

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Belper, Derbyshire

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112875

Headteacher: Mr P Blunsdon

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt
11565

Dates of inspection: 12th-16th June 2000

Inspection number: 188846

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 category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Laund Nook
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Hodson

Date of previous inspection: 10th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Platt	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it?
		English as an additional language	Schools results and achievements
		Under fives	How well are pupils taught?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Mr T Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr R Willey	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Design and technology	
		Geography	
		Equal opportunities	
Ms J Taylor	Team inspector	Information technology	
		Art	
Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	English	How well does the school care for its' pupils?
		History	
		Religious education	
Mr R Barton	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. John's is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school. It is bigger than other primary schools having 449 boys and girls on roll. The school has increased significantly since the previous inspection and this has extended accommodation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (9.18%) is below the national average. The number of pupils coming from homes where English is not the first language is low. Currently, 13 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and 11 pupils have formal statements of need which is broadly average. The school serves an area of mixed housing. Due to the school's popularity many pupils travel to school from further afield and their backgrounds encompass the full socio-economic range. Attainment on entry to the school is generally average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Teaching is sound for children under five and good in the infant and junior classes. This enables pupils to reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and is effective in bringing about changes for the benefit of the school. The school manages its budget prudently and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards for 11 year olds are above average in English, mathematics, science and information technology. Speaking and listening skills are very high.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership. He is supported well by the deputy head, staff and governors who work as a team to achieve high standards in all aspects of the school's work.
- The curriculum is good with a very wide and interesting range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils are interested and involved in activities and their attitudes to work are very good.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. It successfully promotes very good behaviour and excellent relationships.

What could be improved

- The overall provision for children in the reception classes; reducing the number of children in the classes and improving the quality of resources and accommodation.
- Pupils' skills in information technology in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Planning clearer learning outcomes in lessons and recording pupils' attainment to meet these.
- Assessment in mathematics and science to check pupils' progress more regularly in order to further promote continuity of learning.
- Information to parents about the progress their children are making.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been many improvements since the previous inspection in June 1996. Teaching is much stronger with a higher proportion of good and better lessons being seen during the current inspection. This improvement has led to higher standards. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was judged to be average; standards are now good in these subjects. The school has resolved most of the issues raised at the last inspection. Weaknesses in scientific investigation and composition in music are now at least satisfactory and often good. The new information technology suite enables pupils to attain good skills in information technology. Systems to evaluate the work of the school are in place and information is used effectively to monitor the school's progress and set targets for pupils. Curriculum organisation has improved. Whilst the school has made satisfactory progress in improving marking and recording assessment in lessons this is an aspect the school is still trying to improve. The school has difficulties to overcome in the future with more building to start shortly. However, the staff work very well as a team to keep the school running in an orderly way. The school is very well placed to

continue to improve in the future.

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	B	B	B
Mathematics	A	B	B	B
Science	A*	B	A	A

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 Average C
 below average D
 well below average E

The above results show that in 1999 pupils left the school with above average standards in English and mathematics and very good results in science. Work seen during the inspection confirms these high standards, although less so in science. Pupils' achievements as they leave school have been consistently good. Literacy and numeracy skills are particularly strong and reflect teachers' confidence delivering the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. Pupils use these skills to help their learning in other lessons. In Key Stage 1, results have not been quite as high. In reading and writing results of national tests in 1999 were broadly in line with the national average and in mathematics were below average. Key Stage 1 is still in the process of reorganisation and the accommodation is more cramped than for the older pupils. Nevertheless, improvements have been made and pupils' work indicates standards are now above average in English and mathematics and average in science. This shows pupils are making good progress as they move up through the school. The targets set by the school for this and future years in English and mathematics are based on a detailed analysis of data and are suitably challenging.

The children in the reception classes make satisfactory progress and achieve what is expected of them by the time they are five. Attainment is above average in reading and their personal and social skills are also good. Large class sizes, limited space and resources hamper progress and the school has plans to improve this situation. In information technology pupils benefit from good resources and specialist teaching and standards are good. However, these skills are not sufficiently developed in other lessons. In other subjects, including religious education, pupils reach satisfactory standards. Standards in physical education throughout the school and history at Key Stage 2 are good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and are always eager to be involved in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils show high levels of self-discipline and understand how their behaviour affects others.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils are considerate and show initiative to support those less fortunate than themselves. Relationships are excellent and pupils have great respect for the feelings, values and opinions of others.
Attendance	Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.

During the inspection, all the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. In 34 per cent of lessons it was satisfactory, in 48 per cent good and in 18 per cent very good or excellent. Teaching is strongest in Key Stage 2 when 80 per cent of teaching seen was good and better. The excellent teaching was in English in Key Stage 2. Good teaching was seen in all years but was strongest in Year 6 when in a very high number of lessons seen teaching was very good and pupils often make very good progress. In the reception classes teaching is satisfactory and the teachers cope very well with the large classes. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils make good progress. Additional support to boost reading skills is very good and successfully raises standards.

Teaching is good in English and mathematics. Basic literacy skills are taught thoroughly and pupils learn to read quickly and enjoy books. In mathematics teachers plan lively introductions that successfully extend pupils' mental agility when solving problems.

There were particular strengths in many lessons. Teachers have a secure knowledge of most subjects and provide good advice to enable pupils to extend their knowledge. Excellent relationships lead to orderly lessons and pupils work hard. In Key Stage 2, teachers are very demanding of their pupils and they in return strive hard and achieve high standards. Lessons include a variety of activities that maintain the interest of pupils. In the vast majority of lessons pupils learn at a good rate. Aspects of teaching that are less effective are a lack of clarity about what teachers want pupils to learn by the end of the lesson. This leads to pupils not always being clear about what they are learning. Teachers do not always make best use of assessment information in lessons and some tasks are set that are too easy and occasionally too difficult. This hampers pupils' progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2. Children under five do not experience such a wide range of activities due to limited space, resources and large classes. Provision for out of school activities is very good and enriches the curriculum and contributes to the happy atmosphere.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well provided for and they make good progress towards meeting their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is very good. Spiritual development is seen in pupils' appreciation of the natural world. Moral and social development is very good and combines to make a happy and caring school. Provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school has effective procedures for the health and well being of all pupils. Assessment in lessons is not always used effectively to match work to pupils' prior attainment.

The school offers a balance of activities and has a good focus on numeracy and literacy and information technology. Limited space and resources restrict the range of activities for under fives. There are still no facilities to develop their physical skills through outdoor play. Parents have very positive views of the school and are particularly pleased with the standards their children achieve. Communications have improved but written reports lack clear information about how pupils are getting on.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and this has been a significant factor in the school's improvement since the previous inspection. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, staff and governing body who have a clear educational direction for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide good support for the school. They fulfil very effectively their statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school evaluates its performance against national standards and those of similar schools. This information is used well to set targets for improvement and provides an accurate picture of most of its developmental needs.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used efficiently. Funding is spent prudently on items identified in the school's development plan.

Overall the staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate to teach the full curriculum. Currently, the infants have insufficient space and the new buildings planned for the very near future will considerably improve this situation.

The headteacher has developed a team of staff and governors all working towards a common goal to provide the best for the pupils of the school. The school and governors are very good at checking that the school is getting best value. Overall there is a strong commitment to raise standards even higher.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children enjoy attending school.• The good progress children make.• Teachers expect children to work hard.• The high standards of behaviour.• The school is easy to approach with any concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information about the progress their children are making.• A more consistent approach to the amount of work set to be done at home.• The school working closer with parents.

The inspection team agrees with all the strengths identified by parents. The amount of homework required is in line with government guidelines and is judged to be appropriate. The school is improving its links with parents by providing monthly newsletters. Parents are justified about the lack of information about the progress children are making. The annual report to parents lacks sufficient detail about progress and limited reference is made to information technology. The governor's annual report is produced too late and consequently when it is presented to parents the information is not always about the current situation in school. Parents of children with special educational needs receive insufficient information about the targets set for their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Attainment on entry to the reception classes is generally similar to that found in most schools. Children maintain and improve on this by the time they are five. They attain good standards in reading and personal and social development. They make best progress in these aspects as teachers give them more focus. Progress in the other areas of learning, language and literacy, mathematics, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, is satisfactory. By the time they are five standards are in line with the national expectation in these areas of learning. Cramped accommodation, limited resources and large classes often restrict progress and lead to less work being planned for some aspects of the curriculum. Progress in mathematics is often hampered by insufficient individual support as children are working. Physical development is significantly restricted by lack of outdoor space or resources to develop skills in climbing, pushing or pedalling themselves along on wheeled vehicles.

- 2 At the end of Key Stage 1 the 1999 test results for pupils at seven showed standards in reading and writing in line with the national average. Results in mathematics were below average. Compared to similar schools, results in reading and writing were average but in mathematics below average. Key Stage 1 results have fluctuated over the last three years with mathematics always being lower than reading and writing. Not as many pupils exceeded the national average in mathematics as in reading and writing. The school promptly identified this weakness and teachers have been giving closer attention to the needs of the higher attaining pupils. This is starting to show an improvement in the standards of the higher attaining pupils. All results improved in 1999 and the work of the present Year 2 pupils indicates this rising trend has continued. Standards of work in English and mathematics are above average.

- 3 The most recent national test results for pupils at eleven indicate that high standards are achieved. In English and mathematics pupils achieved above average both compared with all schools and similar schools. Standards were even higher in science with pupils attaining well above average compared both with national figures and schools with a similar intake. There is a clear trend of high standards in Key Stage 2 and in 1997 results in science were in the top 5 per cent in the country. The higher standards in Key Stage 2 reflect the stability now in place with new accommodation and an experienced staff of teachers providing consistently good teaching. At the end of the key stage teachers provoke pupils to try hard and are insistent about high standards. This leads to all pupils giving of their best and standards of work of the current Year 6 are above average in all three subjects.

- 4 The targets set for pupils in English and mathematics in 1999 were achieved. The targets for the current year are slightly lower reflecting a cohort with more pupils with special educational needs. These targets are realistic and based on school assessment data. They reflect what pupils will achieve if they work to the best of their ability. Targets for future years are higher and indicate a continuing pattern of very high standards. Test results reveal no consistent pattern of difference in attainment between boys and girls.

