

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Mary's C. E. Aided Infant School
Cheltenham
LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique Reference Number: 115711

Headteacher: Miss A Fitzpatrick

Reporting inspector: Jennie Willcock-Bates
T1967

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th November 1999

School Inspection Number: 189316

Under OFSTED contract number: 707352

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bouncer's Lane Prestbury Cheltenham Glos. GL52 5JB
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	The Revd. Canon Stephen Gregory
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jennie Willcock-Bates, RgI	Mathematics, Music, Physical Education	Attainment and Progress; Teaching; Leadership and Management; The Efficiency of the School
Donya Urwin, Lay Inspector	Equal Opportunities	Attendance; Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare; Partnership with Parents and the Community
Sandra Clarke	Children Under-five, Special Educational Needs, English, History, Geography, Art	Curriculum and Assessment
Joyce Cox	Science, Design and Technology, Information Technology	Attitudes, Behaviour and Discipline; Pupils' Spiritual, Moral and Cultural Development; Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the significant improvements in science and their impact on the pupils' attainment and progress.
- The way planning ensures that the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically developed in all subjects as they progress through the school.
- The curriculum is very good and there is a strong focus on English and mathematics.
- The high quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and the good start children get in the reception classes.
- The very good assessment procedures and target setting with individual pupils, that help all of them to improve their work.
- The outstanding professional leadership of the headteacher and the clear strategies for school improvement.
- The very good team work between governors, headteacher and all staff in the school.
- The excellent relationships and the way the teaching and non-teaching staff encourage all pupils to fulfil their potential.
- The excellent provision for the pupils' moral and social development.
- The caring well-ordered environment and excellent provision for the pupils' guidance and welfare.
- The wide and varied extra-curricular activities that the pupils are involved in.
- The excellent way the school keeps the parents informed of what is going on.
- The air of calm and serenity in the school.

Where the school has weaknesses

There are no significant weaknesses in the school. However, the following are minor points for improvement.

- I. The children are sometimes sitting listening for too long and there is not enough time for them to investigate, solve problems and evaluate their work.
- II. The pupils do not always present their work as neatly as they could in their books.
- III. The importance of extra practice at reading and writing is recognised, but pupils are sometimes regularly withdrawn from practical activities such as music, physical education and science.

· **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

The school has developed well since the inspection in 1996 and is even better than it was then. There has been a clear trend of improved standards in English, mathematics and science. Good progress has been made in all key issues. The use of assessment to inform planning of the work of all pupils has greatly improved. This is now a strength of the school and work is carefully matched to the needs of all pupils, in particular the most able. This is reflected in the high proportion of pupils who reach Level 3 in the English, mathematics and science tests. The senior management in the school is now very effective and a good range of systematic monitoring procedures is in place. The leadership and management are now strengths. The school is now projecting some of the finances beyond one year and this system is still developing. Communication with the parents has improved greatly and they are fully involved in the education of their children. All appropriate child protection procedures are in place and teachers have been trained. Liaison with the junior school has significantly improved and there are now strong links between the headteachers and staff. The school is well placed to pursue its developments and improve further.

· **Standards in subjects**

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999, based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
English	B	B
Mathematics	C	D
Science	B	C

Key: Well above average A; above average B; average C; below average D; well below average E.

The table above shows that the pupils' performance in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 was above average in English and science and broadly in line with the national average in mathematics. When compared to schools with similar numbers of free school meals the results are above average in English but average in science and below average in mathematics. These results show an improvement in mathematics and science since 1998. There has been an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher stages of level 2 and above in reading. These are now well above average in comparison with schools nationally and in line with similar schools. In writing, these results are above the national average and high in relation to similar schools. While in mathematics the percentage of pupils reaching the higher stages of Level 2 and above is close to the national average, in comparison with similar schools they are slightly below average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is above the national average and well above the average of similar schools. The improvement is the result of the school's careful analysis of the test results in 1998, that resulted in the implementation of new programmes of work to raise standards. Programmes of work, assessment and planning have already been further improved in response to the 1999 tests. There has been steady progress and the pupils' attainment has improved particularly at higher than average levels of the National Curriculum. Despite it being early in the school year, there is abundant evidence that all but a small number of pupils with special educational needs are already reaching levels expected for seven years olds at the end of Year 2. The most able pupils are often already exceeding expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years
English	Good	Very good
Mathematics	Good	Very good
Science	Good	Consistently Good
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Other subjects

Good

Good

Overall the quality of teaching is good in each year group and in each class. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there are no significant weaknesses. Teaching was good or better in 78 percent of lessons and very good in 22 percent. The quality of the teaching has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress.

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	Very good. Pupils are courteous and helpful.
Attendance	Very good. No unauthorised absence, and authorised absence is well below average.
Ethos*	Excellent. There is a strong emphasis on Christian values reflected in the air of calm in the school.
Leadership and management	Very good at all levels. Headteacher's professional leadership and management are outstanding; clear leads from governors and subject leaders.
Curriculum	Very good. Broad and balanced with a successful emphasis on literacy and numeracy.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision and pupils make good progress in the targets set for them.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good. Particular strengths in the provision for moral and social development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Very good. Learning support workers are particularly effective. Very good quality and range of resources.
Value for money	Good

**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

- IV. They feel the children are doing well.
- V. They feel the school encourages them to be involved in their child's education.
- VI. They like the Christian beliefs that are taught and the way the school promotes a caring attitude.
- VII. They find the information provided by the school helpful.
- VIII. They like the good behaviour and the courtesy and politeness of the children.
- IX. They like the sensitive way the school supports the children's individual needs.

What some parents are not happy about

- X. The time pupils attend part-time in the
- XI. They feel that not being able to help children

ing is too big a jump from the help they got in the and the way the school promotes a caring attitude.

The inspectors support the parents' views about what they like about the school. These judgements are to be found in the inspection findings. There is no evidence to show that pupils under statutory school age suffer from starting part-time. Many parents were observed in the cloakrooms in Year 1 at the beginning of the day. The majority of children appeared to be happy and well organised at the beginning of the school day.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

There are no key issues for the school to address but in the context of its many strengths, the following minor points for improvement should be considered as the basis for the governors' action plan.

- i) Ensuring that there is time for the pupils to investigate and solve problems in all subjects. (paragraphs 25, 84, 90, 110, 115)
- ii) Ensure that the pupils present their work neatly. (paragraphs 12, 74, 83)
- iii) Keep the time spent on extra literacy under review to ensure that it does not compromise the pupils' experiences in other subjects. (paragraphs 90, 112, 116)
- iv) Continue to develop the governors' long-term strategic view for the school's finances. (paragraphs 46, 56)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. St. Mary's C. E. Aided Infant school is of average size with 182 pupils on roll aged between 4 and 7 years. The headteacher has been in post for only 2 ½ years. The school is strongly committed to its Christian aims and values and the admission policy requires that pupils have brothers and sisters in the school, are from the parish or are from families of committed Christians. Children are admitted to one of two reception classes in the September of the year in which they are five years old. It remains a popular school and there is a waiting list of children for admission. There are currently sixty pupils who started school in September 1999 and nearly all are still under five years old. The number on roll is approximately the same as when the school was previously inspected in 1996.

2. The school is situated in the parish of Prestbury on the outskirts of Cheltenham. The backgrounds of the pupils are generally favourable, but there are wide variations. The majority of pupils are from professional families and a significant minority are from local authority housing and flats. While only six per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much lower than the national average, a large proportion of mothers have to work to supplement the family income. There are fourteen more girls than boys. Three pupils represent minority ethnic groups and no pupils come from homes where English is spoken as an additional language.

3. Most pupils have attended a private nursery or playgroup before they enter school. Attainment

on entry to the school is generally average, although a quarter of pupils are less well prepared for school and find it difficult to sit and listen. Ten of these have speech and language problems that inhibit their learning. Nearly fourteen percent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is below average. None of these have statements of special educational needs, but three pupils are involved with outside specialists for moderate learning difficulties and visual impairment, which is also below average.

The school aims are to:

- maintain the school as a centre of excellence, which is viable, visionary and friendly; where pupils develop good foundation skills and learning habits in all subjects;
- further develop interpersonal relationships and a sense of self, so that children progress to the next stage of education as self-confident, sensitive, competent young people;
- work together within a Christian ethos to develop a sense of community to contribute to the spiritual development of pupils and staff.

The school is currently working on:

1. Introduction of the numeracy strategy.
 2. Developing the monitoring role of the subject leaders.
 3. The next literacy action plan.
 4. Target setting and liaison.
-
4. The school is also working towards the Investors in People award. The final assessment for the award was due to take place the day after the inspection was completed.
 5. St Mary's is a C. E. Aided school and a Section 23 inspector inspected religious education and worship the previous week.

6. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	28(31)	33(31)	61(62)

Figures in brackets relate to 1998

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils	Boys	21(26)	22(22)	23(27)
	Girls	33(30)	33(29)	30(28)
	Total	54(56)	55(51)	53(55)
Percentage at NC	School	89(88)	90(80)	87(86)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	86(84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	20(26)	23(28)	34(27)
	Girls	33(30)	30(29)	22(28)
	Total	(53)56	53(57)	56(55)
Percentage at NC	School	87(88)	87(89)	92(86)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

4. Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)			%
Missed through absence for the	Authorised	School	3.9
		National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0
		National comparative data	0.5

4. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school	4.
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		Number
age) during the previous year:	4. Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

4. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:	%
Very good or better	22
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

4. Attainment and progress

7. When children start school at four years old their attainment is broadly average. A significant proportion of them do not know the names of colours or letters in their names and find it difficult to sit and listen for more than a very short time. The children make good progress and they are on course to reach the nationally recommended outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their creative and physical and social development by the time they are five years old. Higher attaining children will exceed the desirable outcomes in language, mathematics and their social development. All children are well prepared to begin work on the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1.

