

INSPECTION REPORT

Trent Vale Infant School
Nottingham

LEA area : Nottinghamshire

Unique Reference Number : 122541
School Inspection Number: 188853

Headteacher : Mrs Jill Wilson

Reporting inspector : Tony Painter
21512

Dates of inspection : 13th – 16th September 1999

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Infant and nursery
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	3 to 7
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
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Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Cllr Maureen Tewson
Date of previous inspection :	22 nd – 25 th April 1996

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Ernest Marshall, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnerships with parents and the community
David Matthews Jeniffer Young	Science Religious education Art Physical education English History Geography Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and resources Efficiency Curriculum and assessment

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils are looked after well and there is good support for all aspects of their personal development with particularly good provision for their moral and social development.
- Children in the nursery get a good start to their education.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to make good progress.
- The literacy strategy has been introduced well and the teaching of English is good.
- Pupils' progress in art is good and they produce some high quality work.
- Pupils have good attitudes to lessons and these help them to do well.
- Parents are given good opportunities to be involved with the school.
- The school's buildings and grounds are attractive and contribute to the range of educational activities.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The curriculum still does not give teachers sufficient guidance to what needs to be taught to pupils of different ages and ability levels. New developments are not all clearly linked to other parts of the curriculum.*
 - II. Teachers' assessments of what pupils have learned are not yet systematic enough to help them to plan further work.*
 - III. Subject co-ordinators do not monitor teaching enough to share good practice and ensure that curriculum developments are successful.
- * Elements of these weaknesses were identified as key issues in the previous inspection report.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well and will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and standards are rising, particularly in writing. New curriculum frameworks have been appropriately introduced and these are being used to improve the quality of teachers' planning. Teachers now plan together more effectively, paying greater attention to the needs of pupils of the same ages in different classes. These developments and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have had significant positive effects on the quality of teaching. The teaching of children under five now pays close attention to the children's development in the full range of areas of learning. New assessment systems have been put into place and some analysis of results is made for target setting. However, these systems are not closely linked to teachers' planning and have a limited effect on raising attainment. The school is securely placed to further improve.

Standards in subjects

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

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
Reading	C	D	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E

Writing	D	E	
Mathematics	C	C	

The table shows that, in 1998, standards in reading and mathematics were in line with the national averages. Standards for writing were below average. When compared with schools with similar levels of free school meals, however, the school's standards are less secure. Pupils are not doing as well as they might, particularly in English with writing standards being very low. The school has tackled these weaknesses. The school's results for 1999 show improvements in standards although no comparisons are available. Evidence from the inspection also indicates that standards are improving through the school. This is a result of teachers' attention to the curriculum and new teaching methods.

Children under five make good progress, particularly in the nursery. Pupils make overall satisfactory progress through the school. By the end of the key stage, pupils' achievements are in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Attainment in information technology meets national expectations and work in religious education meets the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' work in art is often of a high standard and they make good progress.

Quality of teaching

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

All teaching observed was satisfactory or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In over 60 per cent of lessons the teaching was good or better with around seven per cent of lessons graded very good. Teaching is of a consistently good quality in the nursery. The quality of teaching seen in the inspection is generally better than that apparent in pupils' earlier work. This results from recently introduced curriculum developments, such as the literacy strategy, and clearer attention to planning lessons.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils are polite and relationships are very good throughout the school. Teachers make effective use of very good behaviour strategies.
Attendance	Good. There are very good systems for monitoring absence and promoting good attendance.
Ethos*	Good. The school is a well-ordered community where very good relationships and effective teamwork foster pupils' learning.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. Clear aims steer the work of the school. Governors are increasingly involved in decision-making. Monitoring by the headteacher is beginning to have a positive effect.
Curriculum	Satisfactory. It is broad and balanced with many recent developments. They are not yet clearly linked together and supported by more thorough assessment systems.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision helps pupils to make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good. All aspects of pupils' personal development are well promoted by the school. Provision for moral and social development is particularly strong.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory. Very good building and grounds provide opportunities for a wide range of educational activities. Staffing and resource levels are appropriate.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
IV. There is a friendly and caring atmosphere, the school looks after their children well. V. Teachers are always approachable. VI. The building and grounds are attractive. VII. There are good links with the school through Home/School Diaries.	VIII. Junior school pupils have dinner in the

The inspection team agrees fully with parents' positive views. Arrangements for Junior school pupils to have dinner in the school are secure and no undue disturbance is caused.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

A number of significant curriculum changes have recently been put into place and these are beginning to have a positive effect. In order to consolidate these and to improve pupils' progress and attainment further, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- IX. Ensure that curriculum plans take into account changes in subject curricula and have sufficient detail of what pupils will learn to guide teachers in their planning. (paragraphs 18, 25, 71, 75)
- X. Establish clearer links between teachers' planning and the assessment of pupils' attainment by identifying assessment points in the curriculum plan, devising appropriate systems for recording the progress of individual pupils and using assessments more clearly in planning pupils' work. (paragraphs 16, 19, 28, 70, 75, 93, 94)
- XI. Widen the role of subject co-ordinators to include monitoring lessons to share good practice and identify weaknesses. (paragraphs 43, 46, 50)

In addition, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. They refer to:

- XII. the provision of extended writing and the quality of presentation (paragraphs 5, 64),
- XIII. the extent to which clear analysis has been made of the success of past developments (paragraph 42),
- XIV. the planning to make use of the school's financial surplus (paragraph 49) and
- XV. the full use of computers (paragraph 78).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Trent Vale School is a smaller than average infant school with a nursery. The school building was purpose-built as an infant school and is set in substantial and attractive grounds. There are five classes in the main school with 108 boys and girls although this number is scheduled to rise during the year. Most classes have pupils from more than one National Curriculum year group. The nursery has 56 children attending on a part time basis. These children move into reception classes in the term before their fifth birthday. Most pupils come from the mix of private and council accommodation within the well-defined area around the school. There is a balance of boys and girls and few pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average and numbers are falling. The attainment of children on entering the nursery is a little below that found nationally. By the time children begin compulsory education their attainment is in line with expected levels.
2. The school has clear aims that focus on providing a secure and stimulating environment where pupils are able to achieve their full potential. Partnerships with parents are valued and encouraged. Aims are appropriately incorporated in the policies of the school. Recent developments have focused on addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report and implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Current priorities are set out in the development plan and continue the processes of developing the school and raising attainment. Major developments in information technology and mathematics are planned.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	30	24	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	23	22	27
	Girls	23	22	22
	Total	46	44	49
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82	79	88
	National	80	81	84

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	24	25	27
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	46	47	49
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82	84	88
	National	81	85	86

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.0
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.1
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	6.5
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

¹ No information is available for years prior to the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

3. Since the last inspection, the school has made some improvements in pupils' standards of attainment, notably in writing. Standards in history were also low and this has been improved. Good measures have been taken to consider and meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and their attainment is rising. In accordance with the local education authority policy at the time, the school did not take part in National Curriculum tests and tasks before 1998. This has limited the amount of information available to focus work on raising attainment. Results in 1998 showed attainment in reading and mathematics that was in line with national averages. Attainment in writing tests was below these national averages. The comparisons of these results with other schools have been a disappointment for the school. Attainment in mathematics just reaches the average band but attainment in reading is below and in writing is well below the averages in similar schools. Greater attention has now been paid to setting targets for raising expectations and meeting the needs of all pupils. Test information is increasingly analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. These measures have already brought about improvements in the results in 1999, exceeding the school's targets in all tests and tasks. The inspection confirms the picture of rising attainment, particularly in writing. By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment is in line with national expectations in mathematics, science and all aspects of English. Most pupils meet nationally expected levels in information technology and the levels described in the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Their progress in all subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory although progress in art is good and many pupils achieve high standards of work.

