. The recently produced subject development plan shows some awareness of issues that need to be tackled. Discussion with the co-ordinators reveals a strong commitment to developing the provision in their subject and a sense of anticipation that, with a new management approach in the school, they are to be enabled to take the decisions and actions necessary to raise standards further in English. However, the subject development plan does not address the issue of assessment and recording sufficiently and there is no whole-school system in place to ensure that pupils' strengths and weaknesses are assessed and recorded systematically in literacy.

MATHEMATICS

81 Pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national expectations overall. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, although at the end of Key Stage 2 in the national tests standards have risen more than the national average. There is evidence that more pupils in the current Year 5 are on course to exceed the national expectation at the end of Year 6 in the Year 2001. When compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' attainment in 1999 was well below the national average at the end of both key stages. No evidence was found during the inspection to explain why standards were well below those of similar schools as the quality of teaching in mathematics is good and pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.

82 Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory overall at the end of Year 2. Pupils are able to count forwards and backwards in steps of five and ten from a range of two-digit numbers. The majority of pupils recognise two digit numbers that are multiples of five and a few higher attaining pupils are able to carry out these mental tasks within three digit numbers. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of place value. They are able to undertake appropriate written calculations involving addition, subtraction and multiplication. They can generally explain their methods of working orally. The highest attaining pupils show a good ability to recognise patterns, for example when adding five to two digit numbers, and to generalise from this to work out answers quickly. They can choose their own methods of recording. In their past work, pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding in measuring and shape. They are able to use their mathematical skills satisfactorily when measuring and weighing in other subjects, such as design and technology and art.

83 Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory overall at the end of Year 6. Pupils have a secure understanding of place value and this was evident when they were explaining the relative values of decimals, such 0.007 and 0.07. They are also able to recognise the equivalence between decimal and fraction forms. When finding the perimeter of a range of shapes, pupils in the lower mathematics set demonstrate confidence in mental calculations, such as doubling, and in recording their method informally, and more formally by using brackets, for example $(10 \times 2) + (6 \times 2)$. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of area and perimeter and are able to measure accurately. In the higher set for mathematics, pupils show a good knowledge of the properties of shapes, including parallel faces, angles and rotational symmetry. They are able to give the properties of different triangles with good use of mathematical language. They use protractors accurately to measure acute and obtuse angles. Pupils are good at explaining their methods of working across the ability range but their mental recall is not fast enough.

84 Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to apply their skills to support work in other subjects, such as the use of co-ordinates in geography and working out dates and time scales in history. The work that pupils do in design and technology makes an effective contribution to their skills in measurement. However, the nature of the work in most foundation subjects does not often provide sufficient challenge for pupils in use of their numeracy skills.

85 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Teachers plan well to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy so that during the year pupils make at least satisfactory progress, with some that is good. Pupils make good progress with mathematical reasoning. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and use accurate mathematical language. They use the direct teaching required effectively and offer clear explanations. As a result, pupils listen attentively and know what they are working to achieve. Teachers question pupils skilfully so that they promote pupils' thinking and encourage them to use appropriate operations, explain their reasoning, and use their own methods of recording their findings on occasions. This has a very positive impact on pupils' learning because they are confident to explore different methods of working. However, teachers do not provide many opportunities, particularly in Key Stage 2, for pupils to take increasing responsibility for making decisions in solving problems so that they select their own approaches and related materials.

86 Teachers listen carefully to pupils' responses in order to assess their progress and often use the information gained to plan future work for them. In Key Stage 1 tasks are often well matched to the pupils' needs. However, in Key Stage 2 the work is not always appropriately challenging. In lower Key Stage 2, this is because pupils are often completing worksheets, which they are not always able to understand. In upper Key Stage 2 the higher attaining pupils sometimes spend too much time in consolidation of previous learning. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and sometimes good progress in the targets in their individual education plans.

87 Teachers provide interesting activities and use resources well and, as a result, pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and are able to work independently of the teacher when appropriate. They manage pupils well so that pupils concentrate for sustained periods in introductions to lessons, work at a good pace, form positive relationships with each other

and behave well. However, some pupils are too noisy when working individually and this limits the amount they produce in a session. The majority of teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils in terms of presentation and in the vast majority of classes pupils present their work carefully and neatly. They use homework effectively to support and extend the work of the classroom.

88 Throughout the school teachers use some interesting games to promote pupils recall of number facts but this aspect of pupils' learning is not addressed as regularly as pupils' reasoning. Most teachers are aware of the need to increase pupils' speed of recall but others accept responses that are too slow.