1. By the end of Key Stage 1, when pupils leave the school, overall attainment is generally above average. In the 1999 tests for 7 year-olds in reading, the results were above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. A high proportion of the pupils reached the higher-than-average Level 3. Results in writing were above the national average and the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well above average. Results in mathematics were in line with the national average but below average when compared to similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher stages of Level 2 and above was higher than both the national average and the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 was well above average. In science the results were above the national average and in line with similar schools, but the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was also above average. These results show an improvement on 1998. Further improvements have been made to raise the levels of attainment of all pupils in the school and the literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented. This work is steadily raising standards in English, mathematics and science.

2. While the results of both boys and girls are above the average of boys and girls nationally, the girls performed better than the boys in each subject. The school's results in 1998 followed the national trend as girls performed better than the boys in English and boys performed better than girls in mathematics. The school carefully analysed these results and put improved programmes of work in place to raise standards. Specific attention is given to the boys' attainment overall and particularly in English and mathematics by way of the targeted support of learning support workers and additional literacy and numeracy sessions.

10. The inspection findings generally reflect the test results. Nearly all are at least reaching the levels expected for seven year olds when they leave the infant school despite it being early in the year. When the current Year 2 entered the school at four years old their attainment was average but 25 per cent of them were identified on the special educational needs register for specific support. They have benefited from targeted support when they were in Year 1 and the improved programmes of teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school has concentrated effectively on raising the attainment of boys in English. There are still more boys than girls on the special educational needs register in Year 2, and whilst they are making good progress, their attainment is sometimes below average. The most able pupils throughout the school are exceeding expected levels in English, mathematics and science. All pupils are now provided with more opportunities to apply their knowledge through problem solving and investigation in the majority of lessons. Appropriate plans are in place for pupils to analyse data collected for graphs, which was a problem for them in the mathematics test. Furthermore the pupils are now set in groups according to their abilities for some literacy and numeracy lessons. This is successful in allowing work to be carefully planned to meet the specific needs of the pupils.

11. Attainment in English by the end of Key Stage 1 is above average overall. The pupils speak in sentences and use vocabulary confidently and effectively to explain their ideas in discussion. They listen attentively in lessons and as a result, they understand and remember what they are required to do. Attainment in reading is at least in line with expectation and for over half of the pupils, especially the most able, it is above average. It is early in their final year in school and the pupils are already reading fluently and with expression. They enjoy reading with others in the class and use a good range of strategies to read unknown words. For example, they are splitting words into syllables, sounding out the letters and reading the rest of the text to get the meaning.

12. Standards of writing are already in line with expectations. The pupils write in sentences, use capital letters and full stops accurately. They spell well without help and they use dictionaries and other resources confidently. They spot mistakes quickly. The most able pupils are already using speech and exclamation marks to good effect. Standards in handwriting are sound overall. The pupils write well in handwriting lessons but do not always transfer what they have learned to their other work. Consequently, the work is not well presented and is not tidy enough.

13. Attainment in mathematics is above average and the pupils reach good standards in number. They count attendance and calculate the numbers in the class who are staying to lunch. They already calculate numbers up to 10 in their heads and the most able pupils are working confidently with

numbers up to a hundred. They are developing a good range of strategies to help them calculate mentally, such as doubling and adding or subtracting 1. They recognise halves and quarters and measure short lines in centimetres. They know the names of a good range of three-dimensional shapes. The high-attaining pupils accurately describe the properties of the shapes to the class.

14. Attainment in science exceeds the national expectations for this age group. The pupils conduct simple experiments, test and make predictions about their ideas. They have a good understanding about how they live and the lives of plants and animals. The pupils in Year 2 can make a simple electric circuit and investigate and name the senses. Attainment in information technology is in line with expectations. The pupils control the mouse skilfully and know how to print and save using the tool bar. They word-process short pieces of writing and know how to make capital letters and delete text. They show a good understanding of how to program a programmable toy to move along a track and knock skittles down. In all other subjects the pupils are at least reaching levels expected for their age group.

15. There is a clear trend of improvement in attainment over time. Pupils of all abilities are reaching appropriate and sometimes high levels of attainment. The pupils with special educational needs are working well according to their capabilities. The most able pupils are reaching high standards in most of their work. This marks an improvement since the last inspection. The differences between the attainment of boys and girls in the national tests are less marked in lessons and previous work. There is very little evidence of these differences in English and mathematics lessons. The school analyses test results and the information from assessments carefully. Targets set for individuals and groups of pupils are reviewed at regular intervals, through discussion with individuals and assessments of groups and classes. This has a significant impact on standards in the school.

1. All pupils throughout the school are making good progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of good teaching and carefully planned activities, which enable them to build progressively on what they have learned. There is clear evidence in pupils' work of improvements in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They are generally accurately applying what they have learned to new situations. However, not all the pupils take sufficient care with handwriting. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment are making good progress, because work is carefully planned for them. Throughout the school the pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are very well supported by teachers and learning support workers in lessons, sets and withdrawal groups. The targets in their Individual Education Plans are relevant and regularly reviewed through discussion with the pupils themselves as well as with their parents. Work is equally well planned for the most able pupils, who progress well when using their knowledge and skills to the full in the activities they undertake.

17. Progress in lessons is generally good across the key stage. The pupils progress well in speaking and listening, reading, writing, spelling, mathematics (in particular number, shapes and measures), in science, design and technology, art, and geography. The pupils' progress in their literacy skills is enhanced through effective links with other subjects, when writing about their investigations in science or about people's lives in history and geography. Numeracy skills are successfully practised in science and design and technology, where the pupils measure plans and collect data about birthdays and the colour of their eyes. Progress is satisfactory in data-handling in mathematics, information technology and history.

16. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

18. Overall attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and the school has maintained the standards identified in the previous inspection. Pupils have positive attitudes to work and the people around them. They enjoy being in school and their lessons. They appreciate the efforts of the staff who provide a caring environment in which they feel valued. They listen carefully to instructions, are interested in their work and show an enthusiasm to do well. They ask and answer questions confidently and join in discussions, eagerly offering their own ideas and listening to those of others. For instance, pupils in Year 2 shared ideas well when discussing their science experiments. They work independently when required and are proud of their achievements. All pupils persevere to complete tasks, although some pupils do not take sufficient care and pride in handwriting and presentation when completing work. Pupils with special educational needs respond positively in lessons, especially when they work with the special needs support staff.

19. Pupils behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. The pupils accept and understand the need for rules and are courteous and helpful. For instance, in Year 2 they are keen to explain aspects of school life to inspectors and clearly understand the need for sanctions and rewards. A significant factor in this very good behaviour is the school's policy, which is consistently applied by all the school staff. Pupils know that they will always be treated fairly. They behave sensibly in assemblies and at lunchtimes. The inspection findings support the parents' views that standards of behaviour are high and the pupils are polite. There were no exclusions last year.

20. Relationships are excellent at all levels. There are high levels of respect between adults and pupils. Boys and girls work together well in lessons. Those pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported and encouraged by other pupils and staff. The school has a very happy and friendly atmosphere. There is evidence of mutual trust, respect and empathy. The staff provide

excellent rôle models for relationships, as they work together successfully in a calm, purposeful and well-ordered community. These harmonious relationships underpin the work of the school and have a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviour of all the pupils, which in turn affect progress made in lessons positively.

21. The personal development of the pupils is very good: they show high levels of respect for the views and feelings of others. The personal and social development of children under the age of five in the reception classes is very good. They are sufficiently confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group. They sit quietly when appropriate. They select and use activities and resources independently then put them away carefully and tidy up. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 take responsibility for their own work and are keen to fulfil the routine duties in their classrooms. In addition, Year 2 pupils assist with collecting empty milk cartons at playtime and enjoy acting as escorts to visitors, for example on parents' evenings. All pupils are very friendly and helpful towards visitors, providing a warm welcome to newcomers.

Attendance

22. Attendance continues to be very good. There was no unauthorised absence during the previous year and the level of authorised absence is well below the national average. Pupils enthusiastically report that they enjoy coming to school. The legal requirements for recording and reporting attendance are fulfilled and all teachers conduct registration procedures quickly and efficiently. The prompt arrival of pupils and the punctual start to lessons makes a positive contribution to the effective use of time and consequently opportunities for learning are increased.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

23. Overall the quality of teaching is good in both reception for the under-fives and in Key Stage 1. This good teaching has a clear and positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress and is a strength of the school. In 78 per cent of lessons observed it was good or better and in 22 percent teaching was very good. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and the school is maintaining the high standards identified in the previous inspection. The good and very good teaching is found within each year group. Teaching is very good in mathematics, particularly in numeracy lessons and there are effective opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learned in other subjects, for example measurement in design and technology and the passage of time in history. English is well taught and in

the majority of the literacy hours observed teaching was very good. The pupils are encouraged to practice their literacy skills of reading and writing in other subjects, for example labelling diagrams in science and design and technology and writing accounts of people's lives in history. Teaching is consistently good in science, music and art which marks an improvement on the previous inspection. The quality of teaching in physical education and information technology is satisfactory. Too little teaching was seen in history, geography and design and technology to make a secure judgement.

