

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ashurst, West Sussex

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126090

Head teacher: Mrs J. Williams

Reporting inspector: John Carnaghan
1352

Dates of inspection: 5th-7th March 2001

Inspection number: 189329

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Lane
Ashurst

Postcode: West Sussex
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Telephone number: 01403-710426

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C. Hammond

Date of previous inspection: 23rd September 1996

The inspection contractor for this inspection was:

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1352	John Carnaghan	Registered inspector	English History Geography	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are curricular opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for pupils? What should the school do to improve further?
12289	Susan Burgess	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23315	Irene Green	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design technology Physical education Music Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities Provision for pupils under five.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ashurst Aided Primary School is a Church of England primary school for pupils aged four to eleven. Set in a rural background, it is a small school with 44 pupils on roll, who are all of white ethnic background. Sixteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is slightly below the national average. Of these seven pupils, only two require the involvement of outside specialists for their moderate learning problems. Pupils who enter the school at the age of four have levels of attainment that are above what is found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low by national standards. No pupils at the school have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ashurst Aided Primary School is a very good school. It constantly strives for improvement. It enables pupils to reach high standards of attainment in many areas and is well placed to raise them further. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. The way that the school encourages pupils to achieve their full potential and develop as self-confident individuals is very good. Teaching is good with a number of very good elements. This is promoted by the very good leadership and management of the school, which also does much to encourage the extremely positive attitudes and values shown by the pupils. The school is a close-knit family, which embraces all who enter its doors with genuine warmth. It has a strongly Christian ethos. Members of the governing body work hard to support and encourage the school. The mutual support enjoyed by the community, the church and the school is excellent. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Consistently good teaching motivates pupils so that they learn effectively and reach high standards of attainment.
- The school promotes the growing maturity, positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the pupils. All adults at the school provide good role models for pupils. The school cares for all its pupils very well.
- Very good leadership and strong teamwork ensure a continuous process of improvement.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. There is very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- The school maintains valuable links with parents and the local community and involves them fully in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils with special educational needs are strongly supported through their time at school and make good progress.

What could be improved

- No major issues were identified during the inspection. Some areas of further development that the governing body may wish to include in an action plan have been identified as minor issues in the inspection commentary.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. Since that time standards have risen well in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6 improvement has again been good in English science and mathematics. The school has effectively addressed all the key issues raised in the last report. In information and communication technology (ICT), many improvements have been made and the attainment of pupils has risen considerably. The development plan has been given a sharper focus and is now a practical document in bringing about school improvement. Assessment is much improved and effectively feeds back into daily practice. Overall, since the last inspection the school has made very good improvements.

STANDARDS

The extremely small groups of pupils taking the tests make exact comparisons with national averages unreliable. Results in national assessments were above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 except in mathematics, where they were in line with them. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment was well above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is very good. In National Curriculum tests over the last four years, standards have improved in English, remained above average in science and remained average in mathematics. Again, the extremely small groups of pupils taking tests make such year on year comparisons unreliable; for example, standards in mathematics were well above national standards in 1998 and above national standards in 1999. However, in work seen during the inspection, standards were above national expectations in English, mathematics and science throughout the school, clearly indicating the good progress that has been made. Standards in ICT are well above national expectations; in art and design, design and technology, geography and history they are above expectations; in music and physical education standards are broadly in line with national expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school are very good. Pupils like their life at school and show enjoyment in every aspect of it. They join in activities with infectious enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well at all times. Pupils are naturally trustworthy.
Personal development and relationships	These are excellent. The high expectations that staff have of pupils are consistently met. Pupils relate very well to one another.
Attendance	Broadly in line with the national average, therefore satisfactory.

Pupils have a strong natural commitment to the school. This is greatly encouraged by the cheerful, positive attitudes of teachers and support staff. The school is successful in engendering equally positive attitudes and values in pupils as they move through the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good	Good

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

Teaching in the school is good with some very good elements. 40% of lessons seen were very good or excellent, none were unsatisfactory, and 60% were satisfactory or good. In English and mathematics, teaching was good. Pupils are well managed and classrooms have a warm positive atmosphere. Teaching addresses the wide range of abilities in the mixed age classes very well. All pupils' needs are met because planning is careful to address pupils' individual learning requirements. Pupils learn effectively; they concentrate hard and acquire skills, knowledge and understanding very well. Their knowledge of their own learning is good in the classroom. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. However, because marking is inconsistent across the curriculum and does not always say how pupils could improve their work, pupils and parents sometimes lack sufficient information about the quality of their written work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, which allows all of them to take full opportunity of what is on offer.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The curriculum is very well adapted to provide very good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral social and cultural education is strong. The school has a strong Christian ethos.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff provide very good role models in their warm relationships with pupils. Support and guidance for pupils in areas of academic and personal development are very good. The school's attendance procedures are satisfactory.