89 The co-ordinators have provided suitable training for the staff in the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is implemented effectively. It provides a framework that enables teachers to use the published mathematics scheme more selectively to match work to pupils' needs. This shows improvement since the last inspection. Procedures for assessment of pupils' progress in the key objectives in the National Numeracy Framework are not yet in place to enable sufficient information to be passed to the next teacher at the end of the year. The headteacher has planned opportunities for the subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning in mathematics in the summer term of this year; thus addressing a weakness identified in the last inspection report when this aspect of their role was under developed. Learning resources are satisfactory overall but are limited in range and quantity in some classrooms. They are not always well arranged and clearly labelled for easy access.

SCIENCE

90 Pupils' attainment in science has remained broadly in line with that found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils at the end of both key stages attain in line with what is expected nationally and on occasion above. The results of national tests in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below the national average and very low against similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, pupils' performance in lessons during the inspection and scrutiny of their work suggest that standards are rising and that results in the Year 2000 tests will be higher.

91 Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a sound understanding of the properties of materials and know for example that magnetic force can be transferred from a magnet to another metal object. In Year 1 pupils were able to magnetise a nail sufficiently for it to pick up paper clips. In Year 2 pupils can name a wide range of materials. When looking at a bicycle brought into the classroom they could identify metal, rubber and plastic and describe why materials are selected for particular purposes. Pupils' ability to predict and explain what they have been doing is sound, such as in their work on magnetism they were able to describe accurately what they had observed in their experiments. With teacher help they can set up a simple investigation.

92 In Key Stage 2 pupils are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of physical processes. In one class pupils from Years 4 and 5 demonstrated in discussion that they know that sound has many sources and is heard by the human ear in a variety of forms. They know that sound becomes fainter as it moves away from its source and they have some knowledge of the function and physiology of the human ear.

93 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers place good emphasis on investigative work and thus provide a good basis for pupils to develop their scientific skills and understanding. Teachers are skilled at demonstrating scientific phenomena without showing pupils the final outcome so that pupils are enabled to predict, question and observe. For example, one teacher in Key Stage 1 showed pupils how to magnetise a nail, but did not indicate what force the nail would have and the pupils explored and discovered this for themselves. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and their use of enquiry and open-ended questioning impacts positively on the progress that pupils make. Tasks are planned carefully and, as a result, pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress in both key stages. By the upper part of Key Stage 2, pupils use a wider range of scientific vocabulary and increase their confidence and accuracy when undertaking scientific investigations.

94 Pupils in both key stages take part in science lessons with enthusiasm and are eager to learn. They enjoy their lessons and are suitably challenged. They are confident and enthusiastic about undertaking investigations and express surprise and awe at the results. Their behaviour is generally good and pupils work well together within group investigative work. Some pupils in upper Key Stage 2 find difficulty in working quietly. They have not yet developed an appropriate sense of responsibility in their approach to work and require constant supervision from the teacher to maintain concentration.

95 A sound policy for science is in place alongside the Local Education Authority published scheme of work, which is used to ensure that statutory requirements are met in the subject. Resources are good and generally accessible, although an audit is about to be undertaken to ensure that the widest range of equipment is always on hand for a particular piece of work. Assessment in science is limited to the completion of a commercial recording system. There is therefore insufficient, detailed assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge to be used to plan their future work. Two members of staff share the co-ordination of the subject and provide good leadership, although currently they are not able to undertake lesson observations in order to check on standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

ART

96 Observations were made of the two lessons that took place during the days of the inspection. Little past work had been retained for scrutiny but work displayed around the school was examined and discussed with pupils, particularly in Years 2 and 6.

97 In Year 2 pupils are able to draw from observation with satisfactory awareness of shape and pencil control. Their use of shading and line to show texture and detail is not developed well enough for their age. When painting, pupils are able to mix colours effectively. Some pupils have a good knowledge of the work of artists and are able to express their opinions very confidently about the artists' style and use of colour. Pupils are able to use information technology well to create landscapes in the style of Constable, with satisfactory awareness of the use of space.

98 In Year 6 pupils are able to use line, tone and pattern very well when drawing hands and collected stones from observation. When working with paper collage they are able to express their ideas imaginatively.

99 The quality of teaching is just satisfactory overall in both key stages. Teachers' planning for each term shows that they are offering pupils a satisfactory range of work. However, within the lessons seen the planning and the teaching was not always focused enough on the skills or knowledge and understanding to be developed and expectations in respect of these were not always high enough. As a result, pupils did know how they could improve their work. Within one lesson pupils consolidated their drawing of the shape of tools collected but did not increase their use of tone and line. In the other lesson pupils made satisfactory progress in their understanding of what it feels like to draw directly from nature but did not increase their understanding of Monet's style sufficiently. Teachers make good use of resources and as a result they motivate pupils well, but sometimes the range is too wide. For example, in one class pupils from Years 4 and 5 were able to copy the work of a number of artists, making good use of watercolours. However, their knowledge and understanding of the work of any one artist was very limited. Teachers manage pupils well so that they listen attentively to explanations and concentrate and behave well when working individually. They promote positive pupil attitudes to the subject.