The key strengths in teaching are:

- the knowledge and understanding of how to teach children of this age group, in particular educational and social needs of pupils under five years old;
- the teachers' high expectations of what the children can achieve when they start school;
- the very skilful questioning across the school that prompts the pupils to think and extend their learning; it is particularly successful for the pupils with special educational needs;
- the very successful lesson planning, particularly for literacy and numeracy, which ensures that the pupils' learning is developed progressively from day to day;
- the high quality tasks that pupils undertake in English, mathematics and science that are carefully constructed for the different abilities in each lesson;
- the good range of teaching strategies, in particular the use of direct teaching, and the way lessons are organised to capture the pupils' interest and imagination;
- the calm management of pupils that results in very good behaviour in lessons and enables them to learn and enjoy what is taught. It is a particular feature of creative subjects such as art, dance and physical education, where even the youngest four-year-olds take turns and respond quickly to the teacher;
- the effective use of time; lessons are well prepared, start punctually and have a good balance of direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to play and experiment;
- The successful use of good quality resources to support learning in all subjects in Key Stage 1 and in the reception classes.

24. Teaching promotes the pupils' learning very well. The pupils with special educational needs, in their classes, withdrawal groups and the sets for ability in literacy and numeracy, are successfully taught. Work is well planned in all subjects to extend such pupils' learning and consolidate their understanding. As a result they make good progress. Throughout the school the teachers plan the work of all pupils carefully and the most able are challenged to reach good standards. Their attainment often exceeds expected levels in English, mathematics and science. There are examples of attainment that is high in the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. The work of the learning support workers is

very effective. They are highly experienced and most are qualified teachers. They work in careful partnership with the teachers in the reception classes and in Key Stage 1 and are highly successful in raising standards.

25. There are no significant shortcomings in teaching. However, sometimes children are sitting for too long listening or waiting for their turn, which limits the time available for investigation and problem solving.

26. The quality of day-to-day assessment is very good and has a clear impact on pupils' learning. This is a significant strength of the school. A good range of assessment procedures is identified in planning. Teachers are skilful at observing and noting what pupils are learning. They are quick to stop lessons for re-enforcement or to note when tasks are too easy. Assessment effectively informs the next week or day's plans and ensures that teaching is flexible and meets the different needs of the pupils. The information acquired informs targets that are set for individuals through discussion with teachers. This is a particular feature in all classes including reception. There are examples of high quality marking that praises and reinforces learning and then indicates what pupils should do next to learn.

27. Homework is used effectively but informally to support lessons. There are good examples in English and mathematics. For example, pupils take books home to read and discuss them next day. In mathematics they practise odd and even numbers and are proud to share their learning with the class. These activities have a clear impact on standards and prepare the pupils well for work in lessons.

The curriculum and assessment

28. The school provides a very good curriculum. The curriculum for children under five is balanced and relevantly based on the six areas of learning. There is generally an appropriate balance of teacher-directed activities and rôle-play. The curriculum provides a successful foundation for the next stage of their education in Key Stage 1. Although children make progress at different rates, the curriculum is planned to enable them all, including those with special educational needs, to make progress towards the nationally recommended Learning Outcomes. The curriculum at Key Stage 1 is broad and balanced and lays a very strong and successful emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Literacy and numeracy are effectively developed in mathematics, science, history and geography, for example. The use of information technology to support other subjects is at an early stage of development. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. They are generally given appropriate time but the current emphasis on English sometimes results in less time being spent on other subjects. Personal and social education is taught through religious education and group work

called circle time. Sex and drugs education is taught through science and when an appropriate situation arises, such as the birth of a brother or sister. Statutory requirements are met.

29. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and high-attaining pupils. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are fully met. The provision for these pupils in classes and withdrawal groups is of high quality and is a strength of the school. All documentation, including Individual Education Plans, is very well organised. These plans are carefully used to design tasks that meet the pupils' needs. The work of the learning support workers is successful and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' progress. The parents are fully informed of the provision made for their children. The school has maintained the good quality of support for such pupils identified in the previous inspection.

30. All pupils, whatever their race, gender and ability, generally have equal access to the curriculum. The policy for equal opportunities is clear and helpful. The school ensures that the pupils have equal access to the curriculum by carefully planning their work to meet their needs and by the very good support of the learning support workers. Some pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn for additional literacy sessions on three afternoons and others are removed from lessons to read. Such withdrawal interrupts lessons such as music, physical education and dance. The most able are provided with appropriately challenging tasks.

31. The quality of planning is very good. There is a strong emphasis on progression of knowledge and understanding, continuity of experiences and the systematic development of skills in all subjects. There is an effective framework to the curriculum and topics are successfully planned to link sensibly with other subjects in realistic themes. The curriculum policies and schemes are helpful to the teachers' plans. Teachers plan effectively in year-group teams. This, too, ensures continuity between classes of the same year. The quality and detail of this planning contribute positively to the progress made by pupils. The headteacher and subject leaders carefully monitor planning. Activities clearly match the differing abilities of the pupils.

32. The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent. At the beginning of each year pupils are offered a menu of opportunities including sports clubs, cookery, country dancing, recorders, drama and creative dance from which to choose. Book fairs promote reading while visits to places of interest support pupils' learning in subjects such as history and science.

33. The quality of assessment is now very good throughout the school and is much improved since the last inspection. There is a cohesive, thorough programme for assessment in all subjects including

physical education, music and art. This programme gives clear guidance as to which subjects are to be assessed in each year group during the year. There is a comprehensive range of assessment procedures such as national and internal tests, assessed samples of work, observation of pupils and examination of pupils' work. The use of assessment information to inform the next stages of teaching, learning and planning is very effective. Detailed records are kept of individual pupil progress, including analysis of test results, class mark books, reading records and progress of personal and social skills. Helpful collections of work exemplify different levels in each subject. Assessment and record keeping in English and mathematics are particularly thorough.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

34. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Each element is carefully interwoven with the curriculum. The good standards identified in the last inspection have been maintained and the provision for cultural development has been significantly improved.

35. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is very good. Religious education, collective worship and assemblies contribute a major part to it, but times for quiet reflection and meditation are included as a matter of course throughout the school curriculum, enabling pupils' spiritual awareness to develop. The curriculum ensures that pupils' knowledge and insight into other beliefs is developed through their work in religious education, which includes the study of Judaism as well as Christianity. Pupils are given time and opportunity to explore the beauty and wonder of the world around them and have expressed this through beautiful, sensitive artwork. Children under the age of five were completely absorbed in their dance lessons because of inspirational teaching. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on their own experiences in assemblies and to participate thoughtfully in extempore prayer.

36. The school's provision for moral development is excellent. It is fostered through the school's behaviour policy, which places considerable emphasis on pupils co-operating with each other and in developing friendships. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. A framework of values is built up in many ways and these are explored practically. For instance, during acts of collective worship, pupils are encouraged to think of ways to plan pleasant surprises for their friends and families. All the stories for assemblies are carefully chosen and integrate spiritual and moral themes very effectively. They are relevant and easy for all pupils to understand. The expectation that the pupils should respect and appreciate one another is reinforced by the weekly assembly for good work and good deeds. The parents who attended the parents' meeting spoke highly of the very good attitudes and

values which the school promotes.

37. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent and is promoted from the time pupils enter the school. They are encouraged to take responsibility for a variety of tasks in the classroom and around the school. They are encouraged to work co-operatively in many subjects such as physical education, design and technology and science. Pupils are encouraged to relate positively to others. They are encouraged to be very thoughtful, they fill boxes at harvest time for homeless people and have donated gifts for refugee children in war zones across the world as part of 'Operation Christmas Child'. On a national level, the school holds sponsored events and raises money for National Children's Homes Action.

38. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good and shows a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The school now has a clear multi-cultural policy and has purchased many new resources, including a variety of texts from other cultures, which are used in the literacy hour. The school organises a wide range of educational visits to promote pupils' cultural development. Pupils gain a good insight into their own cultural heritage in history lessons, where they study the work of Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys. They learn about other countries and communities in geography. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to explore other cultures in religious education, music and art. Pupils have also benefited from visits to the school by local professionals, dance and theatre groups to support the range of topics covered.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

39. The school continues to provide a caring, well-ordered environment; provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare is excellent. The school aims, supported by governors, school staff, pupils and parents, successfully encourage responsible behaviour and kindness to others. There is an excellent atmosphere in the school with no evident bullying during the inspection. The school has effective procedures for managing those very few incidents which do occur. Pupils enjoy school and feel happy and safe. There is strong affection and respect for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Learning support workers, parent helpers and lunchtime supervisors make a strong contribution to pupil welfare and guidance.

40. Educational progress is very carefully monitored and the information obtained is thoughtfully used to inform future planning and offer positive support and guidance to pupils. The school is very sensitive to the needs of individual children, and marking is used in all subjects to confirm, encourage and extend learning. Those pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make

good progress. However the additional support for literacy compromises their curriculum entitlement, particularly in physical education, dance, music and mathematics. Very good provision is made for children when they start school and the arrangements for transfer to junior school ensure that pupils are familiar with their new environment. The headteacher regularly and effectively monitors attendance across the school.

41. Provision for pupils who are ill during school hours is well organised and procedures for making emergency contact with parents are established. First aid provision fulfils all statutory obligations. Child protection procedures are now well established and the school has overcome the weakness identified in the previous inspection. There are now two designated teachers and all staff have received training. External agencies and services are routinely used for the benefit of pupils where appropriate. Health education is delivered throughout the curriculum with specific classroom activities in science. The school works hard to promote the health, safety and general well-being of pupils. All governors and staff maintain a vigilant watch for potential hazards and there is a prompt response to issues raised. Appropriate safety checks are made.