- 5 High standards are identified in all aspects of English. Pupils read confidently throughout the school so that by the time they leave school they have a genuine enthusiasm for books. Speaking and listening is a strength in the school and pupils articulate clearly and have a lively vocabulary. Technical terms are used correctly to explain activities in other subjects. Pupils' literacy skills are good and have a positive impact on standards in other subjects. Pupils read confidently for research purposes and write in a wide range of styles across the curriculum. In mathematics pupils' mental calculation skills have greatly improved in response to lively introductions to lessons that demand quick answers to mental problems. These good numeracy skills contribute significantly to progress in other lessons and teachers plan tasks to enable pupils to practise their skills. Pupils calculate and record their measurements in science and physical education. Attainment in science is spread uniformly across all aspects of the curriculum. Investigative skills and a weakness in understanding about materials and their properties have been fully addressed by an adjustment to the curriculum.
- 6 Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is good in both key stages. This reflects continuity in learning as teachers now follow the structure in the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. More attention is given to assessment information and when a weakness is identified action taken to address the problem. For example, the last inspection indicated standards in writing were below average in Key Stage 1 and the school has given more attention to this aspect and standards are now good. Progress in science is good at both key stages. It is slightly faster in Key Stage 2 in response to better teaching and more challenging activities for higher attaining pupils. Although good progress is seen throughout the school pupils in Year 6 make the best progress through the year. This is because of consistently good and often very good teaching, an interesting curriculum that challenges pupils and excellent relationships that lead to pupils always striving to do their best work.
- 7 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well for their abilities and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. In class these pupils often receive sensitive support to enable them to take a full and active part in lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2 pupils were fully involved in the introduction and conclusion of the lesson. During the group work they received very effective help from a classroom assistant working on tasks closely matched to their prior attainment and they made good progress. Pupils in Year 6 receive additional support for literacy in a small group and this is organised well and taught very effectively. These pupils have greatly benefited from this support and literacy skills have improved. The school does not identify any pupils as being gifted or talented but higher achieving pupils are generally being appropriately challenged. Provision for these pupils is particularly effective in Year 6. This is reflected in the 1999 national test results when approximately a third of pupils exceeded the national average in English and science and almost a quarter of the pupils in mathematics. Provision for these pupils has also improved in Key Stage 1 and the school's indication of results for the current year reflect an improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels.
- 8 Standards in information technology are good at the end of both key stages. This improvement since the previous inspection is due to the new resources and specialist teaching. Standards across the curriculum still need to be extended and the school has plans to improve provision, as funding becomes available. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The weakness in composition in music has been resolved and standards are now average with pockets of good standards where teachers are more confident. Standards in physical education throughout the school and history at Key Stage 2 are good and in all other subjects they are satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 The quality of pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour, relationships and personal development has improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now major strengths of the school.
- 10 Attitudes to learning are very good. This has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Pupils enjoy school, are well motivated and keen to respond to the challenges offered. They listen carefully to their teacher, or when others are speaking, answer questions sensibly, and contribute confidently during discussions. Pupils are ready to work and pursue each new task with enthusiasm and good levels of concentration. Children under 5 are also developing good work habits and are already able to sustain interest in whatever they are doing.
- 11 Behaviour in and out of class is very good, and sometimes impeccable. Pupils are a credit to their school. On a visit during the inspection they were justifiably praised by other visitors about their courtesy and behaviour. Pupils display high levels of self-discipline, clearly know what is expected of them, and usually react accordingly. Incidents of bullying are rare. No incidents were observed during the inspection. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils are genuinely proud of their school and show due respect for the building and resources.
- 12 Pupils' personal development is very good. They are considerate and fully understand the impact of their actions upon others. Pupils are confident, and show initiative in a variety of ways. For example, some Year 6 pupils have produced their own magazine and are now selling it to raise funds for charity. All opportunities to carry out their own research, or to plan their own learning, are used productively. Pupils willingly accept responsibility and take on increasing duties, as they grow older. Year 6 pupils regularly prepare and lead assemblies. They also hear the younger ones read. The youngest children understand the importance of taking turns and of sharing, and have a well-developed sense of fair play. The quality of relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and members of staff is now excellent. This makes a significant contribution to the education provided. There is a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere within the school. Pupils are friendly, very polite, and always ready to help one another and their teachers. In lessons they work together well in pairs or groups, and share ideas and equipment sensibly.
- 13 Attendance remains above the national norm and has shown little variation since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence remains around the national norm. Punctuality is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 14 The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. In the lessons observed, the teaching was excellent in one per cent, very good in 18 per cent and good in 47 per cent. Teaching was satisfactory in all other lessons seen and no teaching was less than satisfactory.

- 15 In the reception classes the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and teachers and support staff work hard to overcome the difficulties caused by large classes, limited space and resources. There are very good relationships and the children respond well to the praise and encouragement. They are eager to learn and enjoy all the activities offered to them. Organisation is good and to some extent this overcomes the many difficulties. Teachers are confident teaching the Literacy Hour and notably, the teaching of reading is good. Initial letter sounds are taught thoroughly and children use this knowledge effectively in their reading. Number skills are taught through enjoyable activities, such as taking the monkeys off a tree and singing rhymes. However, children receive insufficient help as they work and this hampers their progress. The lack of a system to record what children have already achieved leads to some tasks not fully extending learning. Marking is often brief and fails to identify the progress children are making. The classroom assistant works closely with teachers and this is a strength in the teaching. In two mathematics lessons, children made good progress in learning to measure as the classroom assistant led very effectively a practical activity measuring and sorting different items.
- 16 Teaching in Key Stage 1 was good overall. It was very good in 4 per cent of lessons seen, good in 56 per cent and satisfactory in other lessons. Teaching is stronger in Key Stage 2 with a higher proportion of very good teaching being seen. Teaching was excellent in 2 per cent of lessons, very good in 28 per cent, good in 48 per cent and satisfactory in the rest. It is notably very good in Year 6 when teacher constantly challenge pupils to extend their learning and many pupils make very good progress in these classes. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and are confident advising pupils as they work. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and the teaching of basic numeracy and literacy skills is very good. Initial sounds and spelling rules are taught thoroughly and pupils use these skills effectively and standards have improved. Introductions to mathematics lessons are lively and teachers ask questions that effectively develop pupils' ability in mental calculations. The teaching of basic skills in information technology has been greatly enhanced by the new computer suite and a teacher employed specifically to teach the subject. Pupils benefit from expert guidance and make good progress in their basic information technology skills. However, teachers do not always build on these skills in other lessons and this restricts opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned. Another strength in teaching is class management based firmly on excellent relationships. The pupils know they are expected to work hard and enthusiasm for learning is good and in Key Stage 2 often very good. Teachers use a range of methods to make lessons interesting and provide ample opportunities for pupils to work individually, with a partner and in small groups. This is very effective in numeracy and literacy sessions when pupils work unsupervised and accept responsibility for their own learning. In other subjects pupils collaborate to present their opinions in class debates and in music compose small pieces of music to perform to the rest of the class. Good questioning is used to check previous learning and to extend vocabulary and to deepen pupils' knowledge. This is effective in giving pupils confidence to express their opinions and articulate their ideas. Speaking and listening skills are of a high standard and teachers plan opportunities for pupils to talk about their experiences. In assemblies older pupils read prayers for the whole school so gaining in confidence to speak in front of an audience. Most lessons are carried out at a brisk pace and teachers have high expectations of both attitudes to learning and academic standards. The excellent teaching seen in English in Year 3 was a prime example of challenging teaching that moved pupils' learning on at a brisk pace and their productivity and enthusiasm for learning was excellent.

- 17 Teaching is less effective when planning lacks sufficient detail. Teachers' medium term plans include objectives for most lessons but these are not always transferred to lesson plans. In some lessons teachers fail to identify what it is they want their pupils to know by the end of the lesson. Pupils are then unclear about the overall focus of the lesson. This lack of clarity about the outcome of lessons makes assessment of attainment in lessons insecure and the school has no consistent whole-school approach to assessing and recording attainment in lessons. This means that although the vast majority of lessons have sufficient challenge and new learning in them, tasks are not always matched accurately to pupils' abilities and prior learning. This slows the rate of pupils' progress. For example, in a literacy lesson observed in Year 5 the higher attaining pupils very quickly completed the easier work set on prepositions before they moved on to the more challenging work. They would have learned more if they had gone straight on to the harder work. Similarly, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3 the teacher had provided alternative work for the differing abilities in the class but these were not sufficiently accurate. A small group of pupils found the set work too difficult and made little progress. The quality of marking is variable but generally satisfactory. The weakness identified in the last inspection concerning lack of feedback in Key Stage 1 has not been fully resolved. This is better in Key Stage 2 when more comments are very constructive and pupils say they find this very helpful in showing them what they need to do to improve.
- 18 The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with special educational needs are given careful support and teachers endeavour to include them in all activities. This was very apparent in physical education when pupils were given a different task to the rest of the class but at the end of the lesson were included in the conclusion and this was very effective in raising self-esteem as well as physical skills. Teachers write individual education plans or target sheets termly and these are reviewed. Work in class is usually well matched to pupils' ability and support staff generally provide valuable assistance when they are available. Support assistants are not always clear about the learning outcomes of the tasks they are supervising and liaison is not always sufficiently robust to check on pupils' progress.
- 19 Teaching of the booster literacy classes in Year 6 is very good. It is organised effectively with a range of activities to interest the pupils. Effective discussion and question and answer sessions raise confidence as well as extend learning. Pupils make very good progress in these lessons.
- 20 Teaching is good in most subjects and in all years. Teaching of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is good. Overall teaching of information technology is good. Religious education is taught well although, limited resources restrict the teaching about other faiths. Teaching of physical education is good and often very good in Key Stage 2 where standards are high. In other subjects teaching is at least satisfactory. Parents expressed a concern about the amount of work required to be done at home. There are examples of good use of homework, which has a positive impact on learning, and pupils are keen to research information at home. Overall provision is in line with government guidelines.

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

- 21 The previous report stated that the school's curriculum provided suitably broad and balanced courses including all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. This provision has been maintained and the overall quality of the curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements.