4. Many children enter the nursery with some pre-school experience and their level of attainment is a little below national expectations. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes in all the areas of learning. By the time they begin statutory schooling, their attainment is in line with that expected nationally. Most achieve the levels described in the Desirable Learning Outcomes². Teachers in nursery and reception classes place considerable emphasis on developing the range of children's language and literacy skills. As a result, children listen increasingly well to adults and to each other. They speak with developing confidence and handle books and writing materials with greater confidence. Most recognise common words and letters. They recognise and write numbers, counting and using mathematical language naturally in their play. They gain knowledge and understanding of the world and some initial competence with computers and other information technology. Children make good progress in their physical development through varied physical play activities both inside and outside the nursery. This is supplemented with well-organised and structured physical education lessons in the hall. Creative development is well promoted through art, music and creative role-play activities where children's imaginations are stimulated effectively. Children make good progress in their personal and social development. They build good relationships with adults and other children, enjoy coming to school and playing happily with their classmates. Children concentrate well on activities, take turns and share equipment and materials well.

² Nursery Education: Desirable Outcomes for Pupils entering Compulsory Education, School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1996)

5. Pupils' attainment in all aspects of English is in line with national averages and expectations and they make satisfactory progress through the key stage. Progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory and pupils take part in discussions in all subjects of the curriculum. Older pupils begin to develop a range of language and use Standard English with increasing confidence, for example when answering questions. Sound progress is made in reading using well-chosen books, particularly in literacy lessons. Pupils become increasingly confident and fluent in their reading and develop a good range of ways to find information from books. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are independent readers with a range of views and opinions about books. Progress in reading is helped by the very good system of home/school diaries. Progress in writing is satisfactory and this represents an improvement in standards in the school. Pupils write for a range of purposes and develop sound skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting. However, older pupils have limited opportunities to write extended pieces and there are still weaknesses in the quality of presentation.
6. Satisfactory progress is made in mathematics and attainment by the end of the key stage is in line with national averages. Pupils gain familiarity and confidence with number in an appropriate range of contexts. They increasingly recognise patterns in the numbers they use and recall number facts with greater speed. They recognise an increasing range of shapes by their correct names and older pupils begin to identify their properties. In practical work across the curriculum, they collect information and present it in simple graphs and some higher attaining pupils interpret graphs and tables. Pupils measure and compare using non-standard units developing an appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They use their developing numeracy skills in different contexts across the curriculum.
6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science and by the end of the key stage, they achieve standards that are in line with national expectations. Pupils gain knowledge of the parts of plants, such as leaf and stem, and recognise an increasing range of properties of materials. They begin to carry out simple observations and investigations and by the end of the key stage, they record results appropriately in a table. Pupils describe how food changes when it is heated. They know a range of common creatures and higher attaining pupils explain why they live in different habitats.
7. Satisfactory progress in information technology is made through a coherent programme of activities designed to meet the demands of the whole curriculum. This has recently been established to support the use of new computers and is beginning to raise attainment in the subject. Pupils learn how computers and other information technology devices are used and gain skills in a systematic way. There are appropriate opportunities for them to practice their skills and apply these to the curriculum.
8. Pupils' work in religious education makes a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of a suitable range of topics within the Agreed Syllabus. They make satisfactory progress and, by the end of the key stage, their attainment is in line with the expected levels.
9. In history and geography, pupils make satisfactory progress through an appropriate range of experiences that develop their thinking and questioning. They develop a sense of time and change and successfully relate this to their own lives. They gain an awareness of the world around them and the similarities and differences between places and environments. Pupils' progress in art is good and they produce work with increasingly fine detail and effective use of colour. Progress is particularly good when pupils recognise and understand the work of famous artists and apply the techniques to their own work. In physical education pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of the

subject. Pupils improve accuracy and control in their movements and make gains in their imaginative responses. Many pupils learn to swim. Progress in music is satisfactory and pupils make appropriate gains in listening and responding to music. They sing and play percussion instruments, applying their developing skills to simple compositions and performing with increasing confidence. Pupils' progress in design and technology is sound and pupils gain an appropriate range of skills through a structured programme of activities.

10. Some weaknesses in the assessment systems and their links to curriculum planning limit teachers' effectiveness in precisely meeting the needs of pupils of all attainments. Although overall progress is secure, some lessons are pitched at too high or too low a level for some pupils to make good progress. There are no significant differences in the attainment and progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity. The arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils are appropriately identified and suitable targets given in their Individual Education Plans. Their progress towards these targets is monitored and regularly reviewed and they make good progress. The very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported effectively to allow them to make progress with the other pupils. All pupils are encouraged to use their literacy and numeracy skills whenever possible in other areas of the curriculum. This is shown in such tasks as route-planning, report writing and displaying information from their topics.

11. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Their attitudes to learning throughout the school are positive. Pupils show interest in their work, and most are able to sustain concentration well. They develop greater independence in a range of ways. In the nursery, children have good levels of independence in choosing and tackling tasks and activities. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop their capacity for personal study, for example through periods of individual reading. Pupils show maturity in the way they reliably work together, such as in small groups working on literacy tasks in the corridor.
12. The behaviour of pupils in and around school is good. They show consideration for others and they are courteous, responsible and trustworthy. Pupils behave well in lessons, in the dining hall and on the field and the playground. Sometimes pupils run down the corridor, forgetting the safety advice teachers have given to them about walking. Teachers effectively ensure that pupils handle equipment safely and responsibly, and that they put books, apparatus and materials away carefully. There have been no recent exclusions.
13. Pupils form very constructive relationships with one another, with teachers and with the other adults in the school. This results in very good relationships at all levels and these have a very positive effect on learning. Pupils work collaboratively with one another in their lessons and they relate positively to classroom support staff. By listening well to the ideas and thoughts of other pupils they show respect for their values and beliefs. With the encouragement of the mid-day supervisors, pupils from various cultural backgrounds play harmoniously together.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good. They are very keen to contribute to the life of the community. They readily take on responsibilities such as taking the register to the office and carrying play equipment into the playground at playtimes. They are prepared to tidy up after an activity and they take a pride in their school. Older pupils take on responsibility for some of their learning, such as creating designs for the school's

millennium maze at home.

Attendance

15. Attendance at the school is good and is above the national average for similar schools. There is almost no unauthorised absence and the school makes determined efforts to keep authorised absence rates as low as possible. There are no truancy or persistent lateness problems. The school day starts and finishes on time and lesson changeovers are quiet and efficiently carried out. Registration complies with statutory requirements and registration periods often incorporate imaginative activities to stimulate the pupils' interest, resulting in effective use of registration time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

16. Teaching

16. The overall quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory. The teaching of children under five is good. Teaching observed during the inspection was all at least satisfactory with a significant proportion of good teaching. This is generally better than that apparent from examination of pupils' earlier work. This results primarily from the introduction of new curriculum developments and more precise systems for planning. Around 89 per cent of lessons in the nursery were good or better with eleven per cent graded very good. The weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been overcome. In Key Stage 1, half the lessons observed were graded as good with around five per cent very good. This represents a clear improvement since the last inspection where weaknesses were noted in teachers' expectations of higher attaining pupils. Teachers have more secure knowledge and understanding across the curriculum, expectations of pupils are generally high and teachers are becoming more demanding. However, some weaknesses in teachers' planning to match pupils' needs still exist.
17. Teachers' planning for lessons is detailed and generally includes some references to what the pupils will learn. New systems of working together have helped teachers to improve the quality of their planning. There is greater coherence between the work planned for pupils in the same National Curriculum year group but in different classes. However, tasks identified for pupils are not always planned to develop pupils' skills and knowledge consistently. This weakness is created by the lack of clear guidance in subject schemes of work about what pupils need to learn at different stages through the school.
18. Teachers continue to have very good relationships with pupils and they use these effectively in their management of pupils and classes. They make very good use of the positive behaviour policies of the school. This helps to create a positive learning environment where pupils feel secure. Explanations are generally given clearly and this ensures that pupils know what they need to do and little time is wasted. Teachers are effective in their use of questioning to develop pupils' thinking and to enhance their progress. They work well with individuals and groups, questioning and supporting to help pupils to make greater progress. In the discussions with pupils that feature at the end of many lessons, teachers' questions help pupils to consider what they have learned. Teachers make good informal assessments of what pupils have successfully learned in these sessions and during the lesson as a whole. These assessments are not fully used in further planning. Systems have been established for formal assessment of pupils' attainment in aspects of the curriculum to be made regularly. However, there is no system to use these formal and informal assessments in planning pupils' work or passing the knowledge gained to the pupils' next teacher. As a result, teachers sometimes plan work that is not securely

matched to pupils' developmental needs. This limits their effectiveness in meeting the needs of all pupils. However, teachers have secure strategies to identify pupils with special educational needs. They make good provision for these pupils and make effective use of the support available.

19. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively introduced and this is leading to improved teaching of English. Tasks in literacy lessons are well chosen and effective in developing pupils' skills and enjoyment of the subject. Aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy have been introduced during the last year and these have had positive effects on pupils' attainment and progress. There are currently good plans to introduce and evaluate the strategy as a whole. Teachers are generally well organised and make effective use of a wide range of resources. These are chosen effectively to enliven lessons and support pupils' learning. The teaching of art builds pupils' skills effectively through the school. A good balance of activities develops pupils' appreciation of art and artists as well as encouraging creative responses.
20. Teachers of children under five have established secure environments in which children can learn from interesting activities in all the areas of learning. Planning is securely focused on what children need to learn by the time that they reach statutory school age. Activities are organised well with good use of a wide range of resources to make learning interesting. There are good partnerships between the adults working in the nursery and these make a positive contribution to the consistency of expectations. Talk is given an appropriately high priority and is used effectively to promote children's thinking. Good attention is paid in the nursery to developing children's independence. Children are encouraged to think and do things for themselves and they respond well to these high expectations. Useful baseline assessments and developing systems of monitoring children's progress are used appropriately to target work for children and promote progress. Reception class teachers recognise the developmental needs of children and manage the transition to National Curriculum work with care.

The curriculum and assessment

21. The school has worked hard at addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. It has reviewed and evaluated the curriculum framework and revised some policies in the light of the audit findings. It now enables more systematic planning for the areas of learning for under-fives and the National Curriculum programmes of study. Teachers now plan and review their work together in order to raise their awareness of the needs of pupils of the same ages who are taught in different classes. This, together with the successful implementation of the literacy strategy is already having a positive impact on the attainment and progress of the pupils. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy were implemented during the last year and have had a positive effect. New assessment systems have been established but these are not sufficiently linked to teachers' planning to make improvements in pupils' progress. As a result, some elements of the last reports' key issues remain as issues for further development.
22. The curriculum for children in the nursery provides them with good access to broad balanced and relevant educational experiences. These are securely based on the areas of learning for children of this age. These learning experiences are carefully tailored to provide them with a range of activities to help their development linguistically, mathematically and socially. The early years' curriculum and the National Curriculum, taught when children reach five years of age, now fit together well. The nursery staff plan on their own then jointly with lower Key Stage 1 teachers in order to ensure the continued

progress from the Desirable Learning Outcomes into National Curriculum Key Stage 1. The planning and practice in the nursery and reception classes enables the children to gain knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. This positively influences the attainment and progress made particularly in language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social education.

23. In Key Stage 1, pupils receive a broad, balanced curriculum which is relevant to their interests and needs. It successfully promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. It provides equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils. Good provision is made for personal and social education. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught informally as part of science and personal and social education. The school has responded very positively to the national strategy for literacy and gives high priority to the teaching of reading and writing. The school has worked hard to successfully establish daily well-organised literacy sessions in each class. Pupils are provided with a strong foundation of skill development. The positive effect of this approach is now evident throughout the school. Governors are fully involved with this initiative, visiting classes and liaising with staff in order to share their findings. The National Numeracy Strategy has recently been introduced and plans for its further development are being successfully implemented. Pupils are encouraged to use their literacy and numeracy skills whenever possible in other areas of the curriculum. This is evident as they design routes, follow maps, write reports and collate information in a variety of ways after conducting experiments as part of their study topics.
24. Teachers now plan both individually and jointly in the medium and short term. This ensures that pupils in parallel classes receive a similar curriculum. A whole school curriculum overview exists in terms of a planned two-year topic cycle but this is not sufficiently detailed. Teachers do not, therefore, have a precise idea of what they are going to teach in each subject area during the two years. When topics are reviewed and updated, parts of the programmes of study can be missed out, duplicated or misinterpreted. This is particularly apparent in science where some elements of Key Stage 2 work are being inappropriately included. Because more than one scheme of work for science is being used, teachers sometimes do not plan tasks that securely build on earlier learning. This negatively affects the attainment and progress of the pupils in the long term.
25. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs at an early stage. The new co-ordinator ensures that the full curriculum is available to all the pupils concerned. Individual education plans set out clear, achievable learning targets. Progress is reviewed regularly as recommended in the national Code of Practice. Pupils are well supported by classroom assistants and a visiting teacher. These make valuable contributions to their groups and in the classroom generally. The overall quality of provision is good and has a significant impact on the standards being achieved by these pupils. They are making good progress.
26. A weekend community sports and football club which is attended by a significant number of older pupils and a wide range of visits and trips linked to the topics, considerably enhances the curriculum provision. The school's procedures for homework are good and understood by the pupils and parents. Home/school diaries are used effectively by the school and parents as a means of communication. These promote greater understanding and have a positive effect on learning. Targets for English and mathematics form the basis for weekly homework, along with a task linked to the topic being studied.
27. All statutory requirements for testing and assessing pupils' attainment at the end of key stage are fully implemented. The school has tried to tackle the issue of using assessment information

to plan the next stage of learning for pupils. A number of assessment strategies are now in place, including some relatively new target setting procedures linked to the class study topics. Assessment data that is collected is analysed to a certain extent, but does not yet significantly improve school improvement or pupils' progress. There is no coherent system of assessment to reflect what the pupils have learnt in the core subjects over a period of time. There is no whole school written record for individual pupils which systematically tracks their performance against specific targets over time. Because assessment is not sufficiently precise, it does not give teachers enough guidance to plan for the next stage of pupils' learning. This slows the progress that pupils make in the long term. Satisfactory progress has been made in using assessment information for planning and evaluating the curriculum. The headteacher has monitored aspects of the curriculum that have been introduced since the last inspection. These include reviewing, monitoring and assessing the reading programme over a two-year period and adapting assessment procedures to include regular target setting for individual pupils. This, along with her systematic monitoring of the Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect on the attainment and progress of younger pupils. Those pupils now in Year 2 have already benefited from this successful project.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

28. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. There is a coherent strategy to foster pupils' personal development that is a strength of the school.
29. Spiritual awareness is fostered well in a variety of ways. There are good, stimulating assemblies that comply fully with statutory requirements. These provide pupils with regular opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection. Visitors, for example from local churches, make significant contributions to assemblies through drama and stories that capture pupils' imagination. Teachers effectively provide classroom time each day for pupils to reflect on important issues. For example, they think about the things that are special in their lives. Sometimes these quiet times are enriched by an act of worship such as a prayer. In religious education lessons pupils learn effectively about the values and beliefs of Christianity and of other religions including the special place of religious buildings, festivals and books. In the curriculum teachers and parent helpers encourage pupils in developing a sense of wonder at the world around them for example when finding small creatures in the school pond and grounds.
30. The provision for both moral and social development is very good and the school's approach to these areas is very effective. The school's discipline plan provides teachers with effective support in fostering good behaviour and instilling in pupils a strong awareness of the difference between right and wrong. The school rule of helping one another is very well reflected in the very good relationships at the heart of the school community. Adults provide positive role models for pupils. Teachers enhance the way pupils relate to others through effective personal and social education and by providing them with ample opportunities to co-operate purposefully in lessons. They frequently focus pupils' attention on the correct way to behave, for example in handling creatures carefully. Teachers use imaginative methods to encourage good behaviour such as adding leaves to a tree in class three. Lunchtime supervisors actively enable all pupils to play well together, including those from differing ethnic backgrounds. The school's broad range of rewards is a significant feature of its success in promoting pupils' social development.
31. The school makes good provision for pupils to understand their own cultural traditions and to appreciate the richness of other cultures. In their religious education lessons pupils are taught

about the festivals of Christianity and other religions. Some of these are effectively shared through celebrations such as harvest festivals, nativity plays and Easter services. Teachers help pupils to develop their understanding of the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh and they provide musical instruments from other cultures for the pupils to play. The school extends their awareness of other cultures well through a wide range of opportunities including visits from African music and Asian dance groups, parents showing artefacts and clothing from other traditions and a multicultural week.

32. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

32. The school has an obvious caring and friendly environment within which pupils can feel secure and enjoy their learning. Before nursery enrolment, the teacher visits the children at home and children have the opportunity to visit the school. Once enrolled, nursery children join in several of the main school activities such as sports, concerts and assemblies. This involvement helps them develop confidence and eases the transfer into the infant classes. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported by the staff and a range of visiting specialists.
33. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress and their personal development is satisfactory. Assessment before entry to nursery is followed by baseline assessment in reception. In addition to National Curriculum testing, teachers use 'Dragon Sheets' and 'Maths Wheels' to evaluate and record pupils achievement in reading, spelling and mathematics, including mental arithmetic. Personal targets are drawn up and transferred into pupils' diaries ensuring that parents are kept informed. These teacher assessment tests are carried out twice per year. Personal development is also recorded on 'Dragon Sheets' and written information is given to parents as part of the annual report of pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs are monitored on a continuous basis and appropriate individual educational plans are prepared and updated. Parents are involved in all stages of this process.
34. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and behaviour are good. The written code of conduct is fully implemented across the school and emphasises the importance of recognising and praising good behaviour. The range of rewards and sanctions used allows teachers to develop a positive approach and promote good behaviour through role models. Any inappropriate classroom behaviour is recorded by the class teacher and discussed with the special needs co-ordinator to determine any action to be taken. These instances are rare. There are no exclusions and no bullying or other forms of harassment were observed. Parents express very positive opinions of the school's discipline structure. Staff are given guidance on the use of reasonable physical restraint of pupils but have had no occasion to use it. The high standard of behaviour achieved is a positive enhancement to learning and no teaching time is lost through the need to restore orderly behaviour in the classroom.
35. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good and result in attendance statistics that are above the national average. Any absence not requested or explained is recorded by the class teachers and followed up by the school's administrative staff. Statistics of weekly attendance rates are posted by the school office for parents' information.

Requests for holidays taken in term time must be made in writing and considered by the Head Teacher. Pupils taking extended holidays or absent through long illness are given selected reading books and worksheets to complete. This work is marked and assessed on completion

and returned to the school. Pupils' good attendance rates maximise their learning time and contribute positively to their attainment.

36. There are very good and effective procedures in place for child protection and the promotion of pupils' well being, health and safety. Emergency contact telephone numbers and named persons are compiled annually and updated as any changes occur. The Head Teacher is the designated officer for child protection matters and all staff are aware of the procedures to be followed. Sex and drugs awareness teaching is included appropriately in the curriculum and parents are expected to play their part in reinforcing the learning. Health and safety inspections of the premises involve the governing body and are regularly carried out. Hazards are identified and prioritised for remedial action. There are regular fire drills and evacuation times are recorded with comments for improvement. Annual testing of fire equipment and large play apparatus is carried out under contract. First aid procedures and equipment are to a good standard. The well-maintained condition and cleanliness of the premises and play facilities are examples of an environment that is conducive to the learning process.

37. **Partnership with parents and the community**

37. The school's partnership with parents and the community is good. Parents appreciate the quantity and quality of the regular newsletters and feel well informed of the work of the school and their children's progress. Parents' evenings are held twice per year when parents have the opportunity to visit the school to inspect and discuss children's work. Annual reports are detailed and parents feel that they represent their children well. Workshops for parents are organised jointly by the school and a local further education establishment. These workshops give parents valuable support in their home/school partnership responsibilities. The school prospectus is well presented and informative. The governing body's annual report to parents is both comprehensive and readily understood. Parents have their own notice board and meeting room in the school. The 'open door' policy operated by the school gives parents a daily opportunity to see the class teachers and discuss any immediate problem or other matter concerning their child. This facility is much appreciated by parents, as is the use of pupils' school diaries for effective two-way communication.

38. Parental involvement in children's learning is very good with some parents continuing to provide active support even when their children have moved on into junior and secondary education. Parents are involved in the homework routines and help with topic research. Parent helpers are regularly in the classroom and have planned tasks to perform. Assistance on extra-curricular activities is provided. The weekend soccer coaching is run entirely by parents who have been given access to the school's facilities. Parents run the weekly school bookshop and the school bank. The school positively encourages all parents to make their skills and time available. The Friends of School are a group of enthusiastic parents and staff who organise a programme of social and fund-raising events to draw parents into school. The success of the group is clearly visible when the quality of the recent improvements to the hard and soft play areas are seen.

39. Links with the community are satisfactory. The school is an active partner in the family of schools and maintains links with a local further education establishment in the role of joint providers of free adult education for parents and the community in general. Links with public services such as the police and fire provide assistance and instruction on security, crime prevention and personal safety matters. The local authority and the school work together on local community activity and sports development, giving pupils an insight into care of the environment and opportunities for enhancement of

personal sporting skills. Links with the church in the form of annual services help the pupils to develop their moral and spiritual thinking. Links with industry and commerce are limited at present although a potentially useful link to support numeracy has just begun.

40. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are sound and, as a result, the school functions as an efficient and orderly community. The headteacher provides sound pastoral leadership and is supported well by the newly appointed deputy headteacher. There are clear plans and targets for her management role in the school. The headteacher places high priority on the establishment and maintenance of good relationships at all levels. This is reflected in the productive relationships that exist and is held in high regard by parents. There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities at all levels. Clear policies and routines for the identification and support of pupils with special educational needs help these pupils to make good progress. Sound developments have been made in raising teachers' expectations of higher-attaining pupils. Systems for giving and receiving information are secure. These measures are successfully established and the ethos of the school is good.
41. Appropriate aims and values are set out clearly in the full policies. Aims emphasise the need to establish a secure environment in which pupils can develop. They focus on the requirement to achieving pupils' maximum potential across the full curriculum. Policies reflect these aims, are helpful to staff and steer the work of the school well. They are clearly apparent in the secure school development plan that sets out developments with appropriate links to responsibilities, success criteria and timescales. Systematic activities to meet the demands of the action plan resulting from the last inspection are integrated into the plan as a whole. A useful system of prioritising is applied to aid the implementation of the plan. Some evidence of success is noted and the school's priorities and targets are identified through sound analysis and discussion by staff and governors. There is greater analysis of the increasing amount of information available to the school on pupils' attainment and their progress. There is less systematic analysis of how successful past developments have been and how this should influence subsequent plans.
42. Satisfactory measures have been taken to remedy the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. Appropriate steps have been taken to improve the quality of monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. Satisfactory systems of monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and the deputy have been able to identify good practice and inform staff development. Some perceptive monitoring by governors have identified important strengths and weaknesses, particularly in literacy lessons. These observations have been augmented by support from the local authority inspection service. Subject co-ordinators continue to play a substantial and developing role in the development of policies and schemes of work. Many have had a substantial effect in developing aspects of their subjects, including informal support and leadership of workshops for the teachers of the school. They are more closely involved in teachers' planning but still have few opportunities to monitor classroom practice. This reduces the school's opportunities to accurately identify what works and what does not and restricts the potential of some developments.
43. The governing body is effectively organised and makes good use of its system of committees. These include a strategic development committee as well as finance and personnel committees.