Partnership with parents and the community

42. The school's partnership with the parents and the community is very good. Excellent information about the life of the school is received through the prospectus, newsletters, consultation evenings and annual reports. A small minority of parents who returned questionnaires do not feel the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress. However consultation evenings are well attended and the parents at the meeting appreciated the discussion with teachers. Annual reports provide reliable commentaries on attainment and progress. Information about the curriculum has improved and nearly all parents appreciate the efforts made by the school to provide them with an explanation of subject design and content. Communication with parents is excellent and very successful at all levels. An agreement made between parents, children and the school enhances this relationship. Parents help their children with work at home, and homework is used effectively across the school to support learning in the classroom.

43. The headteacher and teaching staff are available daily at the beginning and end of school, and parents report that all school staff are very approachable and that queries are responded to promptly. Parents are made welcome and, in turn, make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Many give very valuable assistance in classrooms, school clubs and during external visits. There is a very active Parent, Teacher and Friends Association, which donates considerable resources to the school and provides social opportunities for the school community. Special assemblies and school events are well attended

and enjoyed by family members. The parents enjoy and value this involvement.

44. The links with the community are very good. The school is involved with a regeneration project with the local community and has established close links with a residential home and local churches. The pupils visit museums and places of historical and geographical interest. The pupils' work is displayed in the local library. The school also makes good use of visitors such as the local clergy, local artists and travelling theatre companies. Such visits and visitors make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the world and to their subject and cultural knowledge and personal development within school. Close links have been established between the local playgroup and the reception classes. Termly meetings are held with the play leaders and other early years' workers. This helps the teachers get to know most of the children before they start school. Links with the junior school are good and the infants are excited about the Christmas concert involving the two schools. These links are having a positive effect on the pupils' move to their next school. Each term the school supports a charitable activity to benefit children who are disadvantaged in some way and there is evident sympathy by pupils for those less fortunate. For example, the Christmas performance will collect funds for Cancer and Leukaemia in childhood. The school has close links the local college of education and is successfully involved in the 'teachers in training' scheme.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

45. The school has an excellent ethos. There is an air of calm and serenity in the school where the contribution of individuals and groups is valued. This strong sense of teamwork and support reflects the denominational nature of the school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and senior management team and the close involvement of governors, teaching and non-teaching staffs lead to the creation of a very successful learning environment. There is a strong commitment to raising standards, close relationships and equality of opportunity for all. Statutory requirements are fully met.

46. The governors, headteacher and subject leaders provide very good and cohesive leadership to the school. This has a direct impact on the standards achieved and the very good quality of education. There have been significant improvements in roles of subject leaders and governors since the previous inspection. Good progress has been made in the key issues related to leadership and management. The subject leaders have time to undertake their responsibilities; it is used very effectively and carefully evaluated. The governing body has an improved long-term view of the school's developments but projections for the resource implications are still at an early stage of development.

47. The professional leadership and management of the head are outstanding. She places great emphasis on the raising of standards and the quality of provision. In the 2½ years since she has been headteacher, she has built very effective professional relationships and established clear roles and responsibilities for all staff. There is a very effective senior management team of four senior teachers. They meet regularly with meetings firmly focused on what needs to be done to raise standards. Management at all levels provides a very clear educational direction to the work of the school. There is a clear strategy for improvement and raising standards. Subject leaders provide a similar clear lead in their subjects. Their roles and responsibilities are understood by all. Learning support workers are part of a school team that concentrates on raising levels of attainment. Morale is high and all governors and staff feel integral to the school's success. This teamwork is a considerable strength and contributes greatly to the progress made by the pupils.

48. The headteacher and subject leaders systematically monitor teaching and the curriculum. The headteacher has established very effective systems for self-evaluation at all levels. The current focus is on teaching and learning in the literacy hour, where joint observations provide teachers with feedback and detailed evaluative notes are kept. Subject leaders monitor termly plans for their subjects. They collect samples of pupils' work to assess standards in the school, and test results are carefully analysed. Programmes of work and teaching methods are effectively revised following evaluation of the evidence collected. Standards and progress are steadily improving. Monitoring and evaluation have significantly improved since the previous inspection. The management and organisation of special educational needs are very good. The teaching staff and learning support workers ensure that the school's policy meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. There are very effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating the provision for special educational needs, including the management of resources and the very effective learning support workers.

49. The governing body has a very good knowledge of the school, is very supportive and proud of its achievements. Many governors are actively involved in the day-to-day activities of the school. They have subject responsibilities and meet regularly with subject leaders. The governors are beginning to establish a monitoring role. When appropriate they provide notes on the findings of their visits. They have a clear vision and share an understanding about how to improve standards. They are reflective about their roles and have a very good programme of training that includes literacy, numeracy and monitoring. The governing body, through its effective committee structure, fulfils its responsibilities. The governors are well informed by the headteacher.

50. The aims of the school, developed through discussion with teachers and governors, place

emphasis on the all-round development of the pupils and the achievement of high standards by all. These aims, the values and policies are clearly reflected in the work of the school. There is a strong spiritual emphasis and the school promotes the Christian ethos. There is a strong sense of purpose and pupils feel at home and valued in the school. Policies are regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.

51. School development planning is very good and governors and staff are fully involved in the planning process. Regular audits of subjects and other aspects provide helpful information about the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Priorities relate very well to the school's needs and are fully understood by the governors and staff. The plan is a very good tool for change. It contains action plans for each priority, which clearly identify the governors and staff involved and the resources required. Developments are carefully monitored to ensure their relevance in terms of improvement and raising standards. An outline plan exists for the next three years but this plan does not yet contain projected costs. The development plan provides a very effective strategy for school improvement.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

52. The school has a sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. All have a good range of expertise and experience for the subjects they teach. There is an increased number of learning support workers who provide effective support for the teaching of children under five and pupils with special educational needs, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school benefits from a capable, caring and well-organised team of non-teaching staff who are fully involved in the life of the school and who ensure that daily routines run smoothly.

53. Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers are good. Individual teachers' needs are discussed and this informs the very good provision for their professional development. Care is taken to satisfy individual staff needs as well as the whole-school training needs identified in the school development plan. There is a regular programme of in-service training and staff meetings, and many external courses are attended. Professional development has a positive impact on teaching, for example, in implementing initiatives such as the numeracy hour. The special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support workers have access to high quality professional development and this has been used to improve the provision for the pupils they support. All staff have detailed job descriptions which set out their current responsibilities clearly. Teaching and non-teaching staff who are new to the school receive good support and training. The school successfully participates in an initial teacher training scheme. It provides very effective support to the students, and monitors and evaluates their work carefully.

54. The accommodation is very good and meets the demands of the curriculum. The buildings and grounds are in very good condition and their state is monitored regularly by the headteacher and governors. There is a secure outdoor play area for children under the age of five. There have been several effective building developments over recent years. The old kitchen has been refurbished and is now a useful music room and base for the after-school club. Developments have provided good specialist teaching areas and pleasant learning facilities. The library is attractive and well organised and forms an important feature in the centre of the school. The grounds and buildings are well maintained and the school is very clean and bright. The hall is large and makes good provision for physical education and whole-school collective worship. A variety of very attractive displays enhance the pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements and reinforce the very caring ethos of the school.

55. Learning resources and equipment are of very good quality and quantity, including large outdoor wheeled vehicles for children under five. Resources are well organised and accessible to both staff and pupils and have a positive impact on the standards attained. There is a broad range and number of fiction and non-fiction books in the library and the classroom collections. Resources for learning are very good in most subjects. For example, the large apparatus for physical education challenges the children physically in their lessons. The range of musical instruments is exciting and represents instruments from around the world. Resources for pupils with special educational needs, science and geography have improved since the last inspection. The resources for teaching literacy and numeracy are particularly effective and there are plans to develop the range further. Books and artefacts from the appropriate external loan services successfully enhance resources. The number of computers is sufficient, and the school has plans to further enhance the provision for technology, including access to the Internet.

The efficiency of the school

56. The school is very efficient and has maintained the strengths identified in the previous inspection. Financial planning is good overall. The school development plan is well supported through careful financial planning. The governors' finance committee has clear roles and responsibilities. It has a clear overview of the financial resources and provides helpful support to the headteacher. The governors are developing a longer-term strategic view of the school's finances but this is still at an early stage. The budget is carefully used to support developments and improve the school. All governors and staff know how the budget is linked to the priorities in the school development plan. The subject leaders have budgets for the subjects they manage, that are carefully linked to the subject development plans.

57. Teaching staff are effectively deployed to ensure they capitalise strengths. Subject leaders have good subject knowledge and morale is high. Year groups plan effectively together, ensuring consistency in the subjects taught across the school. Pupils are very well managed and as a result behaviour is very good, enabling them to learn successfully. Teaching and learning are carefully monitored to ensure that the provision is cost-effective. Governors have a developing monitoring role and, through regular visits, they know the school well.

58. The headteacher and staff analyse test results and use the information to set targets. For example, following an analysis of why fewer than average pupils reached Level 3 in reading and mathematics, teaching has become more focused on extending the learning of some of the most able and the least able who were functioning below expected levels. Targets for individual pupils are set following discussion with the pupils themselves. This is very good practice and there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching levels higher than average. Learning support workers are well deployed to support staff and pupils in sets in mathematics and English. Their skills as experienced teachers are well deployed to work with pupils with special educational needs and this enhances the effectiveness of their work. Grants for special educational needs are well used and the pupils make good progress in their support groups and in lessons.

59. Accommodation is used very efficiently and effectively. There are designated specialist areas for physical education in the hall, playground and on the school field, and for music in the music room. The library is very attractive and efficiently used. After-school clubs and the 'Kids' Club' ensure that maximum use is made of the school building. Time is used efficiently and lessons start punctually. There are sufficient good quality learning resources and they are used effectively to support the pupils' learning.