- 22 The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory and covers the currently recommended areas of learning for children of this age. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing children's personal and social and literacy skills and standards in these aspects, notably in reading, are good. Other aspects of the curriculum are hampered by the large classes and cramped accommodation and the school has no outdoor provision or resources for outdoor play.
- 23 In Key Stages 1 and 2 the deficiencies in long term planning and the balance of time spent on subjects, identified in the previous inspection, have been resolved. Subjects now receive an appropriate amount of time resulting in a balanced curriculum with a focus on numeracy and literacy. Each subject is supported well by a policy document and a detailed scheme of work and this has improved the continuity of learning as pupils move up through the school. The school has made significant strides forward in preparing to put Curriculum 2000 in place. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully. Planning for these subjects is now strong and has led to improvement in standards at the end of both key stages. The literacy curriculum is further extended by booster classes and these have been successful in raising standards for pupils identified as requiring additional support. All classes benefit from information technology taught to a detailed scheme in the new computer suite and this has led to pupils being confident in basic computer skills. The school has plans to further extend provision as funding allows.
- 24 The previous inspection identified a weakness in organisation and planning of integrated activities at Key Stage 1. This has been resolved. The thematic approach now used gives more attention to the requirements of specific subjects. However, the overall quality of medium-term planning is variable with some lacking sufficient detail. Planning for information technology is omitted from the vast majority of plans. This is a weakness and most teachers do not give sufficient attention to extending these skills across the curriculum. The school is developing good and appropriate use of cross-curricular links, such as art links with design and technology and mathematics with science and geography.
- 25 The curriculum provides effectively for other aspects of school life. Provision for health education, sex education and drugs awareness is good and is incorporated within the science curriculum of the school. These areas are addressed throughout the year groups although the major focus is in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 have a series of lessons related to drugs awareness run by the local police force. Sex education for Year 6 pupils involves a number of visits from the school nurse and is supported by lessons with teachers in school. An excellent, and extensive, workbook supports the work for pupils covering areas of personal development and health. This thorough teaching has led to pupils having mature and sensible opinions about these subjects.
- 26 Reflecting the school's mission statement all pupils have full access to the school's curriculum. Equality of access for all pupils is very good. The school actively promotes fairness and equality. Where pupils are withdrawn from lessons for specialist tuition careful planning and organisation ensures that they do not miss the work taking place in the class during their absence. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the procedures of the national Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are in place. Teachers try to ensure these pupils receive an appropriate curriculum.

- 27 A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils. There are currently 20 clubs in operation within the school. Clubs cater for a maximum membership of 486 places and older pupils are members of several clubs. Staff and parents give generously of their time to support these activities. As well as a range of sports activities (football, rugby and netball), there are clubs for recorders, choir, orchestra, computer, chess, cycling proficiency, French and craft. Pupils from both key stages are involved and clubs are open to all. Parents are very appreciative of this very good provision. Fifty pupils benefit from learning how to cycle with safety and this reflects the school's concern about the welfare and safety of the pupils. The school organises many visits during the year such as to Litton Mill for geography and Derby Museum and Art Gallery for art and history. During the inspection the pupils thoroughly enjoyed visits to Elvaston castle and Ironbridge as part of their history studies. Year 5 and 6 pupils have residential visits to Kingswood Activity Centre and the Adventure Weekend in Shropshire. These visits offer many opportunities, not only to try new activities but also to develop the necessary skills of tolerance when living with others.
- 28 The curriculum is enlivened by good links with the local community that have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. Generous support for charity raises pupils' awareness of the needs of others. Close links have been maintained with the local church and special festivals are held in the church. Pupils also visit other community churches and a mosque for religious education. The school is involved in local music festivals and the local football and rugby clubs coach sports' skills. The school has useful connections with several companies in Belper. Liaison with the local High School has been beneficial notably in supporting provision for information technology. Internet links with other schools are now being developed. Links with pre-school organisations are not as well established.
- 29 The curriculum is further enriched by very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The whole school ethos is very effective in promoting a caring, learning environment.
- 30 Provision for spiritual development is good and well supported by the religious education curriculum and the daily acts of worship. They provide opportunities for pupils to reflect and consider the needs of others. In one assembly pupils were entranced by the story of two men attempting to cross the North Pole. This was linked to the daily challenges, which everyone has to face, and how they can be overcome. Displays of work in the hall include pupils' appreciation of their world and how their actions show respect for the world. They include comments, such as 'peace for its pupils' and pupils' response, like 'hope accidents with oil won't happen.' Pupils are encouraged to appreciate nature and the beauty of their surroundings. In Year 4 pupils have carried out a topic about saving the world and in Year 6 a seaside enquiry. This shows an appreciation of the strength of nature when they consider how holes were formed in stones found on the beach.
- 31 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school strongly promotes the principles, which enables pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Pupils state quite clearly that the high standard of behaviour in the school emanates from the good examples set by the older pupils. There is a high expectation that all pupils will behave well and a positive attitude to good behaviour. Pupils understand clearly what is acceptable at St. John's School. Daily assemblies are an influential factor in the life of the school. Assemblies confirm the social and moral values that the school upholds. For example in one assembly pupils were asked to think about friendship and to pray about the value of friendship. Throughout the daily life of the school there are numerous examples of pupils' working together very well, sharing equipment sensibly and helping and caring for each other. Often when pupils are working collaboratively they will take the initiative to provide help and support for each other. This is particularly evident in information technology lessons when the more experienced pupils take time to help others when problems arise.

- 32 The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. All pupils are valued for their own qualities and there are excellent relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults. This is a very positive aspect of school life. Pupils are polite to each other and to visitors. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models. The care and concern they show, based on mutual respect, makes a significant contribution to the social development of all pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills particularly in the large number of extra-curricular activities offered by the school. Pupils also learn the social skills of living in a group when they attend weekend residential visits.
- 33 Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils gain a good understanding of their local environment through visits to museums and places of interest. Some older pupils have studied the local history of Belper and there have been visits to the local church. Other artists are studied and different composers are discussed when their music is played in assemblies. A wide range of texts is studied in the Literacy Hour and pupils have written to authors and are very pleased to have received some replies. Many older pupils have a genuine enthusiasm for literature. In classroom displays there are examples of the study of other faiths including Hinduism, Moslem, and Judaism although the school has limited resources to deepen this knowledge of other faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 34 Pupils' general welfare is promoted effectively. They are supervised carefully and lunchtime routines are managed well. As a result the school functions smoothly. There are clear procedures for dealing with accidents and illness, and these are followed closely. Child protections arrangements are in place, with a member of staff having designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies if ever cases of abuse are suspected.
- 35 Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are mostly informal, but effective. Teachers make brief comments about pupils' general conduct in their annual reports and the headteacher keeps notes about any incidents of serious misbehaviour. These are, however, very rare. Only one was documented last year. Attendance is monitored thoroughly. Registers are completed properly at the start of sessions and any absences that are not explained promptly by parents are investigated.
- 36 Pupils' personal development is supported well. Teachers know their pupils well and respond positively to their needs. They provide good role models and successfully promote very high standards of behaviour. Pupils are expected to exercise good self-control at all times and take responsibility for their own actions. School rules are understood well by all pupils and they act sensibly. However, although bullying is rare and dealt with effectively, the school does not have any formalised guidelines to underpin the measures taken to deal with reported incidents. There are no specific arrangements to promote attendance. They are not felt necessary as pupils enjoy coming to school, and inspection evidence confirms this.
- 37 There are some good systems in place for assessing attainment, and monitoring pupils' progress in English, but the best practice does not extend to all subjects. Results of National Curriculum tests for seven and eleven year olds and non-statutory tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 are used effectively to set realistic targets for groups of pupils. Consequently 'booster' groups are identified and those pupils receive extra support and this improves their progress. Analysis of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests has led to a sharper focus on pupils' writing as well as informed systems for monitoring progress. Indications are that these measures have brought about higher standards. Weaknesses identified within the science curriculum, such as investigative work and pupils' understanding of the properties of materials resulted in changes in the taught curriculum and improved attainment. However, in mathematics and science assessment at the end of units of work and regular reviews of pupils' work are inconsistent and do not always clearly inform teachers about pupils' progress in order to promote continuity in learning.

- 38 Records are kept which show the progress of pupils with special educational needs and regular reviews and assessment of targets informs future plans.
- 39 Throughout the school teachers' on-going assessment and recording of pupils' progress across the whole curriculum is inconsistent because there are no agreed whole school systems in place. Teachers' weekly plans do not always identify clearly what pupils should know as a result of teaching. Consequently teachers do not always know what should be assessed or how progress should be recorded.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 40 Response to the parents' questionnaire was far more positive than at the last inspection. Parents are happy with the standards achieved and most indicate that they would feel comfortable approaching teachers if they had any worries or concerns. A significant number consider that the school does not work closely with them. This, however, is contrary to inspection findings. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning through the work they do at home, and receive regular communication about what is happening in school. Several parents were unhappy about the amount of work required to be done at home. Inspectors judged this to be similar to that set in most primary schools and in line with government guidelines. Work set effectively extends learning done in lessons. Some parents regularly work in school where they provide valuable help for teachers. Others accompany visits or help with extra curricular activities. The Parent Teachers Association remains active. It provides many extras for the benefit of pupils and has recently raised funds for an additional area to the playground.
- 41 Communications with parents have extended and monthly newsletters provide information about topics to be taught and important events in school. However, other aspects of communications are less effective. Concerns raised by a large number of parents about the information they receive about their children's progress are justified. Whilst there are sufficient opportunities for them to consult with teachers on a formal basis, the quality of the written annual reports about pupils has not improved. They do not give a clear picture of how pupils are getting on, or let them know how to improve, and do not always include comments about information technology. The governors' annual report is produced too late to adequately inform parents about the current situation in school. The 1998/9 report had not been presented to parents at the time of inspection. Communications with parents of pupils with special educational needs are not fully developed. Parents are invited to review meetings, but do not receive copies of the targets that the school has set for their children, through their individual education plans. When starting school children and parents attend the school for a meeting in the summer term. This is beneficial for all concerned. However, for children not starting school until after Christmas there is a long time gap between the visit and starting school. Parents would appreciate another meeting to reassure their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 42 The headteacher provides very strong leadership. He leads the school very well and gives a very clear direction to all aspects of the school but with significant focus on raising standards. The deputy head and management team supports him very effectively. At present the deputy headteacher has limited time to fulfil his management role and this leads to a heavy load of administrative work to be done after school. The headteacher, senior management team, governors and staff have worked hard to bring about considerable improvements since the last inspection. Standards of work are now good and there is a strong desire to see standards rise further. The headteacher monitors teaching very effectively and from this, professional developments have been provided to resolve any identified concerns. This has been beneficial in improving the quality of teaching which is now good and no teaching seen was less than satisfactory. Effective management has led to good progress in resolving the key issues identified in the previous report. All have received due attention and only further development of consistent assessment procedures across the school remains as an on-going area for development.
- 43 The headteacher and others within the school community have ensured that the philosophy of the school is positively upheld. This is evidenced in the very strong ethos that exists in the school. There is a welcoming atmosphere in which pupils and staff are happy to work and an environment has been established which fosters pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and excellent relationships.
- 44 Subject co-ordinators play a positive role in improving standards achieved in their subjects or areas. They monitor teachers' planning and have begun to look at the work of pupils across their subjects. Successful use of assessment data and adjustment of the curriculum is evident in improved standards in English, mathematics and science. Currently, they have little opportunity to monitor provision in the classroom and so are not always clear about how they can further develop their subjects.
- 45 Under the leadership of the headteacher the school makes a very good analysis of pupils' achievements in statutory and non-statutory tests. This data is then used effectively to monitor the school's progress and set realistic targets for pupils. This information is used well to target support towards identified groups of pupils. Assessment information is analysed and curriculum adjustments made if required. This has been effective in raising the standard of higher attaining pupils and results indicate more pupils are now exceeding national averages. Similarly, investigative skills and understanding about materials and their properties were identified as a weakness following analysis of test results. The school adjusted the curriculum and results have shown a steady improvement.
- 46 The governing body offers good support. It has a strong commitment to further improve the quality of provision including standards of the school. The headteacher meets the chair of governors regularly to discuss strategic planning and financial matters and he is well informed of the current situation in school. The governors have become increasingly active in monitoring more rigorously the work of the school and they are gaining first hand experience of the school by observing teaching. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They actively seek more advice if they are unsure that a proposed action is best for the school. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities, though it should consider the timing of its annual report to parents, which is produced at a very late date. Together with the headteacher they set targets for the headteacher for the following year. These are sufficiently challenging but are not closely linked to school improvement issues, such as the expected improvements in standards achieved. The school development plan is a collaborative document involving governors, the headteacher and staff. It sets out effectively the school's priorities for the coming year, how they are to be achieved and how much they will cost. However, the plan does not make it clear enough what impact these developments will have on school standards, and which planned developments should take priority within the overall plan.