100 The school has an appropriate scheme of work which teachers use to plan lessons. However, the quality of the experiences that the pupils have varies across the school and does not always build sufficiently on their skills from year to year. As a result, the progress that pupils make across both key stages is unsatisfactory. For example, sketchbooks are used in all classes in Key Stage 2 but there is little improvement in the way they support the development of skills. Art supports work in other subjects effectively but sometimes the combination of art with other subjects, such as design and technology, means that the teaching of specific art skills is given insufficient emphasis. The school has planned appropriately to review the school's curriculum to meet the new requirements for the Year 2000.

101 The curriculum co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop the subject but has not previously had a clear role in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning to raise standards. There has been little change in the provision and attainment in the subject since the last inspection. Assessment procedures provide little information to teachers in the planning of appropriate future work. Resources are satisfactory in the school as a whole but are limited in range and quantity in some classrooms. They are not always well arranged and clearly labelled for easy access.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102 Pupils' attainment in design and technology at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. Some individual examples of work are above national expectations. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.

103 In Key Stage 1 pupils use reclaimable material to make models of good quality. They can select the correct fixing agents and they know that glue works better in certain applications than adhesive tape. They handle a range of tools with confidence and make good progress in the accuracy with which they cut material using scissors. Pupils' technical language is good so that they can discuss techniques and describe their intentions. The

more able pupils give an evaluation of the success of their design or technique. Good teaching in the Key Stage enables pupils to make satisfactory and often good progress, particularly in their attempts to make a finished product of quality. The teaching is informed by good subject knowledge, good knowledge of young pupils' capability and careful planning and preparation of materials.

104 In Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory and often better progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding and develop further their capacity to design, make and evaluate an article of good quality. Good teaching in the Key Stage promotes pupils' interest and skills, for example in the construction of a wheeled vehicle the teacher constantly challenged pupils with questions, such as, "Will it move freely if you do that?" or "What will happen if you use too much glue or the axles are not aligned correctly?" In another class when pupils design and make a sun blind, they evaluate materials and consider budgets. The good quality teaching encourages them to explore a range of options and evaluate their choice carefully. Pupils respond to the good teaching very positively; they discuss maturely using appropriate technical language and are creative in their ideas. Teachers set a good pace of working in lessons and the pupils respond well to this approach by maintaining concentration. They apply skills learned in other subject areas, for example considerable mathematics is involved in the measuring and budgeting aspects of both projects. Pupils work together in groups effectively, share ideas and value each other's comments and efforts.

105 Assessment is limited to completing checklists of skills. The subject is led well by the subject co-ordinator who has good subject knowledge and sound plans for the development of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

106 Due to timetabling arrangements only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection. Evidence from this lesson, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff, along with examination of teachers' planning suggests that pupils' attainments at the end of each key stage are in line with national expectations as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress across the school and have satisfactory geographical skills and knowledge and use good vocabulary. Young pupils talk freely about their local environment and can describe how to follow directions, for example from the playground to a particular classroom. They have the beginning of good understanding of weather and weather patterns. In Key Stage 2 pupils can discuss places, for example, they have some sense of differences between localities. In one class pupils from Years 5 and 6 displayed mature understanding of the different features of villages, cities and conurbations in studies of settlements. The geographical language used was good and they understood issues of infrastructure, for example transport, housing and services.

107 The teaching in the lesson seen was good. The teacher planned the lesson well and had good subject knowledge so that the activities presented to the pupils were interesting and suitably challenging. Teachers' planning and pupils' standard of work and level of knowledge suggest that teaching in geography across the school is at least satisfactory and has improved since the time of the last inspection. Teachers make good use of the local environment and residential visits to make pupils' learning experiences practical and relevant.

HISTORY

108 Judgements made about history are based upon one lesson observation, study of pupils' books and discussion with two groups of pupils and the subject co-ordinator. Pupils make satisfactory progress within both key stages and their attainment at the end of each key stage is in line with national expectations overall, which is a similar finding to the last inspection.