60. Financial controls and administration are very good. Effective use is made of the local authority's finance systems; consequently, finances are carefully monitored. Systems are in place to ensure that spending is kept within agreed limits. The budget is well monitored and the governors are given regular information for them to monitor spending. The school is an orderly and effective organisation. The office is very efficient and knowledgeable about procedures. Administrative systems are very clear and unobtrusive and ensure that teachers can focus their work on the pupils.

61. There have been considerable improvements since the previous inspection and the school has a very good capacity for further improvement. Standards are rising steadily and in lessons the pupils' attainment frequently exceeds the national expectations for this age group. From reception, when

pupils enter with average attainment, to Year 2, when the pupils are frequently reaching good standards, progress is good and the school is clearly adding significant value to their education. The pupils with special educational needs and the high-attaining pupils are making good progress and the quality of teaching is good. Standards of behaviour are very good because the pupils are very well managed in lessons and around the school. As a result of its many strengths the school is providing good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

62. The children's attainment is broadly average. There is a small but significant minority who cannot count and muddle up letters and numbers and do not recognise their names. They find it difficult to sit and listen with others in the class. Almost all children entering school have had pre-school experience in a local playgroup or nursery. They are admitted into one of the two reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five. Consequently nearly all the children are still four years old and all have been in school for only nine weeks and some of that was part-time. The children make good progress in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical, creative, personal and social development. Consequently, the majority of children reach the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes well before their fifth birthday. In the areas of personal and social development, language and literacy and creative development, a significant proportion of pupils are on course to exceed the expectations for this age. Towards the end of the reception year they are working in the early stages of the National Curriculum. The provision for the children under-five is good and a strength of the school. All children are very well prepared to start work on the Programmes of Study for pupils in Key Stage 1.

Language and Literacy

63. The children listen attentively to stories and familiar rhymes, often responding with humour. They talk about their recent experiences, many expressing their ideas clearly and some replying to questions at length. They are learning initial sounds through practical activities that help them distinguish between capital and small letters. They confidently predict or identify the rhyming words at the end of the line in poems. Children are interested in books and enjoy sharing them with adults, holding the book and turning the page appropriately. Most can recognise some simple words they have practised. The most able pupils can read simple text and discuss a story with understanding. About a third of the children understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Almost all children are beginning to write their name and some can write simple sentences independently, using letters grouped

into words. Nearly all children make very good progress in language and literacy, reaching the expected outcomes before their fifth birthday and beginning the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum for English.

Mathematics

64. Almost all children recognise numbers up to 10 and can count confidently. They solve simple number puzzles posed orally by the teacher related to everyday situations that are within their experience, such as shopping or sharing sweets. Children use small vehicles or toy animals for sorting, sequencing and counting activities, and join in rhymes which reinforce their learning of sequences of numbers. The majority can name simple shapes such as square, circle and triangle. The children are making good progress in mathematics because they are well taught. By the age of five the majority exceeds the expected outcomes in using numbers, recognising shapes and in understanding a range of mathematical language.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

65. Children make good progress in understanding both their immediate environment and the wider world. They investigate by testing out their ideas. For example, children make predictions about whether or not objects will roll and many understand the connection with a curved surface. They develop an awareness of the place in which they live, based on their own homes. They share with their classmates by taking photographs of the class mascot in their house. They observe the features of the local environment on walks and make simple maps of their journey to school. They use their own family as a basis for understanding the passage of time, by building a personal timeline that includes birthdays and other celebrations. Children are confident in using computers and are effectively developing their keyboard skills, using the mouse and simple function keys to operate simple programs. Teaching is consistently good and consequently the pupils are on course to reach the recommended outcomes by the time they are five years old.

Creative Development66. Children are provided with a successful range of opportunities to express their ideas and feelings through art, music, dance and play activities. As a result they make good progress and are on course to exceed the nationally recommended outcomes. In art they use clay, natural materials, and drawing materials such as pastels and charcoal. Nearly all draw a recognisable figure with reasonable pencil control and know the names of their colours. They respond very well to music in dance, showing a good awareness of loud and quiet sounds and of how to interpret these into movements. The children sing simple rhymes and perform actions to accompany the words and some of them make up their own simple tunes. They play imaginatively in the home corner, which is currently a hospital. They carefully play the rôles of nurses and doctors using medical equipment such as an x-ray machine made by one of the children at home.

Physical Development67. Children enjoy physical activities both in physical education lessons and when using large toys outdoors. They move with confidence and awareness of others in the large

space of the hall. They control their movements on large apparatus with skill, showing they are already reaching the desirable outcomes for five-year-olds. For example, they travel along a narrow beam with great concentration and effort, trying hard to keep their balance. They think of inventive ways to move, such as crawling in and out of apparatus and are proud to show off their achievements to the class. The children are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies, recognising that their heart beats faster, after exercise. They take care to move apparatus safely. Outdoor play can be chosen in the afternoon as an activity and children enjoy using bikes and small apparatus. This provides a useful experience for the development of physical and social skills. Through their play with table top games and jigsaws, using modelling materials, pencils and brushes, they show a growing control and ability to manage smaller items.

Personal and Social Development68. Very good progress is made in personal and social development and this is a strength of the provision. The transition to school from pre-school is carefully planned and as a result children settle in happily and learn classroom routines very quickly. They know that there are times when they must sit quietly, such as in the school Service or when listening to a story. They understand that limited numbers are allowed to play in the practical areas and will occupy themselves with another activity while waiting for their turn. They put equipment away carefully and help to tidy up, sometimes without being asked. Most are willing to contribute to whole-class discussions although some are, as yet, less confident in giving their ideas. Almost all children dress themselves independently for physical education, leaving their clothes neatly folded, and they take moving apparatus very seriously. Behaviour is consistently good whether playing together in the role-play areas, using computers in pairs, or engaging in practical activities such as construction, sand or water. Children relate positively to adults in the classroom and are keen to talk about what they are doing. They also express their feelings in group work called 'circle time', talking about what makes them feel happy or sad.

69. The quality of teaching for under fives is good and in 30 per cent of lessons it was very good. This has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress. There are no significant shortcomings. Teachers know the children well through carefully planned visits to pre-school groups and sessions in school in the summer term before they join the reception class. They make very good use of their knowledge of the children plus the results of the baseline testing to put them into appropriate groups. Teachers effectively promote the learning of all children through purposeful activities. At its best, teaching is lively, responds directly to the pupils' needs and offers an interesting range of activities of sufficient challenge. The teachers ask skilful questions, encouraging responses from more reticent children and challenging the thinking process of the more able.

70. The curriculum for children under five is broad, relevant and very well planned. Day-to-day assessment and results from formal testing provide staff with information about individual needs, upon which they base the learning objectives. Teachers and learning support workers work well together, planning the curriculum jointly and preparing the classroom assistants and volunteers thoroughly for their work with groups. This very good teamwork has a positive effect on standards and the quality of education provided. Areas of learning are carefully linked to topics, giving children opportunities to develop a range of skills. During the morning children are directed to independent activities with a specific purpose, but during the afternoon they have opportunities for making their own choices. A wide range of good quality resources is available to cover the areas of learning, and the carefully labelled storage of equipment such as pencils, rulers and scissors encourages them to tidy up. Parents are encouraged to be partners with the school in their children's learning. They are welcomed into the classroom and encouraged to borrow resources such as the very successful play packs. The provision for children under five is very good and clearly a strength of the school.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

1. The high standards in English identified in the last inspection have been maintained and overall attainment in English remains above the national average. The results in reading in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were above the national average and in line with the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher than average stages of Level 2 and above was well above the national average. These results were also in line with the average for similar schools. However, the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was high in relation to similar schools and schools nationally. These results are similar to those of 1998 and there is a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. In writing the results were well above the national average and the average for similar schools overall.

There was a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher than average Level 3 since 1998. Over the last three years girls have achieved higher levels than boys in both reading and writing. The school has identified the problems and specifically targeted the boys' attainment in Years 1 and 2. While there is very little evidence in lessons or previous work to indicate a significant difference in attainment, there are more boys than girls on the register for special educational needs. The boys tend to be less tidy in their presentation than girls.

2. The inspection findings support the test results for 1999. Overall attainment in English is indeed above the national average and at least a quarter of the pupils are already comfortably exceeding expected levels. This is due to the systematic teaching of literacy skills to the current Year 2 when they were in Year 1. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above average and they have made good progress. They speak in sentences and effectively use appropriate vocabulary with confidence. For example, some pupils in Year 2 discussed making a glossary, suggesting accurate meanings for words such as 'applause'. All pupils follow instructions and listen attentively to their teachers. For example, in a geography lesson about map-making the pupils successfully drew maps following the story read by the teacher. There is little time wasted as pupils move to group work because they understand and remember the teachers' instructions.

3. Despite being early in their final year in school, the pupils in Year 2 are already reading within expected levels. A significant proportion, particularly the most able are reaching standards in reading that exceed expected levels. The pupils are making good progress and are reading fluently with expression, particularly when reading aloud with others in the literacy hour. They are using a good range of strategies to read, such as splitting up unknown words and they have good recall of commonly used words. Pupils talk about their favourite books such as animal stories or

funny books and they clearly distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. Younger pupils recognise familiar words and have a good understanding of letter sounds and how to blend them together. The attainment of a small number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 is below average but they read with interest and within their capabilities. They are making good progress in relation to their attainment, particularly in the use of letter sounds. Almost all pupils enjoy taking reading books and library books home to read with their parents and reading records show they are making good progress through the reading scheme.