It fully meets all of its statutory responsibilities. Information is distributed sensibly between committees in an efficient manner. Good opportunities have been recently taken to have talks and demonstrations from members of staff on aspects of the curriculum. Governors are successfully increasing their involvement in the day-to-day work of the school. There are good opportunities for governors to be linked to aspects of the work of the school. In these roles, they are able to visit classes and make reports to the governing body as a whole. Through this, governors gain greater understanding of the nature of the life of the school and how it works. This has been particularly effective in the review of the school's literacy strategy.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

44. The school has sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. All teachers have been appropriately trained to teach the age group within the school, and there is a suitable balance in their experience. School makes effective use of the expertise gained by some teachers during their initial training in allocating responsibilities, such as in co-ordinating different subjects. There is an adequate number of classroom support staff. They are all appropriately trained, and this enables them to have a positive impact, particularly on the learning of the nursery children and the pupils with special needs throughout the school. The school has allocated significant funding to provide administrative support staff and this is reflected in the efficient running of the school.
45. Sound arrangements exist for the professional development of staff. There are appropriate systems for addressing the needs of individual staff members and the needs of the school as a whole. Suitable training has been organised for teachers to teach literacy and numeracy. Subject co-ordinators provide good support to colleagues by leading workshops. There is a secure system for the appraisal of teachers, which is enhanced by annual professional interviews with the head teacher. Arrangements for the induction of the new deputy head teacher have been effective and the needs of newly-qualified teachers have been suitably met. Some co-ordinators have received no recent training in their area of responsibility or in carrying out the co-ordinators' role. This omission needs to be addressed so that all co-ordinators can have maximum impact on the quality of pupils' learning throughout the school.
46. The very good accommodation provides an effective learning environment and contributes significantly to the school's good ethos. The spacious building is in good condition and it is kept immaculately clean. Classrooms, former stock rooms and corridors provide valuable space for pupils to use in their learning. Substantial storage areas, particularly behind the hall stage, enable resources to be stored effectively. Rooms and corridors have many displays of pupils' work. The quality of displayed work is particularly good in and around the library area, and it provides an attractive welcoming climate for pupils and visitors. The extensive and developing school grounds give pupils good opportunities to play safely in different ways. Many additional environmental features such as the pond contribute very effectively to pupils' learning. The school has detailed plans to develop these further, for example with a millennium maze. The previous inspection found that the outdoor nursery play area gave restricted access to play, particularly when the grass was wet. The school appropriately addresses this by ensuring that the nursery children effectively use the extensive grassed areas alongside the school together with the hard surfaced areas. The established trees in the nursery play area make it a very attractive environment for the children to experience.
47. Resources are adequate for effective delivery of the subjects of the curriculum. The well-organised and

well-stocked library is large enough to accommodate a whole class at a time. It has a good balance between fiction and reference books and provides a valuable learning resource. Books representing different cultures are appropriately available throughout the school. There are sufficient computers to support learning in information technology and there are plans to develop these resources further.

The efficiency of the school

48. Financial planning is satisfactory overall. Systematic procedures are in place for the allocation of the school's annual budget. The head teacher and the administrative assistant consider alternative spending strategies and they present their recommendations to the governing body for approval. The governors' finance and general purposes committee has a developing role in this process, and it is appropriate that this should continue, so that governors are central to financial decision-making. Additional funding, such as that for pupils with special needs, is used appropriately. The school suitably incorporates estimated costs in its development plans, and this addresses a weakness that was highlighted at the last inspection. The governing body informally evaluates the cost-effectiveness of some of its major spending decisions, and there is a need to develop this important process on a more regular structured basis. The school carries a relatively large balance forward each year. This is greater than it needs to be for contingencies and planned expenditure. Plans are in hand for this to be reduced in the current year. The plans lack the precision necessary to help the school to allocate as much funding as possible to pupils' education, while retaining an appropriate contingency fund for unforeseen circumstances.
49. The school makes good use of teaching and support staff. Teachers plan together in year groups and this enables the expertise of individual teachers to be shared. Co-ordinators contribute usefully to planning but their role has yet to be developed so that they have maximum impact in the classrooms. Currently there are too few opportunities for them to work alongside colleagues, observing teaching, sharing good practice and identifying weaknesses. Support staff are well used, particularly in effectively meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
50. The staff make very good use of learning resources and the extensive accommodation. Teachers make particularly good use of the space that the building provides. They effectively use corridors and the former stock rooms attached to each classroom as valuable additional teaching spaces. The spare classroom is efficiently used to provide a range of activities to support learning, and the area behind the stage provides very useful facilities for drama. The library is used well to extend pupils' skills. Very good use is made of the well-developed school grounds and this supports pupils' learning well, for example in learning that different creatures are found in different habitats. The outside areas are all used effectively to provide good quality play opportunities for pupils. Resources for learning are deployed very effectively. The previous report found that thought needed to be given to improving the use of both the internal and external space in the nursery to extend the quality and range of the curriculum. The school has addressed this and the nursery now provides a broad range of curriculum activities.
51. The financial control and well-established school administration are very good, resulting in a very smooth-running, well-ordered school community. The most recent audit of the school's financial procedures found that most arrangements met the standards of best practice, with most recommendations from the previous audit having been implemented. The roles of school staff and governors in financial monitoring are clearly defined and documented. The administrative assistant is very efficient and provides the head teacher

and governors with all necessary financial information. The finance and general purposes committee meet twice a term and this enables it to monitor expenditure effectively and report appropriately to the full governing body.

52. The sound quality of teaching allows pupils make satisfactory progress and their attainment is around the national averages. Pupils' personal development is good and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

53. Since the last inspection, the provision for children under five has been enhanced through a more structured approach to the curriculum. Planning now pays close attention to the recommendations of the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all the areas of learning. Appropriate links are made with the National Curriculum as children enter the reception classes. Teaching in the nursery is enhanced by the good partnership between teaching and support staff. Voluntary helpers are well briefed and are therefore able to make an effective contribution to teaching. Children begin nursery with a variety of pre-school experiences. Their attainment is a little below that expected nationally. They enter reception classes in the term before their fifth birthday. They make good overall progress in all the areas of learning in the nursery and the reception classes. By the time they begin statutory schooling, most have achieved the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
54. Personal and social development is taught well. There are good induction systems to introduce children to the nursery. A caring and supportive atmosphere makes children feel safe and most settle quickly. There are good relationships at all levels and adults pay good attention to the needs of individual children. This helps children to gain greater confidence in their play. Children are generally eager to explore and take part in activities. Behaviour is good at all times and they learn to share and take turns. They treat things with care and put things away willingly. Most children transfer easily into reception classes and soon settle into new routines. Reception teachers provide an appropriate environment for children and work is generally appropriately planned to meet their needs. They have good relationships with children and use praise effectively to develop children's confidence. As a result, children continue to make good progress.
55. The provision for children's development in language and literacy is good. Teaching is good and an effective emphasis is placed on the development of language in the nursery in all aspects of children's work. Good opportunities are created for children to take roles and to explain what they are doing. The quality of questioning, in all nursery activities, is a strength of the work of all the adults. Children have frequent opportunities to match their names, for example in using the computer. They "write" down the appointments they make in the "health centre". Through this work many develop early reading and writing skills. They gain a wider vocabulary through their talk and use these words with increasing confidence. Children enjoy and join in with favourite books, handling them with care. The teachers in reception classes develop children's language further through appropriate reading and writing tasks. Children develop a wide range of language associated with the topics being covered.
56. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Children in the nursery play appropriate mathematics games and begin to develop their knowledge of number. For example, many count items when playing games and some show confidence well beyond ten. Teachers take advantage of children's increasing understanding to discuss mathematics further, such as when a child describes 11 as "one and one". Children use a developing range of simple mathematical terms as they sort and compare containers in the sand tray. They take part with enthusiasm in number rhymes and games, improving their recollection and understanding of number. In reception classes teachers consolidate and develop children's mathematical thinking through appropriate aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy. Children begin to gain independence and confidence in their number work. Effective use is made of a support teacher to question and promote children's progress.