- 47 The school uses its limited financial resources very well. It plans ahead, successfully taking into account any projected changes in staffing and pupil numbers. Spending is linked closely to the priorities in the school's development plan. Grants to the school for specific purposes are used well to raise standards. The school gives very good attention to the principles of best value. This can be seen throughout the school, where the low income per pupil received by the school has been used very effectively to maintain and improve the learning environment. The governors receive regular financial updates and the headteacher is very conscientious in his management of the school's finances. He is supported effectively by the school's administration officer who monitors very efficiently the day-to-day financial situation.
- 48 Careful management has led to an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to match the demands of the curriculum. The specialist information technology teacher is having a positive impact on pupils' information technology skills. The number of support staff is barely sufficient and notably the reception classes do not always have enough adult support although they receive good support from parents.
- 49 The accommodation has been greatly improved since the previous inspection and plans are in place for further building to provide more space for the younger children. Currently, accommodation is sufficient to allow the curriculum to be taught. However, in some classes the large numbers of pupils restricts movement and constrains the type of learning activities that can take place. This is particularly evident in Key Stage 1 and is having an adverse effect on progress of the under fives. The youngest pupils do not have access to a designated area for outdoor play and there is no permanent, large play apparatus available for their use. The computer suite has been recently developed and is very well equipped. The facilities are very beneficial to pupils increasing greatly their confidence in information technology. The attractive grounds and the adjacent playing field are great bonuses for the pupils and are used regularly to extend the curriculum.
- 50 Throughout the school learning resources are generally adequate. Practical resources and materials for science are inadequate and lead to pupils having to wait for resources. The large number of children stretches resources for under fives to the limit and restricts the curriculum for the younger children. The library lacks sufficient books and many older books currently in use need replacing.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 To further improve the work of the school the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

(1) Raise standards for children in the reception classes by:

- taking steps to reduce the large class sizes;
- improving resources, notably for outdoor play;
- providing a broader curriculum;
- making better use of assessment information in lessons to ensure tasks match more closely children's prior attainment.

(The school has plans for additional classrooms to improve provision for the younger children in the school)

(see paragraphs 1, 15, 22, 39, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59)

(2) Further extend the good provision in information technology to other subjects to enable pupils to build on the good teaching in their weekly lessons.

(This is an area for development in the school's action plan as soon as funding becomes available)

(see paragraphs 8, 16, 24, 74, 86, 109, 112, 113)

(3) Improve further the good quality of teaching to increase the number of very good lessons by:

- making lesson outcomes clearer and sharing these with pupils;
- giving closer attention to assessment in lessons so that areas of weakness can be targeted for improvement.

(see paragraphs 17, 39, 59, 69, 76, 84, 91, 95, 124, 129)

(4) Further extend assessment procedures in mathematics and science to check regularly on pupils' understanding at the end of units of work. Providing extra work as required ensuring continuity of learning.

(see paragraphs 37, 77, 85)

(5) Build on the improving communications with parents by:

- indicating more clearly the progress children are making in the written annual reports to parents (notably in information technology);
- publishing the governors' annual report to parents earlier so that information is more up-to-date;
- providing parents of children with special educational needs more information on the help their children receive and the progress being made;
- arranging an additional visit for young children starting school in the spring term.

(see paragraphs 41, 46, 60)

In addition to the areas of development described above the following less important aspects should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- improving the quality and quantity of books in the library; (paragraphs 50, 70)
- providing the deputy headteacher and subject coordinators with more time to carry out their management responsibilities; (paragraphs 42, 44, 70, 86, 96, 101, 118, 124)
- improving resources in science. (paragraphs 50, 86)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	17	48	34	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	447
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	46
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.7
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	31	25	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	27	29
	Girls	22	20	19
	Total	50	47	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (76)	84 (72)	86 (75)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	27
	Girls	21	18	21
	Total	49	46	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (80)	82 (79)	86 (79)
	National	82 (80)	86 (85)	87 (85)

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	23	22	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	20
	Girls	19	18	21
	Total	35	37	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (71)	82 (72)	91 (78)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	18
	Girls	19	20	21
	Total	34	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (71)	84 (78)	87 (85)
	National	68 (64)	69 (64)	75 (70)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	371
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	32
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	474,506
Total expenditure	467,278
Expenditure per pupil	1,126
Balance brought forward from previous year	-3,377
Balance carried forward to next year	3,851

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

447

Number of questionnaires returned

172

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	37	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	46	1	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	51	2	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	48	15	3	1
The teaching is good.	53	39	2	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	37	23	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	24	8	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	31	43	20	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	38	2	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	49	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	39	5	2	8

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

- 52 Education for children under five is provided in two reception classes. At the time of the inspection, many of the children had reached the age of five and were following the programmes of study set out in the National Curriculum. However, there was considerable evidence available to identify that overall attainment of children under five is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Although children start school with a wide range of attainment their overall ability is average. Progress is satisfactory in the areas of language and literacy, mathematics, physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Progress is better in reading and personal and social development and standards are good. Overall the large class sizes and the cramped accommodation hamper progress of children. The school has plans for additional classrooms to ease this situation.

Personal and social development

- 53 Most children have received little pre-school experience and teachers and support staff give a high priority to this area of learning. Children are aware of the difficulties caused by the limited space and have learned to follow the strict organisation required to enable the day to run smoothly. Pupils play together co-operatively and have established very good relationships with adults and other children. Teaching in this area is often good as every opportunity is taken to increase children's self esteem. For example, in music children select percussion instruments sensibly and teachers provide opportunities to perform for others and this increases their confidence as the class appreciates their efforts. At the end of most sessions teachers include a time to share and celebrate achievement and this effectively extends social skills of giving attention to others and taking turns. When working on the computers children show they are aware of the needs of others and the more confident share their knowledge with others who are less sure of the basic skills. Teachers include opportunities for free choice and this successfully develops children's independent skills and most are capable at getting out and putting away their chosen resources. Most lessons are managed well and behaviour is generally good. However, occasionally due to the large number of children a few receive insufficient attention and their behaviour starts to become silly and their rate of learning decreases.

Language and literacy

- 54 In language and literacy children make satisfactory progress and attain the level expected by the time they are five. Children are given many opportunities to speak and listen and to express themselves in front of others. They are beginning to understand the need to take turns in class discussions although many still call out. Conclusions of lessons are used effectively to extend vocabulary. On one occasion, a child described his model as 'fragile' and the teacher promptly clarified this word so that the next child also included it in her description. Staff spend time listening and talking to the children. However, due to the high number of children many activities occur without adult supervision and this leads to missed opportunities to extend children's vocabulary as they are involved in different activities. Teaching is satisfactory and is good in reading. Teachers are confident delivering the Literacy Hour and successfully use big books to model the basic skills of reading. As a result children handle books carefully and sensibly. They are beginning to develop early reading skills and enjoy discussing their favourite stories. Letter sounds have been taught thoroughly and the vast majority of children are using this knowledge in their reading. Writing is the weakest aspect. Children's books show that many write the majority of letters accurately but are less secure in using this knowledge to write unaided. They understand writing has a purpose and have copied the labels for the 'Ginger Bread Man'. This aspect of the curriculum suffers from the lack of individual support to encourage children to practise their writing skills. On occasions tasks set have insufficient content to keep the children busy and children mark time rather than extending their learning.

Mathematics

- 55 Children's overall attainment is average. Overall teaching is satisfactory and teachers provide an interesting variety of number displays and children refer to them to help count to 20 in twos. When recording numerals children often use the different charts to help them. Through singing songs such as '10 fat sausages' they are developing the idea of taking away. Teachers follow this task up with interesting visual activities, such as counting the monkeys on a tree and then checking how many are left when some have been removed. This makes learning enjoyable for children and they grasp the idea of taking away and understand 'more' and 'less'. However, due to the large numbers in the class children are less confident transferring this knowledge to their individual tasks and they receive insufficient adult attention to clarify their learning. When working unsupervised a few children are left with little support and they could have produced more work. Some tasks were completed quickly and additional work to extend their learning was not available. Teachers are fully aware of this and always revise learning at the beginning of lessons and provide a range of activities to consolidate learning. Support staff are used very well in mathematics and included in planning. This led to a very effective, practical group activity involving measuring and grouping items according to length. By the end of the session pupils had a clear understanding of the need for care when measuring and correctly recorded the items according to their length.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 56 The strongest aspect in this area of learning is the children's basic information technology skills. They benefit from good teaching in the school's computer suite and the vast majority are confident using the basic computer tools. They know the mouse controls the cursor and quickly learn to draw circles and colour them in. The teacher and adult support offer good advice and children learn how to select items from a menu. They are growing in confidence in using the keyboard to copy words. Other aspects of the curriculum are covered as part of a range of topics and pupils make satisfactory progress and attainment is average. During the inspection there was limited evidence of this area of learning being taught. Pupils discussed the main parts of their body and the movements they make. Displays of children's work indicate an understanding of change as children have drawn pictures of activities they do at different times of the day. They discuss the members of their family understanding grandparents are older. As part of religious education children have drawn pictures of friends and talked about caring for each other.