4. In writing the attainment of nearly all pupils in the present Year 2 is already in line with the national average. The pupils make very good progress over time and many are on course to reach above average levels by the end of the year. They write in sentences using capital letters and full stops correctly. The most able use speech and question marks correctly. In all classes pupils write for a variety of purposes including lists or instructions, for example, on how to make a magician's hat. When writing stories they work hard to make their writing more interesting, by linking ideas with words such as 'suddenly' or 'although'. Standards of spelling are good. All pupils use dictionaries or simple wordbooks if they cannot spell a word, although their own attempts at spelling are often a reasonable try. Pupils are quick to spot mistakes when drafting and editing writing. Pupils' writing in handwriting lessons is carefully formed and neat but in other lessons a small proportion of pupils take less care with the presentation of their work drawing lines across the page without a ruler or varying the size and evenness of their letters.

75. Pupils' responses in English lessons are very good. Behaviour is very good and the pupils show considerable interest and make a good effort with their work. They all work well within the routine of the literacy hour and do not bother the teacher when working independently or in groups. There are many examples of pupils being helpful to each other and they show respect for one another's ideas by listening carefully in discussions. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are excellent and this has a positive effect on the good progress pupils make in lessons.

76. The quality of teaching is very good in the majority of literacy hours. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to achieve and they match the level of work closely to the needs of the different abilities in the classes. They carefully build on what the pupils already know and recap on their teaching points thoroughly when it is clear that they need more work on a particular area. For instance, in one class the teacher went over the purpose of verbs giving several examples

when it was clear that many had forgotten the work they had done before the summer holiday. Teachers are confident in their implementation of the literacy hour although, in a small number of lessons, whole-class work is overlong, which does not give the pupils sufficient time for group activities. There are a very few times when tasks do not challenge the more able sufficiently. A strong feature of teaching is the skilful use of praise and encouragement, which does a great deal towards increasing pupils' confidence in all aspects of English, but particularly in writing. The teachers value all pupils' contributions and there is often sensitive questioning of the least able which includes them fully in discussions. The target setting with individuals has a significant impact on the pupils' progress in specific areas of learning such as presentation and spelling, for example. Homework is used effectively to support what the pupils learn in literacy hours. The pupils read books and discuss them with the class. They learn spellings and write stories and poems to share with others.

77. The curriculum is very broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. Arrangements for monitoring progress in literacy are very good. Assessment of reading, writing and spelling is thorough and regular; difficulties are identified at an early stage so that extra support can be given. There is excellent planning for the systematic development of literacy skills closely linked to the National Literacy Strategy. The school is aware of the importance of practising reading and writing in other subjects and effectively links speaking and listening and literacy skills within mathematics, science, history and geography lessons. The subject is very well led and very useful guidelines have been produced for all aspects of English. The subject leader contributes very significantly to the development of staff expertise through training and the evaluation and monitoring of teaching. Learning support workers are actively involved in lessons and are well prepared. They make a useful contribution to the informal assessment of pupils' progress. Resources for English are good. The library is well stocked with books on a range of subjects, stored at an accessible level for small children. There is also a wide range of good quality books and resources that are efficiently shared across the classes. The use of information technology is still at an early stage in English, although pupils do have opportunities to word-process their writing or practise their punctuation skills.

Mathematics

78. Overall attainment in mathematics at the end of the key stage is above average. The school has maintained the good standards identified in the previous inspection. The results of the

tests in 1999 were in line with the national average and below the average of similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the upper stages of the average Level 2 and the higher Level 3 were above the national average and the average for similar schools. This marks an improvement on the results for 1998. There was a significant increase in the numbers of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in 1999 and they were well above the national average and the average of similar schools. As in 1998, the school analysed the results in considerable detail and made further modifications to teaching, planning and assessment procedures. They targeted support at the pupils currently in Y2 when they were in Year 1. The support has continued for a group of about twenty-five pupils who are working at levels lower than others in the year group.

79. The inspection reflects the results of 1999. The current pupils in Year 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 are already attaining the average Level 2 in their mathematics work particularly in number, despite it being early in the school year. The improvement in attainment is related not only to the ability of the majority of the cohort of pupils, but also to effective programmes of work that are now in place to raise further the attainment of all pupils in mathematics. The school groups pupils in ability sets in Year 1 and Year 2 for a proportion of their lessons in the week. Work is planned to raise the levels of attainment of pupils with special needs. This is particularly successful in enabling all abilities to be appropriately extended in their learning. The carefully focussed teaching within the numeracy lessons is very well planned. The pupils are regularly assessed and work is specifically targeted at their individual mathematical needs. These strategies are clearly raising standards.

80. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils can count attendance for the day and calculate how many of them are staying to lunch. All the pupils already calculate numbers up to ten in their heads. They have effective strategies to add two-digit numbers including the use of doubles. For example, they were calculating $7+8$ by working out $7+7+1$. The majority of pupils are comfortably adding and subtracting numbers up to twenty and the lower-attaining pupils count and order numbers up to twenty. The most able pupils calculate missing numbers on the hundred-square and a significant minority can already transfer their knowledge of numbers up to a hundred to numbers up to a thousand. Even the high-attaining pupils in Year 1 were calculating sets of missing numbers on the hundred-square.

81. The majority of the average and high attaining pupils calculate halves and quarters of

shapes and recognise what shape half a square is. When working on their own at the start of the day the pupils were filling in the odd and even numbers in a street of houses. All of them calculated what the next number in a sequence containing 65 and 67 would be. The pupils accurately measure short lines in centimetres and know the names of two-and 3-dimensional shapes such as rectangles and cuboids. The most able pupils know the number of surfaces on a cube and the number of edges on a hexagon.

82. Overall progress in mathematics is good from reception to Year 2. The pupils clearly build upon what they know and understand in relation to number, in particular when calculating mentally. Through very good teaching the pupils apply their knowledge about numbers and all of them are quickly developing new strategies to calculate figures in their heads. For example, they know that $2+2+2$ is 6 and that 7 is $1+ 2$ lots of 3. The pupils successfully practise their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example in science and design and technology they calculate measurements and collect data about the colour of eyes and about favourite holidays in geography. In history they are developing a concept of the passage of time and quickly learn about days and months. They work out absences for the day and the week. The most able pupils are becoming increasingly confident with numbers and quickly learn new ideas about patterns in numbers up to a hundred. The low-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are progressing well when using coins to buy gifts up to 10 pence and can double numbers up to ten. The good progress is the result of the careful and systematic implementation of the numeracy strategy and skilfully focussed teaching that enables the pupils to think and reason, as well as answer questions quickly. Their numeracy skills are effectively used in other subjects. For example they measure in science and design and technology and collect data about the colour of eyes and favourite food.

83. The pupils' response to mathematics is always good. They concentrate very effectively in lessons. When they do not understand an idea or a calculation they are confident to ask the teacher for help or to ask for further time to think. They are attentive in lessons and enjoy discussing shapes and calculating numbers in their heads. They quickly settle to their work and are very good at sharing ideas and equipment. The pupils support one another very well and enjoy each other's successes. The majority work neatly and carefully. However, whilst they show pride in what they have learned, a significant proportion of some pupils' work in mathematics books and work sheets, particularly that of the most able boys, is not always presented as well as it should be.

84. Overall teaching in mathematics is very good and never less than satisfactory. This marks an improvement since the previous inspection. The teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of the pupils' achievements. These attributes are particularly evident in the sets for mathematics where the pupils are appropriately challenged to enable them to extend their thinking and their range of strategies for calculating numbers quickly and accurately. Lesson planning is very good and clearly promotes the national numeracy strategy. In one lesson in Year 1, tasks to practise missing numbers up to a hundred became progressively difficult. Very effective direct teaching of skills and knowledge, particularly in number, challenges the pupils to think mathematically when solving problems. Teachers ask skilful questions using technical language and this extends the pupils' vocabularies in mathematics. In Year 2 pupils worked in pairs applying their knowledge when calculating challenging problems posed by the teacher. There is a very good range and quality of day-to-day assessment. The best assessment occurred where the teachers stopped the pupils to check out what they understood before encouraging them to progress further. Homework is used very effectively to support work in lessons. For example the pupils are memorising odd and even numbers and some are learning simple multiplication facts. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching. However, occasionally, the teachers do not intervene enough in the pupils' learning in their independent activities. There is not always enough time for the pupils to work independently of the teacher, solving problems and investigating numbers.

85. The school has implemented the numeracy strategy very successfully. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced. Data handling has improved since the previous inspection but the pupils do not always analyse the information collected. The plans now include more emphasis on this element of mathematics. Procedures for assessment are excellent and include analysis of national and internal tests and a very broad range of on-going assessments of pupils' work. Targets are set for individuals which are agreed with the pupils in regular meetings to discuss the progress of their work over the term.

86. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. There has been very effective training for the staff, and the subject leader has organised a range of strategies to support their work. For example, medium-and short-term planning is monitored and the strengths and weaknesses are fed back to the teachers to help them improve. Samples of pupils' work have been monitored to ensure that the most and least able are reaching appropriate levels. This information has been discussed with the whole staff. Collections of pupils' work have been

analysed against the national criteria and are successfully used to assess the pupils' attainment. The monitoring of teaching and learning through classroom observation is about to take place jointly between the headteacher and subject leader. The quality and range of resources are good and the school is carefully auditing the need for resources to ensure that the budget for mathematics is efficiently spent to support specific aspects of the mathematics curriculum. The use of information technology in mathematics is developing. The pupils use programs to help them recall their multiplication tables. Plans are in place to develop the capability to handle data.