57. In the nursery, children are given good opportunities to develop and widen their knowledge and understanding of the world and teaching is good. They talk with greater confidence about their families and their experiences when looking at photographs of themselves. They are given good opportunities to handle things and to understand what they are. Teachers and other adults in the nursery question children well to advance their understanding. Children use construction materials to create their own play spaces and talk to each other about what they have done. They use simple tools such as scissors with increasing skill. Children listen to stories on tape recorders and enter information into a computer, printing out the results with help. Good teaching in reception classes helps children to develop their understanding further and increasingly record their observations. Teachers build appropriately on their information technology skills. They use classroom activities to promote thinking and talking, helping children to make secure progress.
58. Nursery children make good progress in their creative development resulting from effective teaching that encourages them to respond imaginatively. They use a range of percussion instruments and sing simple songs and rhymes. Good opportunities are given for children to role-play in contexts such as “the health centre” and “Captain Hook’s boat”. They play enthusiastically and initiate creative ideas, playing together increasingly well. Children use a range of materials to make pictures and teachers pay good attention to developing children’s skills in using colour and pattern. Teachers in reception classes foster creative development well by building effectively upon children’s earlier experiences. Children use an increasing range of media with greater control and purpose. They improve their singing and begin to respond appropriately to pieces of music.
59. Physical development in the nursery is encouraged well through effective use of the outside play area and lessons in the school hall. Children use a range of large and small equipment that offers appropriate levels of challenge and enables them to make good progress. They gain skills of co-ordination through running, jumping, climbing and balancing. Teaching is very good. Lessons in the hall are particularly well planned and make effective use of secure routines. Children are able to use their imaginations, developing and refining their skills well to achieve good standards of movement and control. Children gain finer skills through cutting, painting and building. There is good teaching in reception classes. Children enjoy well-organised physical education lessons, moving with greater control, imagination and use of space.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

English

60. Attainment by the end of the key stage is in line with the national averages and expectations in all aspects of English. This is an improvement on the 1998 National Curriculum results that showed weaknesses in writing and few pupils attaining above average levels. Pupils’ current work indicates that more are likely to attain the higher level 3 by the end of Key Stage 1 next year. There is evidence to suggest that standards will rise further as the present Year 1 and reception children reach the end of key stage. This is because teachers have worked hard to address the issues raised at the previous inspection and implemented the national literacy strategy most successfully. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive very good support from staff. Their individual education plans are specifically targeted to meet their needs and within classes tasks are appropriately

matched to pupils' abilities.

61. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. Their skills are in line with national expectations when they leave school. Pupils express their thoughts and ideas well through discussion in lessons in all subjects, improvised drama and role-play. Big Book sessions and whole class discussions at the end of lessons are particularly effective. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their different ideas and opinions. Lower attaining pupils benefit from additional adult support to develop their answers and sustain their interest. Older pupils are precise and accurate as they answer questions in well-structured sentences. Pupils use a wide range of language and show confidence in the use of Standard English and subject specific vocabulary. A significant number of higher attaining pupils begin to use a broader range of appropriate language to describe and extend their ideas. They are confident to speak in front of an audience, for example when presenting plays, answering questions in assemblies, or re-enacting a role-play at the end of a lesson.

62. Progress in reading is satisfactory and, by the end of key stage, attainment is in line with national averages. Pupils' progress in group and individual reading in literacy lessons is often good. High levels of interest and motivation have been created by the very successful literacy strategy. These are maintained by the use of well-chosen books across the curriculum. Pupils read with greater fluency and expression in larger group and class situations. By Year 2, pupils are increasingly confident as independent readers, giving their own views and opinions about well-known stories. They make good use of the context and illustrations when discussing *Each Peach Pear Plum*, or *The Magic Key*, whilst benefiting from the broad range of literature introduced in lessons. Most pupils profit from reading at home. This broader reading experience and excellent use of home/school diaries has a significant impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of texts and authors because they visit the school and local library regularly. They are systematically introduced to basic research skills and older pupils apply this knowledge independently to gain information from books. Good knowledge of libraries is developed through effective use of the school library with weekly visits for all classes.

63. Progress in writing is satisfactory and by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainments are in line with the national average. Pupils have more opportunities to write for a wider range of purposes including lists, labels, posters, letters, reports, stories and rhymes. They are beginning to understand the process of planning, drafting and evaluating to improve their work. Older, higher attaining, pupils show imagination and flair as they discuss their ideas for story writing, but opportunities for extended writing are limited. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are developed through pupils' writing across the curriculum. Younger pupils soon become aware that sentences should begin with capital letters and end with full stops. Some older pupils, who have just transferred to Year 2, confidently describe the function of other forms of punctuation, such as question marks, exclamation marks and apostrophes. Many older pupils know strategies to enable them to spell more complicated words accurately. Good use is made of word lists, "Bear Words" and simple dictionaries to help pupils to develop vocabulary. The application of the literacy strategy is beginning to link successfully with other subjects. Topic, spelling and reading homework support attainment and progress well. Handwriting in a joined form is taught consistently and pupils acquire the skill reasonably quickly. However, the presentation of a significant amount of Year 2 written work lacks care and spoils the effort which pupils had obviously put into the content of this work. There is already some improvement in this area with the introduction of alternative ways of saving

written material.

64. The pupils have good attitudes to work, are enthusiastic, enjoy their lessons and are eager to learn. They are well behaved and well motivated. They concentrate intently to complete and improve their work. They develop considerable independence and many sustain concentration for long periods. During discussions, they listen intently to the contributions made by classmates and participate eagerly, giving thoughtful, considered answers. Relationships are strong, with pupils responding well to the praise they receive. All pupils value the support they receive from staff and adults in lessons. They enjoy the opportunities planned to evaluate their work. Discussions at the end of lessons support this aspect of learning very well. They are carefully planned to ensure that pupils have the chance to demonstrate their progress.
65. The overall quality of teaching is good and some lessons are very good. The literacy strategy has significantly influenced teaching styles and the quality of teaching has improved since the last report. Tasks set are particularly well matched to pupils' different interests and abilities, including lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Lessons are well planned, with specific objectives to identify clearly the precise focus of learning for pupils of different abilities. Teachers expect pupils to contribute to class and group discussions and are skilled in the way they introduce and explain points. This has a positive effect on the attainment and progress which pupils make. Support staff and parent helpers assist pupils well, which encourages them to persevere and make good progress. Teachers make good use of the information gained from the home reading scheme to promote pupils' progress further. Teachers' management of behaviour is usually good and this creates an industrious working atmosphere in class. Work is regularly marked.

Mathematics

66. Pupils' attainment, by the end of the key stage, is in line with the national average. This is broadly consistent with the 1998 National Curriculum assessments. Results for 1999 show improvements, particularly in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. These results are consistent with the picture of improving attainment gained from the inspection. Aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy have been effectively introduced over the last year and teachers have paid greater attention to planning mathematics lessons. This greater consistency of lesson planning has had a positive effect on the quality of pupils' work and their progress. Numeracy is appropriately developed through the school and pupils have opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects, such as when drawing routes and measuring in design and technology.
67. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is around the national expectations and make sound progress through the school. Pupils in the reception classes gain familiarity with numbers and a greater range of mathematical language as they find numbers that are more or less. Higher attaining pupils show developing confidence in numbers above ten and some begin to recognise patterns in a number square. Year 1 pupils count confidently to 20 and use larger numbers with quick recall. They identify a range of shapes and use correct mathematical names for them. Pupils measure and compare, using non-standard units. When conducting practical activities, pupils present their information in simple graphs. Higher attaining pupils begin to gain understanding of tens and units, recognising the distinctions between them. They have quicker recall of simple number bonds. Lower-attaining pupils are effectively supported with good questioning to enable them to make good progress. By the end of the key stage, pupils tackle a range of mental calculations with confidence. They use numbers up to 100,

identifying them on a number square and showing developing understanding of place value. Most identify simple shapes and many correctly describe their properties. Pupils draw and interpret simple tables and graphs. Higher attaining pupils can recall some multiplication facts and use these in their calculations.

68. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good throughout the school and they behave well in lessons. They are generally responsive to class sessions where they are keen to answer questions. Pupils listen carefully to teachers' explanations and instructions. When they begin their tasks, pupils organise themselves well and settle quickly to their work. Most concentrate hard at their activities and use resources with care. Many pupils begin to make good gains in working independently.
69. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are soundly planned with growing attention to the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. The introduction, over the last year, of elements of the strategy has been an important factor in raising the quality of teaching. Teachers now plan more clearly to develop pupils' skills with greater consistency. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and use these, with clear strategies to promote good behaviour, to create an effective classroom ethos. Classroom routines are secure and they are made clear to pupils. As a result, lessons generally proceed smoothly and effective use is made of time. Explanations are clear and questioning is generally effective in encouraging pupils to think carefully. Teachers make good use of the support staff available to them. These staff are clear of their roles and aware of what the pupils need to learn. They are able, therefore, to effectively promote the progress of the pupils they work with. Teachers have sound strategies to assess how well pupils have learned, for example through well-organised discussions at the end of lessons. They do not, however, have secure systems to ensure that this information is effectively used when planning work. As a result, over time, progress is hampered as teachers do not have sufficient information to plan work at precisely the correct level.

70.

70. **Science**

70. The school's statutory results in science in 1998 broadly reflected national averages. Teacher assessments for 1999 indicate a similar picture, with an appropriate number of higher attaining pupils gaining the higher level 3. However, when the school's 1998 results are compared with schools with similar levels of free school meals, pupils are achieving less well. This is largely caused by some lack of cohesion in the planning of work that pupils undertake as they move through the school from class to class. Although pupils make overall satisfactory progress, some lessons are not securely pitched to promote good progress.
71. The current attainment of pupils when they leave the school at the end of the key stage is in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils generally reach appropriate levels of scientific knowledge, understanding and skills. This addresses a weakness that was highlighted at the last inspection that pointed to higher attaining pupils not making sufficient progress.
72. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Year 1 pupils gain appropriate understanding of how sounds are made, and they learn, with the support of information technology, to name parts of a plant such as leaf and stem. Appropriate understanding is gained of what makes an electric circuit work. Pupils learn that materials have different properties such as water resistance and that some are rough or hard. Sometimes progress is not as good as it might be when lessons do not maintain their attention on the identified main area of

learning. For example when the teachers' focus moves from teaching about materials to studying the five senses. Satisfactory progress is made in Year 2 so that by the end of the key stage pupils record the findings of their investigations appropriately, such as by using a table. They describe how food changes when heated, and they have a secure knowledge of a range of common creatures. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of why animals are found in different habitats. Lower attaining pupils are sometimes unsure of where to look in order to identify creatures that they find. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress. They are well supported by classroom assistants, who enable pupils with speech difficulties to contribute effectively to science discussions.

73. Pupils' attitudes to their science work are generally good. They are keen to enter discussions and to provide suggestions. Most pupils listen well to the ideas of others. They are well motivated by practical activities such as when they use the school grounds to collect creatures, and they willingly talk about their discoveries. They raise appropriate questions about the properties of materials such as "Is it soft?"
74. Teaching is satisfactory although there are some weaknesses. Teachers use time and resources well and they are skilled at managing pupils. Activities usually engage pupils very effectively in their learning so that they are interested in their tasks. Sometimes teachers do not mark pupils' work in a way that helps them to improve their learning. For example, some work on reading thermometers was marked correct when there were inaccuracies. At times teachers encourage misconceptions, such as writing in pupils' books that magnets "stick" to some objects rather than teaching them that they are "attracted". Planning is sometimes weak as there is insufficient guidance on how pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are to be developed in a structured way from class to class. As a result, some teaching focuses on work that is of an unsuitable level. The assessment of pupils' work is not used enough to plan what they need to learn next.
75. **Information technology**
75. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage. Teachers have made good efforts to improve the teaching of the subject and address the weaknesses in the last report. A clearer structure to the teaching of the subject is being created with appropriate use of published materials. This is helping teachers to give pupils a firm foundation in specific skills and pupils make good progress in these lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to practice these skills at other times and their overall progress is sound. Pupils in reception and Year 1 classes use tape recorders and players with confidence. They learn to name correctly parts of the computer and identify their purposes. All pupils show developing confidence as they use the mouse with greater accuracy and precision. They pick up and move items on the screen carefully when they dress Teddy. Higher attaining pupils know that information can be saved on a disk. Pupils develop skills in using drawing programs to create pictures with increasing control. Older pupils enter text in various forms and some pupils make changes to their writing. Year 2 pupils explain how computers work and identify common uses for them.
76. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are generally good. Most pupils have appropriate levels of confidence when using the machines. They are interested and excited by what they learn to do. Pupils are keen to offer answers and make suggestions when teachers are explaining how computers work. They concentrate hard on their activities and show high levels of motivation. Pupils are very supportive of their classmates when they succeed in their tasks.

77. The teaching of information technology is satisfactory and the direct teaching of skills and knowledge to classes is often good. In these lessons teachers establish a good atmosphere for learning by effective classroom management and good use of positive behaviour strategies. They give clear explanations and question pupils well to deepen their understanding. Teachers' effective use of praise and demonstrations by pupils gives all pupils sufficient confidence to try things for themselves. Some use of computers outside of these lessons is well organised with effective use made of support staff. Teachers do not, however, make full use of available opportunities to use computers across the curriculum.
78. **Religious education**
78. Pupils' attainment, by the end of the key stage, is satisfactory when judged against the objectives set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. They make satisfactory progress through the school and this is evident in their increasing knowledge of Bible stories. Assembly visitors make a strong contribution to extending this area of learning, for example by fostering pupils' good recall of details in the stories. Throughout the school, the emphasis is on Christianity and associated issues such as the life of St Patrick. Knowledge is extended to the study of other world religions including Islam, when pupils gain an appropriate awareness of special books such as the Qur'an and important practices including fasting.
79. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good, particularly when teachers and visitors present lively animated stories. Most pupils listen very well and they feel secure in the atmosphere created by teachers. They respond positively and confidently to teachers' questions with their own ideas and opinions. They behave well, listening respectfully to the beliefs and comments of other pupils.
80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers use resources well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. They plan lessons carefully with well-chosen stories. Different accounts of the Creation enable pupils to compare the details of the main features. One carefully selected story prompted pupils to consider and discuss the nature of God. Old Testament stories are used to help pupils to reflect, for example on the relationship between God and Jonah. Teachers effectively use school visits to foster pupils' learning. Pupils build their understanding of Noah's Ark by attending a workshop at Wollaton Hall. They learn about the significant features of religious buildings when visiting the local Parish Church and the Methodist Church, and they extend their awareness of the rites of passage in major world religions at Nottingham Castle.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

81. Art

81. Pupils' progress in art is good. They effectively build their skills of observation from a good start in the nursery, where support staff carefully develop children's attention to pattern and colour. Their progress is particularly good in Year 1 where teachers skilfully link pupils' developing understanding of the work of famous artists such as Paul Klee with

the methods and techniques that the pupils use. While employing the skills of the artists, pupils effectively experiment with and use new techniques of their own, imaginatively applying these to their own work. In Year 2 pupils use sketch books to express and explore their own ideas, for example in designs for the school's millennium maze. Pupils make good progress in using the work of artists such as Van Gogh to produce detailed artefacts in mouldable materials, such as "Old Boots" made of clay. The head teacher sometimes enables small groups from each class to work together. This results in work of a very good standard, for example in the fine detail of drawings of feathers and the use of colour in paintings. The results are displayed attractively for other pupils to see. In some lessons, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to evaluate and comment on their work and that of others in order to improve future efforts.

82. Pupils' attitudes to their learning in art are good. Most pupils listen carefully and make appropriate responses to the teachers' questioning. They follow routines well and concentrate hard. Most respond enthusiastically to pictures by famous artists and confidently raise questions about them, especially when they are not required to sit still for too long. They readily share their imaginative ideas as they work.

83. Teaching is good. Teachers provide a wide range of materials and media that are easily accessible to the pupils and used well. They explain clearly what the pupils are required to do and this ensures the pupils work purposefully. Teachers are lively in their presentations and focus pupils' attention on clear aspects of learning such as line and colour. They effectively encourage pupils to talk about what they observe in the work of famous artists, and foster new skills such as smudging chalk to achieve a particular effect.