Creative development

- 57 Standards of work are in line with the expected level for the children's age. The vast majority of children make satisfactory progress but this is restricted on occasions by limited space and too much adult support that does not always allow for individual expression. However, children engage in a wide range of creative activities and are very proud of their results. They paint, cut out and glue with great care. Children have experimented with shades of blue in their attractive 'puddle pictures.' The vehicles on display show attention to detail on fire engines and buses. Children enjoy music and clap and play percussion instruments to a rhythm and satisfactorily learn to follow symbols to play the number of beats in their names. Staff often take part in imaginative role play in the doctor's surgery and this stimulates imagination and extends vocabulary.

Physical development

- 58 This area of learning suffers most from limited space and resources. During the inspection children only had on short lesson of movement using the school hall. There is no outdoor provision or large scale equipment for outdoor play. In the lesson seen children enjoyed moving in time to the music and recognised the different quality of music and adapted their movements to being slow and heavy or jerky like a puppet. Manipulative skills are developed effectively through the use of scissors, pencils, building and using dough to make models. Children's physical development is average for their age but the development of their skills of jumping, running and co-ordination to pedal and climb are restricted by the lack of provision.
- 59 Teaching is satisfactory overall. In one quarter of lessons seen it was good and in all other lessons teaching was satisfactory. Teaching of reading and information technology is notably better than other aspects and good progress is made in acquiring basic skills in these subjects. Teachers and support staff plan together and this has a beneficial effect on the smooth running of the day. Teachers have worked hard to devise systems to overcome the limited space and large class sizes but this inevitably affects the children's learning as they do not always receive adult attention when required. A broad curriculum, based on the above areas of learning, is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children. However, aspects of the curriculum lack stimulation to extend learning, for example limited use is made of the environment and large numbers of pupils make visits more difficult to arrange. Learning outcomes are not always clear and planning often refers to tasks to be taught rather than what children are expected to know at the end of the lesson. Records of skills are maintained for English and mathematics but the lack of a recording system linked to learning outcomes is disadvantageous and results in some tasks being set that do not move children on as quickly as they should. Marking of work is very brief and provides limited evidence about a child's achievement. Teachers allow free choice time and this is effective in extending social development as well as accepting responsibility for their own learning. Very good relationships between staff and children promote good behaviour and a happy learning atmosphere.
- 60 Parents are invited to visit the school in the summer term before their children start school. This is appropriate for children starting school in September. However, parents are justified in feeling there is too long a time gap for children who do not start school until the following January.

ENGLISH

- 61 The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds show that standards were broadly in line with the national average, and average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils who attained higher than the nationally expected level was about average for reading and above average for writing. The 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds indicate that standards were above average because of the significant proportion of pupils who attained the higher level (level 5). Attainment was also high when compared with similar schools. Over previous years between 1997 and 1999 Key Stage 1 attainment overall has improved, whilst high standards have been maintained at Key Stage 2.
- 62 Standards of work seen during the inspection indicate that levels of attainment at the end of both key stages are above average. The current Year 6 includes more pupils identified as having special educational needs and so results in national tests may not be quite as high as previous years. The previous inspection identified a weakness in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and this has been a focus for improvement and standards are now good. At Key Stage 2 high standards have been maintained.

- 63 The improved standards at Key Stage 1 reflect the thoroughness of the assessment and on-going review of pupils' work throughout the key stage. There are many planned opportunities for pupils to write in most subjects of the curriculum. The range and purposes for writing have been increased and pupils' work is systematically monitored and judged against National Curriculum levels. The effective practices, which have been developed from the analysis of Year 2 standards, are currently being extended to Year 1. For example, pupils are encouraged to write independently for a range of purposes, and there is close attention to sentence structure within literacy lessons. Examples of pupils' writing in Year 6 are monitored regularly by the head teacher and this information is checked against National Curriculum levels and is used to check on individual progress.
- 64 Standards of speaking and listening are very high for the ages of pupils at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Year 2 speak clearly and confidently about a range of subjects. This was demonstrated well in a Year 2 lesson when a pupil told the whole class about her birthday celebrations. Others listened attentively and contributed their own thoughts and ideas well during the short discussion. During lessons they answer questions thoughtfully showing that they have listened carefully to what has been said. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident and articulate when speaking in a wide range of contexts. They use vocabulary, which is appropriate to the subject, for example when discussing explanatory texts in literacy lessons and take account of others' points of view when engaged in formal debate. During informal conversation pupils show much self assurance when discussing topics, such as sport or those which feature currently in the news.
- 65 Standards in reading are above average at the end of both key stages. Most pupils in Year 2 are fluent and generally accurate readers. They read a variety of texts independently and retell stories they have read, recalling the main points in detail. Pupils express preferences for reading and most talk about their favourite books at home. A small proportion of pupils still require the support of a structured reading scheme. However, they know their letter sounds and letter blends and use their knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. They know how to obtain information from reference books. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have clear views about books and authors they enjoy. They read independently, selecting from an increasing range of fiction and non-fiction. Pupils recognise different genres of writing and identify important characters and features of the plot. Many see meaning, which is implicit in the text, for example how Aboriginal artists were able to paint the internal bone structures of animals. A small proportion of pupils, although they understand the 'mechanics' of reading, do not extract the deeper meaning from what they read.
- 66 The standard of writing at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. Pupils write clearly about a range of topics and for different purposes. Examples of imaginative writing in stories and poetry show good use of vocabulary and an awareness of the reader. An example of this was the story of Tot the scarecrow who 'walked across the fields one bright morning, singing to himself'. And in the description of autumn 'The wind blows hard. The leaves toss high'.

- 67 Pupils write book reviews, following a suitable structure and instructional writing, such as recipes. Writing is extended very well in other subjects, for example, when writing about Noah and the Flood in religious education. Pupils' sentences are logical and sequenced well and their ideas are expressed clearly. Spelling of familiar words is accurate and pupils make good attempts at more adventurous words. Handwriting is well formed and legible. Standards of writing seen at the end of Key Stage 2 are generally above average. Pupils write for an increasing range of purposes including narrative, discursive writing, factual writing and poetry. Teachers effectively provide very good opportunities to write in other subjects and the pupils' skills have a positive impact on standards in other subjects. For example, pupils compose a glossary of World War II words such as 'Luftwaffe' and 'propaganda' as part of their history topic. They write fluently about the conquest of Everest or how to build a burglar alarm (science) and extensively in religious education about Christianity and other faiths. Writing is organised well and paragraphs used correctly. Main ideas are sustained and pupils' writing is enriched by vocabulary and technical terms related to the subject. Pupils show good understanding of writing styles, for example, when using non-standard English in dialogue to help characterisation. Narrative includes descriptive vocabulary, such as 'disgruntled' and 'unceremoniously'. Handwriting is clear, joined and legible and most pupils spell accurately. A small proportion of lower attaining pupils do not use punctuation other than capital letters and full stops correctly. Their spelling is less accurate than expected for their age.
- 68 The teaching of basic skills of literacy is very effective. Pupils are taught letter sounds and blends well and they increase their reading and writing skills at a good rate. Pupils' achievements are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure they make good progress. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been very effective in raising standards.
- 69 Teaching overall is good. In lessons seen teaching was good and better in 78 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the rest. Teaching is stronger at Key Stage 2 where about fifty per cent of the lessons seen were very good, and there was a small proportion of outstanding teaching. The effectiveness of the teaching is underpinned by the excellent relationships, which are established. This promotes mutual respect and very good attitudes to work and behaviour. Teachers set high expectations and pupils respond enthusiastically. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. This enables them to question pupils skilfully in order to clarify thinking and move learning forward. Opportunities to link teaching to other subjects are used effectively making learning more relevant and meaningful for pupils. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils developed a better understanding of the properties of lenses by examining an explanatory text as well as discussing moral issues linked to drinking and driving. Well chosen tasks help pupils to develop their understanding and their writing skills. In a lesson about communications in Year 2, pupils were given the opportunity to use only their sense of touch in order to 'read' words made from plastic letters. This helped them appreciate the difficulties of Helen Keller, about whom they were reading as well as understand the Braille system of the book they were shown. Pupils in a Year 3 lesson seen made very good progress with their descriptive writing, as well as learning about the agreement between pronoun and verb, because of the very well planned activity provided. In all lessons teachers set targets for achievement so that pupils know what is expected of them. This is beneficial for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress towards these targets. In some lessons teachers' planning does not state precisely what pupils will know as a result of their teaching. Consequently assessments are too general and do not allow clear day-to-day monitoring of individual pupils' progress. On occasions when teachers rely on text books for the main source of activity the match of work to pupils' ability is not always appropriate and results in a lack of challenge for higher achieving pupils.
- 70 Resources are generally adequate but the range and quality of books in the library is insufficient. The subject is managed very effectively with coordinators reviewing samples of pupils' work and adjusting the curriculum if a weakness is identified. Currently other provision is monitored by the headteacher and the coordinators have limited time to observe provision in the classroom.