109 Discussion with Key Stage 1 pupils about their recorded work shows them to be developing a good understanding of some differences between how people have lived in the past and how we live today. They are able to do that in the context of their own lives as they talk about babyhood and childhood. They can also recognise changes over time from studying the lives of people of their grandparents' generation and characters from British history, such as Robin Hood. They find information from photographs, pictures and film, and record what they know through drawing and writing. Key Stage 2 pupils from Year 6 have a satisfactory recollection of information about life in Ancient Greece. They can use this information to describe, for example, the importance to the Greeks of physical fitness for men and domestic competence for women; how schools were provided for boys only and the nature of their education; how some of our language is derived from Greek words.

110 In both key stages the work recorded is largely related to reproducing factual information. Overall, insufficient use is made of first-hand resources to stimulate enquiry and imagination. Key Stage 2 pupils do not use research skills enough to select and combine information on a subject and present what they find in their own ways. Without these skills, they cannot reach the higher levels of attainment in the subject. The limited amount of time given to the subject means that the quality of the experiences given to the pupils is not always high enough. The school has not yet developed an approach in which history could be enriched by teaching it as part of other subjects, such as Greek decorated pottery in art, or role play about life in a Victorian wash house in drama. Whole school procedures for making assessments of pupils' attainment and progress in learning skills or knowledge of history are not yet in place.

111 The co-ordinator is keen to take advantage of the opportunities that are to be provided for visits to other classrooms. Currently, she is not able to be informed about the quality of teaching and learning and standards in order to make decisions about aspects of the subject requiring improvement.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112 Standards in information technology at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations. The use and application of information technology show considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection when information technology was under-used. Consequently, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject, although generally satisfactory, were limited in their range. A computer suite housing eleven workstations has been created and pupils show great confidence and maturity when using this facility.

113 At Key Stage 1 pupils can load programs and enter, store and retrieve information. Pupils from Years 1 and 2 were able to generate a picture in the style of a Constable landscape using a computer programme. Pupils show good skills using the computer in this way to generate ideas. They have good awareness of the functions of the computer, using the mouse and the keyboard competently and with confidence. In Key Stage 2 pupils can construct a two-dimensional plan using logo, including 90° and 45° turns, operate the Pendown system and save their work on file. Keyboard and mouse control skills are very good and pupils' knowledge of what the computer programmes are capable of is good. Pupils' understanding of computer control and modelling is satisfactory and most are very competent at word-processing.

114 Pupils at both key stages are very enthusiastic about information technology. They follow instructions carefully, behave well and work together co-operatively in groups.

115 The good quality teaching observed in information technology lessons plays a major role in the good progress that pupils make and in the good behaviour which pupils display.

116 Teachers' confidence and competence in using information technology ranges from satisfactory to very good. They plan lessons very thoroughly and have high expectations that pupils will use the equipment correctly and work independently. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and keen to promote the subject. He supports colleagues, and has a high level of awareness of the opportunities and potential offered by the subject. Resources are good within the computer suite and in these timetabled lessons pupils use them well to support work in subjects of the curriculum, such as art and mathematics. A wide range of good software is in place that enables pupils to experience all aspects of the subject. As funds allow the school plans to provide some computers in classrooms that can be used by pupils to extend their work across the curriculum

MUSIC

117 At the time of the last inspection music was judged to be one of the strengths of the school. Much of that strength lay in the expertise of one member of staff and was not shared fully with other teachers in the school as part of their professional development. As a result, with the retirement of this key member of staff, some of the subject knowledge has been lost. However, all teachers continue to teach music to their own classes and pupils have frequent opportunities to use percussion instruments.

118 During this inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson and the music that was part of assemblies. Therefore, It is not possible to make a judgement about standards or the quality of teaching and learning. However, based on these observations, the study of teachers' planning and discussions with co-ordinators it is judged that that the provision for the subject is in need of further development. The main reason for this is that the music policy and supporting documentation only state what needs to be achieved for each class in general terms and give no guidance as to how this should be done. Non-specialist class teachers are required to devise their own lessons and there is no guarantee that experiences will build sufficiently from one year to the next. The co-ordinators have only recently taken responsibility for the subject and have already drawn up a subject development plan. They intend to seek advice on how best to establish a scheme of work that will meet the particular requirements of the school.

119 Some pupils benefit from regular instrumental tuition from visiting teachers and a number of those were heard accompanying singing with confidence in assembly. Brass and woodwind tuition is, and has been for many years, a valuable enrichment of experience for those who choose to take advantage of the opportunity. Two boys are learning to play the guitar through the voluntary efforts of a teacher and are making good progress. The quality of the short periods of musical appreciation provided as part of assemblies is poor. With careful planning this could provide a small part of the 'listening and appraising' requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study for music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120 Due to the timetabling arrangements physical education was only observed in Key Stage 2 during the inspection. Pupils were seen participating in games and dance.