84. **Design and technology**

84. The timetable did not allow any design and technology lessons to be observed but aspects of the subject were taught in other lessons. Pupils' past work and teachers' planning indicate that provision for the subject is sound and pupils make satisfactory progress. Teachers plan carefully for design and technology activities from a curriculum with increasingly specific tasks to be given to pupils. They take appropriate opportunities to develop skills that relate to design and technology, such as using scissors accurately. Through these and other experiences, pupils gain a range of skills that they apply to a clear programme of specific projects. This has fully addressed the weakness identified in the last inspection.

85. Pupils make designs for some activities and these show increased levels of detail as they move through the school. They gain skills in cutting and joining materials of various kinds including paper, card and wood. Pupils increasingly make evaluations of their work and make judgements of what they have done. They have good attitudes to the work and are enthusiastic about their projects. When working practically, they apply themselves with concentration and strive to make their work better. Pupils are careful with tools and resources, handling them with care and putting them away correctly when they have finished. They are conscious of safety requirements when using simple tools.

86. **History and geography**

86. Insufficient lessons were seen during the inspection week to make judgements on the quality of teaching in these subjects. However, the provision made is satisfactory. Pupils receive an appropriate range of historical and geographical experiences and make satisfactory progress in both subjects through the school. They gain sound knowledge of people, places and environments both past and present whilst learning how and where to find

information. At the time of the previous inspection, although standards in geography were judged satisfactory, attainment in history was below that expected in most schools. Since then, there has been improvement in both subjects. Pupils' responses to history and geography are sound. They enjoy finding out information and ask good questions, such as when a mother visits with her very young baby. Pupils gain confidence as they share ideas, look for evidence and ask and answer questions.

87. When studying the immediate locality of the school, younger pupils describe the position of landmarks in simple geographical terms such as, 'near' and 'far'. This develops through Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven they understand how to compare and contrast their own locality and other places nearby; for example, by identifying many similarities between the town of Livingstone and Beeston. Pupils design simple routes and plans such as, how they get from home to school or a basic layout of their classroom. More complicated plans of Trent Vale school include the use of a key and symbols. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils produce and interpret simple grid references and produce fairly sophisticated maps and plans.
88. Younger pupils develop understanding of the past as they describe a favourite holiday, or last year's best Christmas present. They identify differences between being cared for as a baby and gradually looking after their own needs as they get older. Pupils compare, for example, the size of clothes that fitted them when newly born with their school uniform now. Discussion about their families shows their understanding of relationships between grandparents, parents and themselves. Older pupils show increasing understanding of the difference between the past and present. They discuss how transport and shops have altered and developed over time. In their talk, they refer to what they have learned about the Cob Shop, Victorian Britain, or old and new toys. Their extended knowledge includes the making of time lines and a detailed personal family tree.
89. Pupils develop a high awareness of the importance of caring for the environment as they progress through school. They know how to look after their school grounds and suggest ways to keep the school and playground tidy. Older pupils explain how the environment can be damaged and that litter causes pollution. They compare conditions in a rain forest with the local weather and draw diagrams to explain how to measure temperature. Many pupils try hard to use precise vocabulary and communicate their ideas clearly and enthusiastically whilst discussing what they know.
90. **Music**
90. Pupils make satisfactory progress in music through the school. They improve their singing in a variety of contexts and gain appropriate skills in using percussion instruments. When listening to music, they identify an increasing range of attributes and apply these to their own music. Some begin to describe a range of responses to music, explaining what the pieces remind them of or emotions they feel. They clap tempos with improving accuracy and identify pieces that are fast and slow. Older pupils copy phrases of songs and clap rhythms well.
91. Pupils respond well to music lessons and listen carefully to music and teachers' instructions. They behave well and concentrate hard on their work. Pupils take part in singing with enthusiasm and are keen to answer questions and give opinions confidently. They choose instruments sensibly and treat them with care, putting them down when asked.
92. The teaching of music is satisfactory. Teachers plan carefully with attention to all aspects of the subject and lessons include an appropriate balance between activities. Teachers are enthusiastic

and project this well for the pupils and this enlivens the lessons. Organisation is generally secure and little time is wasted. This is particularly apparent when teachers use a visiting pianist in the hall. Lessons begin and end sharply and effectively. However, some of these lessons include children and pupils from a wide age range. This limits the effectiveness of the lessons as teachers cannot easily pitch the level of difficulty of work to ensure that all pupils make progress.

93.

93. **Physical education**

93. Most pupils are achieving the standards expected of them for their age in physical education. The progress they make to reach these standards is satisfactory. All observed lessons were gymnastics lessons but teachers' planning indicates appropriate provision for dance and games. This addresses a weakness highlighted in the last inspection that found that games needed to be given more time to ensure a balanced physical education curriculum. The school extends its provision through opportunities for pupils to learn to swim. Teachers give good incentives for pupils to make progress in swimming through a well-structured system of awards and certificates. Assessment in the other areas of the subject is insufficiently developed to motivate pupils to the same degree or to enable teachers to monitor and develop their progress.

94. Younger pupils improve the accuracy and control of their movements by practising them and watching others perform. They become increasingly imaginative in their responses. Lower attaining pupils gain confidence, for example in jumping from a height and landing safely. All pupils gain from exerting themselves and increasing their heart rate during lessons. By Year 2 pupils run, skip and hop safely and with increased control. They recognise the effect of exercise on their bodies. Some reception and Year 1 pupils have good opportunities to develop their work effectively with partners. They evaluate and comment on their own performance and that of others. This results in pupils applying new ideas to their planning and their performance. Consequently, their progress is enhanced. Other teachers do not always incorporate these effective strategies into their teaching.

95. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Most pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and respond appropriately. They show a good awareness of others when using apparatus. They take turns, obey safety and social rules and behave well. They often show enjoyment of the set activities and join in enthusiastically. They are particularly well motivated when teachers join in and demonstrate. Pupils concentrate well on developing the quality of their movements.

96. Teaching is sound. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage them well. They use time and resources effectively. Teachers sometimes include in their planning too many areas of focus for pupils in one lesson. This means that some aspects of movement are not developed fully. Teachers provide small equipment such as hoops, balls and ropes for pupils to use on the spacious grassed areas at lunch times. This enables them to make up their own games and to co-operate very well at play. Parents provide valuable opportunities for pupils to join football sessions on the school field at weekends.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

97. A team of four inspectors, including a lay inspector, undertook the inspection of Trent Vale Infant School over a period of four days. The evidence was gathered in 12 inspection days and included over 44 hours spent in classes, discussion with pupils and evaluating their work. The evidence base included:

- observation of a total of 46 lessons or parts of lessons, distributed across the whole school;
- inspection of other school activities, including registration periods and assemblies;
- examination of the written work of a sample of over ten per cent of the school, chosen to represent the range of age and attainment;
- listening to the reading of a sample of over ten per cent of the pupils in each age group, selected to represent the range of attainment in the school;
- discussions with groups of pupils and individual pupils about aspects of their work and their knowledge;
- scrutiny of registers, school policies, planning documents, assessment records and financial records;
- interviews and discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff;
- discussions with members of the governing body;
- discussions with individual parents;
- a formal meeting with parents before the inspection;
- the results of a parental survey distributed by the school before the inspection.

1. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y2	108	0	23	13
Nursery Unit	28	0	1	N/A

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Education support staff (YR – Y2)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	42

Average class size:	21.6
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Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	36

Financial data

Financial year:

98 / 99

	£
Total Income	219262
Total Expenditure	214496
Expenditure per pupil	1165.74
Balance brought forward from previous year	25359
Balance carried forward to next year	30125

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
 Number of questionnaires returned:

204
44

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	41	55	5		
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	41	50	2	7	
The school handles complaints from parents well	25	38	30	5	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	41	55	2	2	
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	35	51	5	9	
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	32	66			2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	24	66	7		2
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	26	58	12	5	
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	42	54	5		
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	37	54	7		2
My child(ren) like(s) school	67	28	5		