MATHEMATICS

- 71 Standards of work at the end of both key stages are good. For Key Stage 2 this is reflected in the school's 1999 National Curriculum test results. In these, the percentage of pupils attaining the national average or better was above the national average. The percentage achieving the higher level (level 5) was close to the national average. Pupils also performed well when compared to similar schools, except for those achieving the higher level where they were average in comparison. For the past four years pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has remained above the national average. The 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results do not reflect the inspection judgement and showed that attainment was close to the national average. Results revealed that the percentage of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level was below average. Compared to similar schools attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was below average and well below for those attaining the higher levels. Several initiatives have been successful in raising standards in Key Stage 1. Pupils are now taught in separate Year 2 classes and have a dedicated room to work in. This means teachers plan more carefully for the needs of the pupils and the environment is more conducive to learning. This has led to higher attaining pupils being challenged more and an increase in numbers of pupils exceeding the national average. The National Numeracy Strategy is now well developed with a positive impact on skills to calculate mentally and to solve problems. Initial indications of the results of the national tests in 2000 are very promising and support the judgement of improved standards.
- 72 The school's previous report stated that attainment at Key Stage 1 was average while at Key Stage 2 it was average or slightly above. Progress since the last inspection has been good and attainment is now good at both key stages. The previous report judged teaching to be satisfactory and it is now good overall with examples of very good teaching.
- 73 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have made good progress since starting school and most are beginning to handle simple addition and subtraction problems involving tens and units. Teachers provide higher attaining pupils with more challenging work and they are gaining in confidence to tackle more difficult addition problems. Pupils measure well in standard units for all measures except capacity. They sort, collect data and draw graphs, and have begun to try to interpret their data in simple ways. Although the school has improved well the numbers of pupils attaining higher levels, in some lessons more explicit challenges and increasing expectations of these pupils are still required.
- 74 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a firm understanding of place value extending into negative numbers. They use their knowledge of number operations to solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to a good level. They work with decimals to two places and some higher attaining pupils are very quick in their mental ability to double and halve decimal numbers. Mental arithmetic skills are increasingly developed as teachers throughout the school place a strong and appropriate emphasis on them. Pupils measure accurately in appropriate units and solve problems involving perimeter, area and volume. They measure and name different types of angles and know about the angles in different triangles and quadrilaterals. Pupils collect and present data in different forms and can represent probability data on a nought to one scale. Teachers give regular opportunities for pupils to carry out mathematical investigations that extend and deepen their understanding of mathematics. Currently, there is insufficient focus on graphical interpretation skills and limited use of computers in this work.

- 75 There is a very good emphasis on numeracy and pupils' skills are good. Teachers have made good progress in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This approach is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' mental skills. Mathematics is used widely to support learning in other lessons and this is helping to reinforce numeracy skills. For example, in geography pupils calculate co-ordinates and scales in plans and maps. They work out figures to draw graphical comparisons of climates. In physical education, pupils measure performances by time or length and then work out how much they have improved. In science, pupils time pulse rates after different events, form charts and graphs of their findings and work out averages.
- 76 Teaching at both key stages is good overall with no unsatisfactory teaching being seen during the inspection period. In Key Stage 1, sixty per cent of teaching was good and in Key Stage 2 twenty five per cent of teaching was very good and a further fifty per cent was good. The quality of the teaching is reflected in good progress throughout the school and the good standards of work seen. Teachers praise and encourage their pupil and this motivates pupils to try hard. Behaviour is very good. Teachers often praise pupils for having a good try even when wrong, and this helps raise self-esteem. This is particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs who are fully involved in lessons and make good progress relative to their prior attainment. The excellent relationships evident in classrooms means that teachers and pupils can enjoy humorous exchanges within a very work orientated environment. Teachers are now basing their planning and lessons on the guidelines from the National Numeracy Strategy. For example, using introductory sessions to practise and reinforce mental strategies. Teachers are quick to get pupils to explain their calculations and this keeps pupils alert and they learn different methods to solve problems. Lessons are structured well and together with good pace keep pupils busy and interested. Teachers share with pupils the tasks to be completed but planning does not always make it clear what pupils are to learn in the lesson. This makes it difficult for teachers to make clear assessments of pupils' on-going progress and to be sure that future plans are accurately linked to prior learning. This leads to tasks not always being closely matched to pupils' prior attainment. Although teachers have successfully raised the number of pupils exceeding the national average at the end of both key stages in lessons tasks do not always fully challenge the higher attaining pupils.
- 77 The co-ordinators offer good leadership and there is an evident drive to continue raising standards. Currently, assessment procedures do not regularly check on progress throughout the year so that a close monitoring of attainment is not fully achieved. The school is aware that this is an area for development and this has already been identified on the school's development plan.

SCIENCE

- 78 Standards of work seen are average at the end of Key Stage 1. This is similar to the teacher assessments for 1999, which were broadly in line with the national average although well below average on understanding materials and their properties. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level is broadly in line with the national average. Trends over time show an improvement in the performance of pupils since the previous inspection. Teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment is broadly in line with those of schools in a similar context. The weakness in experimental and investigative science identified at the previous inspection has been eliminated. This is apparent in pupils' work where there are good links between attainment targets on materials and their properties, physical processes and investigational science. The weakness in pupils' understanding of materials and their properties was also addressed. The science curriculum has been amended to correct this and there was much evidence in pupils' work at Year 2 to reflect the change of emphasis.
- 79 Examples of work seen in Key Stage 2 indicate standards are good. This reflects similar high standards to the results in the national tests for pupils aged 11. National test results in 1999 were well above average and 38 per cent of pupils exceeded the national average. This is highly commendable and in 1997 results were in the top five per cent in the country. Trends over time are broadly in line with the national trend over the past four years. National test results are well above average when compared with similar schools.

- 80 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils possess a sound scientific vocabulary and knowledge. Through investigation they discover that force can be used to push and turn items. They understand that sound sources create vibrations that in turn vibrate the eardrum and send messages to the brain. After carrying out investigations with electrical circuits they discover that electricity flows through wires and can be a source of danger. Year 2 pupils learn about reversible and irreversible change through practical bread making and freezing and melting activities. Skills of prediction are developing well and pupils guess, with a good measure of success, objects that will float and sink. Good attention is given to life processes and pupils name parts of the body and know about conditions necessary to sustain life and growth. After bread making they have a clear understanding about reversible and irreversible changes. Pupils are beginning to understand the need for fair testing and apply this knowledge in their investigations. Results are presented in a variety of ways and pupils are encouraged to draw and label. They produce simple bar graphs to show data, for example, that related to pets. Presentation and layout is generally satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils write clear explanations with carefully drawn and labelled diagrams.
- 81 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils distinguish between natural and man-made materials and determine suitable materials for the job. They have a good understanding of the characteristics of solids, liquids and gases. Through investigation they determine which changes are reversible and which aren't and have a secure understanding of which substances are soluble and which are insoluble. They know how to separate substances using filtration. By the time pupils leave school they possess a sound understanding of the parts, structure and functions of the human body. There is evidence of good progress across all the attainment targets and particularly in the development of experimental and investigative skills. For example, Year 5 pupils investigate separating mixtures by sieving, filtering and evaporating and discover that some changes caused by mixing can be reversed and this is not possible for other materials. Pupils with special education needs are afforded full access to the science curriculum and teachers support them well although tasks are rarely adjusted to meet their needs. Pupils develop a good scientific vocabulary. In a Year 6 class pupils talked of "completing the circuit", "making a good contact" and "amending the design" in work on constructing a burglar alarm. In a Year 5 class pupils talked of "pupil" and "iris" and correctly distinguished between them. They knew "retina" and were able to explain that it "reversed the image". Presentation and layout of work is usually clear, neat and makes effective use of well-annotated diagrams, graphs and drawings.
- 82 In both key stages pupils make good progress. Progress in Key Stage 2 was slightly better as more demanding explanations are required from higher attaining pupils and this improves their rate of learning in lessons. Pupils build on their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. For example, in a Year 1 class, pupils were learning about habitats. They match creatures to appropriate habitats and explain why some habitats were unsuitable for particular creatures. These observational skills were further extended in Year 5 when pupils had selected a section of wall with very different conditions on either side. They had observed and investigated thoroughly the effects that the contrasting environments had upon plant and animal life. Literacy skills are used well to research and record information whilst numeracy skills are frequently used in data handling and often takes the form of graphs and tables.

- 83 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is strongest in Key Stage 2 when two thirds of the teaching was good and the rest was satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, a half of the teaching was good and in other lessons teaching was satisfactory. Teachers plan interesting activities that make pupils enthusiastic about science. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher made good use of a big book and a video that captured pupils' interest and increased their learning. A good focus on vocabulary with effective questioning led to pupils using scientific terminology correctly in their responses. Effective revision of previous work helped to promote recall and thoughtful replies. Visits make science more interesting for pupils and they learn better. For example, pupils remembered the names of hog-weed and bluebells from their woodland visit and crabs and sea anemones from the seaside rock pool. They explained why certain environments were unsuitable for different animals. Pupil activities are relevant and pupils respond positively to the challenges set by the teachers. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance and consequently behaviour is very good and pupils use equipment and materials sensibly.
- 84 At Key Stage 2 teaching was better with more attention being given to experiments and solving of problems. Throughout the key stage much of the work contains an investigative element and pupils are eager to carry out research activities. Teachers are encouraging and pupils confidently put forward ideas, make predictions and draw conclusions. This was very evident in a Year 3 lesson when pupils were setting up an investigation to discover which conditions promote and sustain plant growth. They identified features for a fair test including "temperature", "soil type", "soil amount" and "pot size". Teachers extend technical vocabulary through confident use. For example, pupils in Year 4 investigating the impact of ramps in raising weights used terms such as "Newtons", "Newton metre", "gravity" and "pulley". Teachers have secure subject knowledge and provide good advice as they are helping pupils in lessons. This effectively extends pupils' learning in a relevant working situation. Teachers have high expectations and continually encourage pupils to predict outcomes. This was very apparent in Year 6 when pupils were making burglar alarms. They experimented, modified and improved their alarm in discussion with a partner. The teacher made the activity challenging yet attainable and pupils rose to the challenge and worked hard and showed a sense of determination to solve problems and complete investigations. Questioning techniques are appropriately used to assess pupils' learning, promote progress and encourage. Homework is regularly set and often involves researching information or finding environmental examples to extend topics studied in lessons. Marking at Key Stage 1 records corrects answers and often includes comments of encouragement. At Key Stage 2, this is expanded by much greater use of comment and question, designed to generate further thinking and to promote improvement in pupil attainment. This is particularly effective in Year 6 and is a significant factor in the good progress pupils make. At both key stages planning for lessons is variable. Learning outcomes are not always clear or sufficiently well defined and then pupils are unclear about the overall focus of the lesson.
- 85 Curriculum planning is satisfactory and the school is preparing well for Curriculum 2000. The subject long-term plans are constantly reviewed and modified in response to any weaknesses discovered by thorough analysis of national test results. This has promoted improvement in pupils' investigative skills across both key stages which was a weakness identified in the last inspection. Although effective use is made of assessment information to adapt the organisation of the curriculum this is not the case with assessment of pupils' learning throughout the year. A lack of consistency in procedures to assess and record pupil achievement at the end of science units of work leads to some teachers having little evidence to identify pupil attainment and progress throughout the year.
- 86 Currently the co-ordinators provide effective management but have no strategic overview of the subject and have had no opportunity to observe provision in the classroom. The previous report identified resources for science were just sufficient. There has been little improvement and resources are now barely satisfactory and this is a problem when investigations require consumable materials. The school has a small nature area, including a pond, which is much used, especially in Key Stage 1. Little use of computers is made in science to record data.