The school very successfully involves parents in many aspects of its life. The quality of information for parents is very good. The school uses its strong links with the local community, especially the church, to enhance pupils' education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The head teacher provides clear leadership and a strong sense of direction for the school; in this the small, enthusiastic group of staff, supports her strongly.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is a valuable friend to the school. It has very good awareness of the school's strengths and effectively fulfils all of its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The close collaboration amongst all who work at the school ensures that there is an ongoing, effective self-evaluation process. Assessment information is used very well by the school to inform its planning for the future.
The strategic use of resources	Financial decisions are closely linked to the schools' identified needs and expenditure is closely monitored. The school spends its money wisely.

Teachers are pushing ahead with improvements in the school. The governing body has an enthusiastic and committed membership, who share the head teachers' vision for the school and support her strongly. The governors and local church play an active role in the positive ethos of the school. Accommodation is much improved since the last inspection and maintained and cleaned very well. Resources in nearly all subjects are good and are helping raise attainment. The school provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem• They believe that teaching is good.• They think that their children like school.• They are of the opinion that the school has high expectations of the children• They think that their children are making good progress• They believe that the school works closely with parents• They think the school is well led and managed.• They think that the school helps to develop children's maturity and responsibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A number of parents expressed the view that marking of pupils' work was sometimes slow and lacking detail.• A small minority of parents do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Inspection findings support the range of positive views of the school. Of the areas that parents would like to see improved the inspection team found that marking was inconsistent and in need of improvement.

However, there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, given the size and the circumstances of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is above the national average. Test results for the very small numbers of pupils who sit these assessments are unreliable as a means of information about attainment. However, standards indicated by Key Stage 1 tests in 2000 were well above national averages in reading and writing and very high in mathematics. Compared with 1999, the results in 2000 demonstrated very good improvements. In comparison with similar schools, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average in writing, well above in reading and very high in mathematics. Overall, these figures indicate that pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. Key Stage 2 test results in 2000 showed attainment well above national averages in English, above average in science and in line with national averages in mathematics. Compared with 1999, the results in 2000 demonstrated generally good improvements. In comparison with similar schools, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average in English, in line with them in science and below in mathematics. Overall, and allowing for variations in the aptitudes of individual pupils in the very small groups taking the tests, these figures indicate good progress through Key Stage 2.

2. Children enter the reception class with above average levels of attainment. Because of the good teaching they receive, the majority are on target to exceed the expected levels in their Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. In their personal and social development, children are enthusiastic and co-operative and develop good levels of independence. Their standards are above what is expected nationally. In communication, language and literacy, children's standards are also above average. They communicate very effectively with one another and with adults. Most children read appropriate books with confidence. In mathematical development, children attain above national averages. They count to 30 and understand 'more than' and 'less than'. They have a good knowledge of shapes. They attain national expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children know about the birds and animals common in the local environment. They cook simple items. In information and communications technology (ICT), they click, drag and select, using a mouse. In creative development, children draw from observations of plants and fruit. They enjoy singing and confidently showed off their skills with ocarinas in assembly. They all sing simple songs. In their physical development, their standards are average. Children develop manipulative skills well and cut and stick competently as well as using paintbrushes with dexterity. In physical education, their development is less good due to limitations imposed by the school building; standards are in line with national expectations.

3. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write at increasing length, using more complex sentences in writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. They use an adventurous vocabulary with great confidence. They read with accuracy, fluency and good expression. Pupils show good skills in using all kinds of reference books and they show good aptitudes, using the library. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can write imaginatively with an increasingly sophisticated vocabulary. They write at length in other subjects, like history. They successfully attempt a variety of styles in their writing.

4. In mathematics, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are confident and competent in number work, adding and applying their skills well in problem-solving tasks. They have good recall of multiplication tables and other number patterns. They know how to solve simple algebraic equations. All pupils can draw graphs to show data and can draw sensible conclusions from them.