Science

87. In the teachers' assessment of seven-year-olds in science in 1999, the pupils' attainment was above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools, with a well-above-average number attaining the higher Level 3. The inspection findings reflect the teacher assessments. The pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be average. The pupils conduct simple experiments using scientific methods to test what they anticipate will happen and compare their ideas with what actually occurs. They have a good understanding of their own lives and compare them with the life cycles of plants and animals. The pupils know how to assemble a simple electrical circuit. They investigate the senses and can name and describe them all. In addition they can identify specific senses to match tasks such as reading and eating.

88. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make consistently good progress in science, building systematically on what they know and can do. In Year 1 the pupils study sources of light and the difference between objects that give out light and those that reflect light. Across the key stage the pupils are developing a good understanding of the need for a fair test. For example, one group of pupils emphasised the need to blindfold pupils when investigating smell. They talk knowledgeably about healthy foods and select the most appropriate food for a healthy meal. The pupils are beginning to carry out simple experiments systematically and record their findings in an appropriate manner often using a table or diagram.

89. The pupils' attitudes to their work in science are good. They are eager to begin their lessons, and they work independently and in small groups with a strong sense of purpose. They enjoy experiences such as the visit of the Life Bus. They remember with interest many ways of

keeping healthy and are clearly motivated by the visit of a parent who is a doctor. In Year 2 science lessons the pupils were completely absorbed in exploring electric circuits. They shared resources well and discussed thoughtfully why some electric circuits work and others do not. They have a confident relationship with their teachers and speak easily with adults when working out solutions to questions.

90. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers are knowledgeable and confident and the planning for every lesson is meticulous so that all sessions have a clear structure. Lessons invariably begin with questions and a brief review of what has been previously learnt and then work is built on this prior knowledge. Teachers give very clear instructions so that pupils know what to do. Pupils are inspired through the energetic and lively way questions are phrased. The pace of learning is brisk and pupils are encouraged to think critically and to work hard. Their efforts are warmly recognised. The teachers insist that work is set out neatly and pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their finished work. However, work is not always well presented. Occasionally, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment. They are given worksheets without the opportunity of first hand experiences. Appropriate use is made of information technology to process data and to present it in a variety of graphical forms. Work is marked carefully and comments are constructive. Some pupils miss vital parts of science lessons because they are withdrawn for reading.

91. The school has a good scheme of work, which ensures complete coverage of the required curriculum and provides a good range of topics in each year. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. In addition, there is now a systematic procedure for assessing pupils' attainment, which is used well to modify future planning and to provide appropriate work for pupils of varying abilities. The subject leader monitors teachers' planning and has compiled a useful portfolio of work against which to moderate standards of pupils' work. Since the last inspection the subject has been developed well and appropriate emphasis has been placed on pupils developing scientific skills as they carry out investigative and experimental work. There is a good range of resources for all areas of science, which is another improvement since the last inspection.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Design and Technology

92. During the inspection very few lessons in design and technology were planned to take place. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about teaching. However, from the scrutiny of photographic evidence, pupils' designs, their project evaluations and discussions with them about their work, the pupils are making good progress overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The pupils clearly build upon what they have learned about cutting and joining paper and card in the reception classes. By Year 1, pupils made and discussed the contents of healthy sandwiches as part of their food technology work. By the time they are 7 years old they apply and extend these skills to plan, design and make simple musical instruments. Pupils are encouraged to produce good working diagrams and list the materials they require and the tools they will need to use. Those pupils with special educational needs progress well within their lessons and over time. The pupils discussed the annual puppet-making week with obvious enjoyment. They remembered the fun they had designing and making puppets. Photographic evidence shows that this event provided endless opportunities for them to consolidate and extend their designing and making skills.

93. The school has worked hard to ensure that all pupils have appropriate experiences in design and technology and make consistent progress. Design and technology is competently led and managed. The subject leader has introduced useful guidelines which clearly set out how pupils in each year group will build up technological skills, knowledge and understanding through meaningful projects, usually linked to class topic work. The school has adapted the design and technology planning to match new nationally recommended curriculum guidelines. The curriculum is reviewed annually and there is a clear vision for future developments. Assessment procedures are clearly identified and the information provided contributes greatly to curriculum development and the pupils' annual reports. Resources and tools are good in range and quality, including those for food technology. They are successfully used to support the pupils' planning, designing and making.

Information Technology

94. Pupils attain levels in information technology that are appropriate for their ages and their competency in using the computer is sound. The school has maintained the standards

identified in the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have good control of the mouse and are confident with the use of several tool-bar options such as “save” and “print.” They produce short pieces of writing using the word processor. They know how to obtain capital letters, delete and produce spaces between words. The pupils experiment with different fonts and sizes of letters to present their work attractively. When using programmable toys the pupils show a good understanding of the need to sequence commands. They can easily control the movements of the toy to follow a pathway to knock down skittles.

95. Overall, the pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They are progressively building on what they have learned about information technology in the reception class. They are successfully developing their competence when using various applications of the computer and they are increasingly confident users of the technology.

96. The pupils have good attitudes towards information technology. Many pupils are confident and enjoy exploring the possibilities of the various programs they use. They persevere with the tasks set them and work together co-operatively to get things right. They treat equipment with respect. Higher-attaining pupils are pleased to help others to develop knowledge and skills. Information technology makes a good contribution to the pupils’ personal and social education.

97. There was limited direct teaching in information technology during the inspection. However, information from work sampling and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and increasing confidence, which enables them to support pupils effectively in their learning and to introduce new concepts and skills successfully. Examples of pupils’ work, demonstrating the use of specific skills, are retained in an attractive collection of work. Activities are carefully planned to enable the pupils to develop their competence and skills systematically and progressively.

98. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully produced a scheme of work and updated many of its computers. The curriculum for information technology is now of satisfactory breadth and balance and pupils study all the required elements of communicating and handling information and controlling. However, the use of information technology models or simulations to explore aspects of real and imaginary situations is at an early stage of

development. The school has recently implemented the nationally recommended scheme of work and staff are becoming more confident when teaching information technology.

99. The subject leader enjoys information technology and has increasing personal expertise. She has worked hard to develop the use of information technology resources and to provide the necessary documentary support. There is a clear and realistic plan for the subject; several sensible priorities have been identified for development, for instance the use of data handling. There are record keeping sheets for each pupil and set levels for the attainment in each year group. All issues raised in the previous report regarding planning and assessment have been effectively addressed. The school has a satisfactory number of computers and a very good range of software. Communication through the Internet is about to begin and there are plans to upgrade some of the computers further.

History

100. There were too few history lessons seen during the inspection to make a secure judgement on teaching. However, an examination of the pupils' work and discussion with them about the past, indicate that they are reaching appropriate levels for the age group and are making good progress. This marks an improvement since the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in explaining the differences between history and geography. They talk with increasing confidence about people and events that they have studied from the past. In Year 1 the pupils discuss the differences between their lives today and life in the past. For example, in a lesson about Florence Nightingale, almost all pupils knew that Victorian hospitals were very different from those of today in terms of hygiene and conditions. By Year 2 they identify and use sources of information to answer questions about the past. They are increasing their understanding of the different ways that the past can be represented and can name photographs, paintings, old maps and diaries as reliable sources. They know that Samuel Pepys's diary contained an eyewitness account of the fire of London rather than a story. Timelines are used effectively in all classes to enable pupils to put historical events in context and develop a sense of chronology.

101. The history curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. The school places a strong emphasis on using practical approaches to make history exciting and encourage curiosity about the

past. Where possible pupils handle artefacts or use role-play, dressed in costume, as in the Year 2 topic about castles. Lively accounts of the middle ages resulted from the visit of a time traveller in costume. They visited a castle site and made a large castle in the corner of the classroom. Planning is very good, with clearly identified National Curriculum areas of study and links with other subjects. There is excellent attention to the gradual development of enquiry skills through key questions clearly identified in planning. Assessment is effectively linked to each programme of work. The subject leader is knowledgeable and has an enthusiasm for the subject. There is a clear strategy for development and historical enquiry and investigation have been identified as areas for further improvement.

Geography

102. Too few geography lessons were seen during this inspection to make a secure judgement about teaching. However, evidence from looking at pupils' work and talking to them about what they have learnt in geography suggests that the sound standards found in the previous inspection have been maintained. The pupils' understanding about a range of places is appropriate for their ages and good progress is made in gaining knowledge about the local area through fieldwork. The pupils talk with interest about the local village of Prestbury and understand the features that make the village different from a contrasting place, Weston-Super-Mare, naming features such as farms, hills and fields. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, are developing a good understanding of map-making, first making maps of their immediate environment then looking at aerial photographs and comparing them with a large scale map. Their understanding of other countries develops well through studies of rainforests and Polar Regions; they discuss the animals and people that live there with confidence. Art is often linked with geography for displays. For example, pupils enjoyed making a colourful, large-scale depiction of the rainforest in the classroom, which provided opportunities to work co-operatively in a group.

103. The subject leader has developed a very good overall scheme for the teaching of geography, which progressively develops the skills involved in learning about places, such as observation and investigation. Geography makes a good contribution to the cultural and social development of the pupils through studies of other countries and issues such as pollution in the environment. There is an effective plan for further development based on a careful audit of the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and the quality of teaching. There is a good range and

quality of resources, including aerial photographs of the school. The pupils' geography skills and knowledge are assessed appropriately at the end of each programme of work.