121 Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national expectations, with some attainment that is above in games and dance. The standards observed at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.

122 In lessons observed in Key Stage 2 pupils are well motivated and work hard across a range of games activities, including soccer, rugby, hockey and netball. They develop good stick control in hockey. They know how to stop and propel a ball accurately. In rugby, pupils work hard to improve ball handling and have a good sense of position. In netball, pupils can pass accurately and are mastering the art of ensuring they are not travelling before making a pass. They are keen to demonstrate their skills and are well behaved.

123 Good teaching by the subject co-ordinator supported by skilled volunteer coaches ensures that pupils make good progress in games and dance. The teaching is challenging, conducted at a good pace and informed by very good subject knowledge, which enables the teacher and the coaches to give good demonstrations of technique. Pupils develop good evaluation skills. When asked to evaluate their techniques, they give mature responses, which indicate that they understand the importance of the right technique. For example, pupils were able to identify that the hockey ball will not travel in the intended direction unless the stick has firm and accurate follow-through.

124 Pupils work well together in coached sessions. They help each other and communicate ideas and advice. They understand some health and safety issues, for example the importance of warming up and down. Pupils demonstrate good levels of self-discipline in games lessons. They enjoy physical activity and most, though not all, change into appropriate clothing and footwear. Pupils' level of performance in dance is very high. Skilled and enthusiastic teaching has enabled pupils to produce very mature sequences, interpret music creatively and complete a very polished performance. They show pride in their performance and apply themselves to the subject in a very mature manner. Pupils of all ability levels work well together in games and dance lessons and all activities are held within mixed gender groups. Pupils make good gains in learning throughout their time in school and the good work seen in Key Stage 2 is obviously influenced by work undertaken in Key Stage 1.

125 The co-ordinator is a skilled physical education teacher whose approach and subject knowledge enthuses pupils and supports colleagues. Subject documentation is good and assessment consists of checklists of skills which monitor pupils' performance adequately.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126 Only one lesson in religious education was observed because all other lessons during the inspection week took place outside the inspection days. In addition pupils' past work was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils about the work seen. Pupils' attainment in both key stages is in line with what is expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus.

127 By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge and satisfactory understanding of some Bible stories, such as The Prodigal Son and are able to talk about the feelings of the father and his sons, for example caring and being jealous. From the story of the parable of the shepherd who lost his sheep, pupils are able to consider how they show care and concern for each other. Some pupils know that the story of the creation is in the Bible and that the Qu'ran is a special book.

128 By the end of Year 6 pupils have good knowledge of the traditions of Sikhism and Hinduism. They are aware of religious symbols associated with these religions, such as the wearing of particular clothes. They are able to use appropriate vocabulary for names of special buildings, books and clothes. They are beginning to understand that there are some characteristics that are common to religions. Their understanding of the significance of belief in people's lives is satisfactory.

129 It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning in the subject overall based on the range of evidence available. However, teachers' planning shows that the pupils have a range of experiences that are matched to the programmes included in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and enables them to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress as they move from year to year or across an area of study. They promote in pupils a respect for the beliefs of others, a willingness to share their views and positive attitudes generally to the subject. However, teachers' planning does not always identify clearly enough how pupils' understanding is to be developed and this results in work that is sometimes not relevant enough to the pupils' age and experience. The range of resources used generally does not enhance pupils' learning in this respect, although there are some good examples of the use of visitors who talk about their festivals and celebrations. For example, some American parents who talked about Thanksgiving celebrations and pupils have made visits to the local church and the cathedral.

130 Teachers mostly mark pupils' work regularly and ensure that pupils present their work neatly and carefully. However, the quality of marking varies and at its best the teachers' comments make clear to pupils how they need to improve their work. A system is not yet in place for assessing pupils' progress against the locally Agreed Syllabus.

131 The main co-ordinator for religious education has only just taken on this responsibility and has not had time to develop the role. She is aware of the need to improve some aspects of the subject, particularly in respect of the use of a wider range of resources. Resources are few in number and limited in range but the school is able to borrow artefacts from the local Diocesan Centre.

132 The provision for religious education has improved since the last inspection and now has a clearer focus as a result of staff discussion of the recently introduced locally Agreed Syllabus. However, there continues to be a need to make the work more relevant for the pupils both in the teachers' delivery and in the range of methods of recording used by pupils. Work in religious education supports pupils in the development of their literacy skills satisfactorily in Key Stage 2 as they frequently record their work in written form, although they do not use a wide range of writing styles. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, cultural and moral development.