ART

- 87 Standards are similar to those seen in most primary schools and have remained the same as those found at the time of the previous inspection. Displays of pupils' work are attractive, carefully mounted and show a variety of skills although the range of media is rather limited. Pencil, paint, coloured and textured papers are most frequently used.
- 88 At Key Stage 1, pupil's art shows their knowledge of pattern making through their study of the work of William Morris. They have experimented with marbling and a range of materials to create collages. They have an understanding of artistic vocabulary and refer to the 'background' in their pictures of ponds. Colours are mixed carefully to obtain different tones of green and blue. Observational drawings of shells and items collected on a school visit show close attention to detail. Pupils have the opportunity to work on a large scale. This was effective in Key Stage 2 when pupils were painting a mural on a corridor wall using charcoal and paint. By the end of Key Stage 2 the quality of work is satisfactory. Pupils have studied a range of artists and work in Year 5 shows an understanding of the work of Claude Monet. Pictures reflect an appreciation of creating an impression rather than including a lot of detail. Other work on display indicates that by the end of the key stage pupils have an appreciation of the styles of Andy Warhol, Kandinsky and Lowry. The craft club extends the curriculum and pupils have made an impressive Millennium Banner including pupils' favourite aspects of the school.
- 89 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The majority of teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject to teach the basic skills but do not use a wide range of materials or techniques. They encourage the use of appropriate vocabulary. For example, in Year 1 the teacher successfully got pupils to talk about the 'texture ' in their pictures and how they could get this effect using different materials. When teaching is less effective pupils are given the resources to work with and these hamper their skills to choose which medium or technique to use to achieve a desired effect. This limits pupils' opportunity to be creative and imaginative.
- 90 Art is used effectively to support and illustrate other areas of the curriculum, particularly, literacy, numeracy and science. For example, bubble painting and paper collage to provide a background for observational drawings of pond life to create a record of a recent visit to a pond.
- 91 The role of the co-ordinators is not yet fully developed and there is insufficient information available to show the amount and variety of pupils' work that has been evaluated and to ensure consistent progress throughout the key stages. Consequently there is little evidence to show that assessment is taken into account when planning, particularly for the development of skills. Resources are adequate but limited in their range. There was very little evidence of two or three-dimensional work and very little on display to show the use of modelling materials.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 92 Attainment in design and technology is similar to that seen in most schools and this standard has been maintained since the last inspection. Evidence on standards was drawn largely from pupils' work, work on display, discussion with pupils and examination of planning as only one lesson was observed during the inspection.

- 93 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use simple tools to cut and shape materials, such as fabric, paper, dough and card. They make static models like vehicles, as in the display "Go for a Ride" and stuffed soft toys. Pupils in Year 1 had been to visit the local park for geography and after due consideration identified how the park could be improved. This led pupils on to make one "item" for the new park such as a slide, swing and bench. Year 2 pupils had designed and made two and three-dimensional Mother's Day cards. They also fashioned bread shapes and cooked them as part of a science topic. Pupils had constructed boats, designed and made a fruit salad within a science topic and had also linked it to art. Stick puppets were designed and made and featured in a scarecrow display about "Tattybogle". These showed imagination but there was no evidence of joining materials to create moving models. Although class discussion on design takes place prior to the making process, there is little recorded evidence of design in picture or written form in Key Stage 1. However, a few teachers keep a useful photographic record of work done during the year. This provides clear information about pupils' standards and indicates pupils are making satisfactory progress.
- 94 In Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 3 design and construct cardboard Roman temples as part of a history topic. In Year 4 pupils design and make a three-dimensional flowers, choosing tools and materials suitable for the purpose. They modify, amend and evaluate their work. These developing techniques are seen in Year 5 work on car and bridge design, where testing for load bearing is also included. Pupils in Year 6 design and make an Anderson shelter in history. Again, they make suitable choices about materials and tools and amend and evaluate their work. Science work on constructing a burglar alarm follows the same structured approach. Pupils appreciate the need to modify and change design and the significance of evaluating the outcome.
- 95 Teaching was satisfactory in the lesson seen. Appropriate emphasis was placed on safety and pupils understand about using tools safely and the importance of hygiene when working with food. Good relationships led to pupils working well and responding enthusiastically to the subject. Pupils discuss their work with interest and talk about the processes involved in designing and modelling. A good feature across both key stages is effective links between design and technology and other subjects of the curriculum. The previous report stated that teachers should be more explicit about where learning in design and technology is taking place. This has improved and teachers in both key stages look for design and technology opportunities within other subject areas and exploit them effectively. There is no formal assessment procedure to enable teachers to check on pupils' progress.
- 96 The co-ordinator has produced a draft policy document and a comprehensive scheme of work so that the school is ready to teach the new curriculum in the autumn. The co-ordinator is involved in monitoring planning but does not monitor teaching to check on provision in the classroom.

Geography

- 97 At the previous inspection attainment was stated to be average. This situation has been maintained.
- 98 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good geographical knowledge of the local environment and have visited the school's locality, including shops and park, and have worked out their route to and from school. Pupils are aware of the variety and use of many buildings in the neighbourhood. They identify different kinds of homes, work that is linked effectively with habitats in science. Year 2 pupils know that an island is surrounded by water and have drawn imaginary islands. They have included a range of features and used simple symbols to plot these on their maps. Pupils know of the water cycle and have an understanding of features such as rivers and streams. They collect data on weather and produce bar graphs of their observations.

- 99 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils compare and contrast Belper with many different locations, including India, Kenya, Greece, Egypt and Brazil as well as with locations in other parts of the British Isles. They have compared climatic conditions, topography, settlements, land use and economic activities. The good focus on mapping skills has led to pupils being confident when reading maps and finding places. Pupils have a good understanding of plans and know how they are different from maps. They use aerial photographs to aid their interpretation of maps. They have a sound knowledge of scale, grid references, contours, direction, keys and symbols. Pupils use maps and atlases well and locate cities and features on maps of the British Isles, Europe and the world. They understand the pattern of day and night, winter and summer as well as the influence of sun and moon. Pupils pursue local studies focussing on Belper. A Year 5 debate about a proposed new housing estate in Belper raised questions of pollution, employment, safety and quality of the environment. Pupils in Year 4 were preparing for a visit to nearby Litton Mill. The school makes very good use of visits to enable pupils to experience at first hand many geographical features and issues. Little use is made of information technology in the subject and this is a weakness. Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support from teachers and classroom helpers and peers and make satisfactory progress.
- 100 Teaching in lessons seen was good. Lessons are prepared well and teachers have good subject knowledge. The latter was evident in the quality of geographical vocabulary used during the lessons. Pupils use this language in their explanations of their work. For example, in Year 6 lesson on the climate of Brazil pupils used and understood terms, such as “coastal and equatorial climate” and “acid and polluted rain.” Teachers encourage pupils to work hard and their work is well presented. There are no formal assessment procedures and pupils all do similar tasks. This leads to occasions when tasks do not closely match pupils’ need and this hampers progress in lessons. Planning makes effective links with other subjects, particularly with mathematics and science. For example, Year 6 was using climatic data and representing this in a graph. Work on grid references is based on previous work on co-ordinates in mathematics. Teachers present interesting activities and pupils enjoy geography. Behaviour is good in all lessons and very good in some. Pupils show an interest in lessons and enjoy learning new vocabulary. Geography makes a significant contribution to the cultural, moral and social development of pupils. Pupils are made aware of other cultures through work related to countries such as India, Kenya and Brazil; they consider the morality of certain environmental issues and social issues relating to pollution in the locality.
- 101 The co-ordinator has no strategic overview of the subject and so is unable to identify where support maybe required.

HISTORY

- 102 Pupils’ attainment is similar to that seen in most schools at the end of Key Stage 1 and better than most schools by the end of Key Stage 2. This indicates an improvement in standards since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with expectations at both key stages.
- 103 Curriculum planning is good and already takes account of the requirements for the revised curriculum in September 2000. Teaching and learning are supported well by the school’s effective use of recently published national guidelines.
- 104 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils develop a secure understanding of the past. When discussing people in history, for example, they know that Guy Fawkes’ gunpowder plot took place long before Grace Darling’s rescue of the shipwrecked passengers. They understand that changes take place over time. Following their visit to Elvaston Castle, for example, pupils discussed the differences in the lifestyle of people at the turn of the century.

- 105 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of chronology and how events through time have influenced life today. For example, pupils in Year 3 know about ancient Egyptian and Greek civilisations and of what has been learned from the discovery of Tutenkahmun's tomb. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 learn about Roman and Saxon settlements and how Roman skills influenced buildings and roads in Britain. Year 5 pupils gained good insight into life in the nineteenth century from their visit to Blists Hill museum. Pupils in Year 6 study Britain since the 1930s. They know for example, how the depression prior to World War II affected many families in Britain and of the new discoveries during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.
- 106 Literacy is promoted in a wide range of writing for different purposes. In Year 3 for example, pupils write about life as a Roman slave in their 'day at the amphitheatre'. Pupils in Year 6 write at length about experiences as an 'evacuee' or about John Harney's reflections on the Jarrow March.
- 107 The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and plan enjoyable tasks for the pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils were engrossed in a 'weaving' activity to simulate 'clip mat' making. This was linked to an educational visit. Good questioning about photographs of Elvaston allowed pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of the 'olden days'. Teachers build well on pupils' earlier experiences and challenge pupils to record work in interesting ways, including graphs, diagrams and written work. This consolidates pupils' learning and improves their recording skills. Teachers question pupils skilfully using specific language, such as 'squalid conditions' (Year 4) or by encouraging pupils to empathise with those who lived in particular situations. This effectively improves pupils' language skills and their understanding of history. Relationships in classes are very good. There is very good rapport between teachers and pupils, which often encourages an excellent response. Pupils work hard when given written tasks, are eager to contribute to lessons and remain polite and courteous towards others.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 108 Standards in information technology are good and are above those expected at the end of each key stage. This is an improvement since the previous report when pupils' level of attainment was average.
- 109 Significant progress has been made recently. The school has benefited from the establishment of an information technology suite and from the recent appointment of a specialist teacher. Overall progress is good but is restricted because there is limited access to the necessary equipment within classrooms for pupils to practise and consolidate the skills they have learnt in their information technology lessons.
- 110 Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are good. Pupils access the correct program from 'the desktop' using a mouse and are able to drag icons, move screens and perform simple word processing tasks confidently. Pupils use the appropriate specialist terminology to describe what they are doing, such as 'scrolling' and 'changing fonts.' Higher attaining pupils sort a simple database into two categories and understand the sorting process.
- 111 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress and attain standards that are above those expected at this stage. The majority of pupils can access the Internet, download graphics and integrate these into their own text. They can also receive and send e-mail with attachments. The older pupils can input data into spreadsheets and use simple formulae to perform such tasks as addition and calculating discount.
- 112 Throughout the school pupils use word processing programs and as they gain in confidence and expertise they are able to produce documents to a high standard with little teacher support. For example, two Year 6 girls are producing a magazine using their skills and intend to sell the publication to raise funds for charity. However, pupils are not taught keyboard skills and the skills they do acquire are not sufficiently used in their classrooms to enrich other areas of the curriculum.