Art

104. The school has maintained the sound standards identified in the previous inspection and the pupils are reaching levels expected for this age group. Some areas have improved and almost all pupils are making good progress, particularly in observational drawing. Each age group successfully focuses on the development of a particular skill such as drawing, painting or printing at some time during the year. For example, pupils in Year 2 are presently working on drawing, learning methods of representing facial features from a visiting artist, and this has resulted in very good progress. The pupils record their ideas and feelings using a variety of techniques and media including both two- and three-dimensional work. In Year 2 the pupils are building on what they have previously learned by exploring the connection between colour and mood, and carefully creating card loom weavings with various interesting materials. In Year 1 pupils are becoming aware of texture through exploring printmaking using fruit and vegetables in connection with their healthy food topic. Simple paintings are produced in the style of famous artists such as Van Gogh and Picasso, and the pupils sensitively express their opinions about these famous artists' work.

105. The quality of teaching in art is good. Lessons are well planned and organised. Resources are used effectively to support the pupils' painting and drawing. Praise is skilfully used to encourage the pupils to think about what they are doing and to evaluate and modify their work. Teachers carefully choose examples of pupils' artwork, including those from less-able pupils, to point out interesting ideas. This clearly motivates and enthuses the pupils and contributes significantly to their good progress and to their spiritual development. There are many voluntary helpers who support the pupils in lessons. They are well briefed about what to do with their group. The skills and talents of local artists are used to good effect for clay and painting. This expertise has produced work of very good quality, as in the clay models of cherries and other fruit.

106. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Care is taken to give the pupils good quality experiences in the use of a good range of media such as ink, paint, pastels and clay. Art is often successfully linked through topics to other subjects. The use of information technology is at an early stage of development. High standards of illustration greatly

enhance displays of work. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable subject leader. The policy and scheme of work for art are very good, clearly defining what should be taught and how. The pupils' skills and knowledge are planned systematically to ensure that they develop appropriately as the pupils move through the school. Planning and the procedures for assessment are excellent. The pupils progress in art is monitored through twice-yearly self-portrait and observational drawing tasks and these assessments are kept as a useful record of the individual pupils' artistic development.

Music

107. Overall the pupils are reaching standards in music expected for this age group and they are making good progress as they move through the school. Not only is the school maintaining the good standards identified by the previous inspection, but also the progress pupils make over time has improved.

108. The pupils sing particularly well and with expression in assembly. They build upon their knowledge and effectively recall what they have learned in previous lessons. They know the names of percussion instruments and can describe the sounds they make. They recognise loud and quiet sounds in music and apply that knowledge when playing their own instruments. They are making good progress in controlling instruments when creating sound patterns and can follow the guidance of the conductor, making appropriate pauses for silence. They perform short musical patterns from symbols and recognise the dynamic, playing loudly or quietly as required. The progress is good because the pupils concentrate effectively and they are systematically taught to play sound patterns. Nearly half of the pupils in Year 2 are taught to play the recorder. The pupils frequently listen to a good range of music from around the world. This makes a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral and social development. They recognise when the instrument played is made of metal or wood and describe the sounds made. In dance lessons the pupils quickly become absorbed in moving creatively to music. Aspects of critical appraisal and evaluation are less well developed than performing skills.

109. The pupils enjoy music. Lessons are fun and they enjoy guessing which instrument is played. They behave very well and are very good at taking turns and knowing when they must be silent and listen to other pupils performing.

110. Music is taught well by non-specialist teachers who have gained confidence through the use of an effective published scheme of work. As a result, they are developing a good understanding of music for pupils of this age group. Planning is clear and ensures that the pupils have a good range of musical experiences which build progressively upon each other. This structure enables the pupils to make good progress. Lessons are very well organised and the pupils are carefully and successfully taught the discipline of performing in a group. Good direct teaching introduces the pupils to symbols in music and enables them to apply what they have learned to a class performance. The only shortcomings are related to the pupils sometimes sitting and listening for too long or waiting too long for their turn to perform. Consequently, there is not always enough time for them to explore and investigate patterns of sound when composing.

111. The music curriculum is broad and balanced and all the elements of listening, appraising, performing and composing are carefully planned to ensure that the pupils' skills and knowledge are built upon progressively. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. Teachers' plans are carefully monitored and teachers given regular feedback on the quality of their work. Currently classroom observation is used to help and support teachers. The monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development. The quality and range of assessment procedures to track pupils' progress in music are outstanding. The teachers carefully record the assessments they make of pupils' progress and these then inform the next stages of learning. The records are used very effectively to inform the pupils' annual reports.

112. Pupils generally have equal access to the full curriculum but sometimes individuals are withdrawn from lessons to read or for other literacy activities. This practice limits the experiences for a small minority, especially those with special educational needs. The school is aware of this problem and plans are in place to review the practice of withdrawing pupils from lessons. There is a good range and quality of musical instruments and taped music. There are exciting instruments from other countries around the world. The music curriculum is enriched through a variety of extra-curricular activities, for example through the lunchtime recorder groups, singing in the church and for the senior citizens and performances in concerts in the school. Pupils are excited that this year they will be singing with the pupils from the neighbouring junior school.

Physical Education

113. The pupils are reaching standards expected for the age group and their progress is satisfactory in lessons but good over time as they move from Year 1 to Year 2. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In Year 1 the pupils made good progress in controlling their bodies, but at times during lessons they were merely repeating skills they had already mastered which did not extend their physical abilities. By Year 2 the pupils are making clear progress in controlling their bodies while stretching, curling, running and jumping. They use the space in the hall increasingly well and by the end of the key stage they are beginning to create more complex curling and stretching movements. Simple sequences of movement are beginning to be linked smoothly and the pupils use the apparatus creatively and confidently. The best progress was made when the pupils were encouraged to think carefully about the movements they were making, evaluate each other's sequences and then identify how they could be improved.

114. The pupils clearly enjoy physical education and get great satisfaction from creating sequences on the large apparatus. They are very well behaved in lessons and are learning how to be safe on apparatus and when moving quickly in the hall. They are very supportive of each other and celebrate successful sequences of movement.

115. The quality of teaching is generally sound and there are strengths in planning, assessment and the use of demonstration to improve the quality of the physical activity. Objectives for lessons are very clear and discussed with pupils. There is good attention to safety and to enabling pupils to keep themselves safe. The best lessons were brisk and lively with varied activities. In these lessons time was given for evaluation as well as demonstration and the pupils were encouraged to think of ways they could improve their movements. However, this is not a consistent feature of all lessons and, although pupils observe others working, they are not always given enough time to evaluate and improve the quality of the sequences. Praise is used successfully. However, in some lessons work on the apparatus becomes continual practise rather than refining and improving the sequences already learned.

116. The physical education curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The pupils have generous amounts of time in the hall for gymnastics, small games and dance. Planning is very good and ensures that, across the key stage, work is planned to meet the physical needs of the pupils. Procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are very good and

Careful records are kept. The records inform the next stages of learning and the pupils' end-of-year reports. The majority of pupils have equal access to the lessons. However, some pupils are removed from physical education to read and this disrupts lessons and they miss an important element of the week's work. The subject is well managed and the subject leader is experienced and knowledgeable. The teachers' plans are effectively monitored but the monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development. There is a very clear subject development plan, and while physical education forms part of the development programme over the next two years, the subject leader is about to introduce a national programme of sports into the school. The physical education apparatus is good quality and appropriately challenging for the pupils. Small games apparatus and other equipment is very good in both quality and range. The school is well placed for further development.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

117. The team of four inspectors worked in the school over a period of three and a half days. Fifty lessons were observed and a total of fifty-one hours was spent in classes, in discussions with pupils and evaluating samples of their work.

118. Inspectors visited registration and assemblies. All the teachers were observed teaching the literacy hour and numeracy lessons at least once. Many teachers were observed teaching several times during the week and all subjects were inspected. Discussions were held with the teaching and non-teaching staff. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body to discuss their roles and responsibilities. The pupils were observed entering and leaving school and at all break times.

119. All the available work of a sample of three pupils, representing the ability range from each class in the school was scrutinised. In addition the work of a sample of pupils with special educational needs was examined alongside their Individual Education Plans. The inspectors listened to reading in the literacy hour and a sample of 10 per cent of the pupils discussed their books and were heard to read. Many informal discussions took place with pupils in lessons and at other times during the day about their work and the life of the school. Planned discussions took place about English, mathematics, design and technology, information technology and behaviour.

120. A large amount of documentation provided by the school was examined before and during the inspection. This included the previous inspection report and action plan and reports of annual reviews by the local education authority. The school budget, the development and improvement plans, curriculum and lesson plans, minutes from governors' meetings, the school's analysis of national and local test results and target setting procedures were also inspected. The registered inspector held a meeting with 19 parents before the inspection and the responses from ninety-six parents' questionnaires were analysed. Additional discussion took place with parents in the morning when they brought their children to school and with those parents who help around the school.

121. Religious education and worship were the subject of a section 23 inspection during the previous week.

122. 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	182	0	28	8

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3

Education support staff (YR – Y2)

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked each week	76

Average class size: 30.3

Financial data

Financial year: 1998-1999

	£
Total Income	305953
Total Expenditure	287985
Expenditure per pupil	1591
Balance brought forward from previous year	43507
Balance carried forward to next year	61475

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	170
Number of questionnaires returned:	96

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	50	43	4	3	
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	47	44	6	3	
The school handles complaints from parents well	23	39	36	1	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	45	46	3	5	
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	21	58	9	11	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	46	46	7	1	
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	34	52	11	2	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	38	54	5	3	
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	51	48	1		
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	50	50	1		
My child(ren) like(s) school	51	45	3	1	

Other issues raised by parents

The parents at the meeting generally reflected this good support for the school. They felt that they were well informed. They also felt welcome into the school. The parents felt the school has improved under the new headteacher and the children were given the confidence to move on to the junior school.