- 113 The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages but this is principally dependent on the specialist teacher. Generally class teachers do not take part in the specialist lessons. However, at the upper end of Key Stage 2 teachers were seen working collaboratively with the specialist for the benefit of the pupils. During specialist lessons effective introductions revise prior learning and pupils recall earlier work and enjoy the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Most lessons include a clear demonstration of the skill to be taught and the large television screen is a useful aid. Pupils give due attention to these demonstrations and quickly grasp new skills. Good questioning clarifies their learning and provides appropriate challenges for the pupils. Teachers allow pupils to work in pairs and they benefit from the interchange of knowledge and ideas to solve problems. All pupils treat the resources with respect and enjoy working together on the given tasks. Activities are prepared well and organised carefully. The pupils are managed well in a difficult classroom as there is limited space for pupils to sit comfortably. Teachers use technical terms accurately and pupils are at ease using language, such as 'scroll', 'edit' and 'integrate'. Good links are made with other subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy through the use of spreadsheets and word processing, but this is an area for further planned development. The majority of pupils is intensely interested in their information technology lessons and work well and the rate of learning is always good and often very good. However, due to limited access to computers in classrooms teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to practise their skills and use information technology in other subjects. There was little evidence of other teachers working with pupils using computers or of pupils developing key board skills. Assessment of pupils' progress is good. An activity is given at the end of each unit of learning that incorporates all the skills taught. The results are recorded and, together with an evaluation of lessons and an individual portfolio of work, form the basis of an effective system that tracks pupils' progress.
- 114 The subject is efficiently managed. Policy and schemes of work have been refined and good, informal support is available to members of staff. There are good links with the local high school and with a similar primary school and this is beneficial in sharing ideas.

MUSIC

- 115 During the inspection it was only possible to observe three lessons. Listening to the music in assemblies and attending extra-curricular activities supports judgements. Standards of pupils' work in both key stages are similar to those found in most schools. The weakness identified in the previous inspection has been resolved and teachers now give due attention to extending pupils' composition skills.
- 116 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils select suitable instruments to accompany a story and maintain an appropriate rhythm. They know the names of the instruments and are beginning to use musical terms correctly. These skills are further extended throughout Key Stage 2 with a notable strength in Year 3 where the teacher is a competent musician and shares enthusiasm as well as knowledge effectively with the class. Pupils extend their musical terminology and know 'pulse' 'rhythm' and 'pitch.' They understand music is represented by symbols and work in small groups to compose short pieces of music. They confidently select suitable instruments and enjoy performing to the rest of the class. The teacher encourages careful listening and pupils make positive comments to each group after their performance. By the end of the key stage listening skills have further improved and pupils listen to taped music and identify tuned instruments. The higher attaining pupils recognise which instruments play the same tune. They repeat accurately a given chord and successfully build up a short piece of music combining chords and different rhythms. The more musically experienced pupils play tuned instruments correctly following musical notation. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons. The practical activities make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and to increasing their self-worth.

- 117 Teaching is satisfactory overall and this leads to satisfactory progress, although there are pockets of very good progress in response to stronger teaching. Of the lessons seen two were satisfactory and one in Key Stage 2 was very good. Where teaching is very good the teacher has good subject knowledge and shares this well with the pupils and they are eager to learn. The lesson was lively and included opportunities to play, listen, compose as well as sing. Resources are organised well in all lessons and teachers make learning fun for the pupils. Management is based on very good relationships and behaviour is generally good and in one lesson seen was excellent. Many pupils enjoy music and take up instrumental playing or sing in the school choir. Singing in assemblies is tuneful and often accompanied by the school recorder group.
- 118 The new coordinator has clear plans to further improve standards although currently has no opportunity to observe provision in the classroom. Staff give generously of their time to provide additional musical activities for pupils and these significantly extend the curriculum as well as improve musical skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 119 Pupils at both key stages make good progress in physical education and attain good standards and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching has also improved and is now good at both key stages with some very good teaching at Key Stage 2.
- 120 At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils travel in different ways, such as running, walking, jogging and jumping. They do this with care and control and respond well to the teacher. Pupils link their movements together to perform sequences of movements to a good standard. In Year 1 pupils incorporate balances into their work and demonstrate good skills. In Year 2, pupils use their travelling skills on different types of gymnastic apparatus. Pupils' landings though safe are not as controlled as they could be and pupils were not reminded or taught sufficiently how these could be improved. Pupils in Key Stage 1 co-operate very well to get out and put away apparatus, and accomplish this task to a high standard.
- 121 By the time pupils leave the school their games and swimming skills have progressed very well. The general standard of throwing and catching is very good and is developed systematically by teachers throughout the year groups. In Year 6 pupils use these skills to play rounders to a very good standard. They not only bowl, bat and field well, but also demonstrate a mature and knowledgeable grasp of the rules and tactics of the game. Pupils' gymnastic abilities are good. In a Year 3 lesson the teacher developed pupils' gymnastic skills so that they combined movements and performed controlled sequences either on their own or with a partner. In dance pupils keep in time to the music and learn to perform several country dance sequences. They enjoy dance and by the end of the lesson are confident with different steps and one pupil successfully called the steps for the rest of the class.
- 122 Overall the quality of teaching in lessons seen was good. Throughout both key stages teachers show good and sometimes very good subject knowledge. This helps them to teach their pupils the correct skills in a progressive way. Teachers' high expectations of their pupils are rewarded with good performances. Relationships between pupils, and between teachers and pupils, is very good and this helps to make learning enjoyable as well as constructive. The teachers' management of pupils is very good and they give a high level of praise and encouragement. This has established a good, supportive and safe working environment in which pupils work and behave very well. Less effective aspects of teaching include expectations of performance that are not sufficiently high and occasionally pupils could achieve higher levels of skills. Although pupil demonstrations are a feature of many lessons, teachers do not always comment on how these could be improved or focus attention on the standards to be achieved. This leads to missed chances for pupils to adjust and improve their performances. When praising pupils teachers do not always explain what is good about the work and so other pupils who hear the encouragement do not know what attributes are needed to achieve a good standard.

- 123 The school has a high level of after school sporting activities for Key Stage 2 pupils. This forms a valuable contribution to the work of the school and life of many of its pupils. The school is fortunate to have the efforts of teachers, parents and outside organisations, and these are to be thanked for the time that they give to such worthwhile activities. Pupils enjoy this wide range of sporting activities and many learn about team spirit as they play competitively against other schools.
- 124 The co-ordinator provides good leadership and is effective in leading the staff on to build on the high standard already achieved. As yet there have been no opportunities to monitor teaching across the school or introduce an assessment and recording system.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 125 At the end of both key stages pupils reach the standards expected of them within the locally agreed syllabus. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- 126 By the end of Year 2 pupils have appropriate knowledge of the Old and New Testaments. They learn about the story of Ruth for example, as well as the stories of 'Creation' and 'Noah's Ark'. They reflect on New Testament parables such as the story of the sower, and how Jesus was lost for three days. Pupils begin to understand the importance of commitment when learning about Dr. Barnado. They link harvest festival celebrations with their own responsibilities towards others through thoughtfulness and care.
- 127 At Key Stage 2 pupils study Christianity in greater depth, and learn about other faiths. Pupils in Year 3, for example, think more deeply about the teaching contained in the Lord's Prayer. The Old Testament stories of Abraham, and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph in Egypt help pupils understand the origins of Judaism. The story of Joseph is used effectively to help pupils reflect on their own feelings of rejection, honesty love and forgiveness. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of Christian belief. Through their visit to the local church they learn about the significance of the artefacts used in worship and celebrations such as baptism and marriage. They reflect on the messages contained in parables and consider, for example how they can best use their own talents to help others. They use literature, such as Blake's poem 'The Poison Tree', to help examine the importance of controlling their feelings towards others. Pupils increase awareness of other faiths by studying Hinduism. They know about the importance, for example, of Brahma and Vishna in the religious culture and the importance of prayer in the life of a Hindu family. Pupils in Year 6 study the religion of Sikhs. They locate on maps the region in Northern India where it is most commonly practised. Similarities drawn between the Christian bible and the Sikh guru Granth Sahib help pupils understand the values and importance of other faiths.
- 128 The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and this helps them to plan and deliver lessons confidently. Consequently pupils' learning is relevant and clear. Good questioning helps pupils clarify their earlier knowledge and understanding. Teachers promote good discussion, giving pupils the opportunity to express their views. Literacy is also promoted well, for example in a Year 6 lesson pupils had to write and explanatory text from the information gained in the lesson about Sikhism. Relationships are excellent. There is a mutual respect between teachers and pupils, which promotes good attitudes to work in a pleasant and orderly environment. Resources are carefully chosen and add excitement an interest for pupils, as in a Year 2 lesson when an old family bible was shown.
- 129 There are enough books to support the teaching of religious education and the visits made to the local church and the Hindu temple in Derby have a good impact on pupils' learning. However artefacts to illustrate aspects of non-Christian religions are very limited. There are no systems at present which clearly record pupils' progress in knowledge and understanding of the attainment targets set for them within the agreed syllabus. The subject makes a significant contribution to the caring ethos that is evident throughout the school.