5. In science, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have good knowledge of plants and living things; for example they can describe the main organs of plants. They have good investigational skills due to the strong focus that teaching places on this aspect. Pupils have a good scientific vocabulary, so are able to produce thorough records of investigations. They understand fair testing. They make accurate predictions of the outcomes of experiments and explain the reasoning behind their predictions. Pupils use ICT well in writing up their investigations.

6. Standards in ICT are well above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Most pupils, of all ages, are adept at using computers. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make extensive use of spreadsheets and databases. Pupils can use a programmable model to make a flashing traffic light sequence. They can make lights switch on, when entering a tunnel and switch off on exit. They are able to undertake simple designs on computers using various keyboard commands.

7. Standards in art and design are above national expectations at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils three-dimensional work reveals skilful use of clay and card in making models of local houses. They can produce good quality sketches of one another in sporting poses. They produce art in association with other subjects, like science. In design and technology, standards are above national expectations throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils designed a vehicle powered by an electric motor for the exploration of the pyramids. Their design proposals showed good understanding of design, taking account of fitness for a purpose.

8. In geography, attainment is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils are able to use their own observations in recognising and explaining human activities beyond the local environment. They use atlases very well to find information. It is not possible to report on attainment in geography at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment in history is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1; it is above them at the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show good understanding of elements of Victorian social history; they show good awareness of the changes in this period and know some of the reasons for these changes. They use source materials sensibly and know about many eminent Victorians. They write and present their findings with clarity.

9. In physical education, the standards that pupils reach are in line with what is expected at the end of Key Stage 2, no judgements can be made on standards in Key Stage 1. Pupils at have good ball control in football. They know about the importance of warming up before physical activity, but are not so aware of the needs to cool down. Standards in music are in line with what is expected throughout the school. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have a wide repertoire of songs. All pupils can play simple tunes on the recorder with good rhythm. A number play the flute competently.

10. Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities. From the earliest age all pupils are challenged well by the good teaching. The challenges which pupils are given are subtly adjusted by the careful planning of work for pupils' differing needs, so that all pupils achieve well for much of the time. The quality of pupil management and relationships in the school, means that pupils want to give of their best. The nature of pupils' special educational needs is well known to teachers. They are thus able to plan and deploy staff and resources accordingly; as a result these pupils also achieve well. Pupils' learning is enhanced because they usually react positively to the challenges that the school provides. At Key Stage 1, pupils on the special educational needs register are making good progress relative to their prior attainment. Clear and relevant targets are identified in their individual education plans, and

the reviews of their progress indicate that most of these targets are met. These targets are measurable and easily understood by pupils, and thereby contribute to their learning. At Key Stage 2, these pupils continue to make good progress. In lessons seen during the inspection, the majority of special educational needs pupils made good progress relative to their prior attainment in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to school are very good and make a positive impact on their learning.

12. Pupils are interested in their work, enjoy reading, and are eager to ask and answer questions and to contribute to discussions. Pupils work well in pairs and groups, for example when checking and evaluating each other's results in maths or when playing four-a-side football in physical education. They sustain their concentration during lessons and take a pride in their finished work. Pupils work well independently, when required to do so. For example, Years 5 and 6 enjoyed dissolving a range of substances during a science lesson. They were largely working on their own, while younger pupils, aided by their teacher, were each able to make an observation about the different plants they had found on the recreation ground. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to learning. As tasks are well matched to their needs, they behave very well and work hard. They have very good relationships with other pupils and the staff who support them.

13. Pupils are polite and confident with adults and, throughout the school, are happy to talk about themselves and their work. They are welcoming and courteous to visitors. They readily applaud the efforts and achievements of others, for instance when two pupils played the flute in assembly. Relationships are excellent between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves. The very positive nature of these relationships is a significant feature of the school.

14. Behaviour in class, in assemblies and around the school is very good. Lunchtimes are relaxed, sociable and orderly. Pupils play amicably together at break times, in spite of the very limited space available within the immediate grounds. Even when enjoying the greater freedom of the recreation ground, pupils respond instantly to instructions. They cross the road to and from the school very sensibly and are well used to the safety routines.

15. Attendance and unauthorised absence are both broadly in line with the national average. There were no exclusions last year. Pupils are punctual to school in the morning. All the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children liked school.

16. Personal development of pupils is very good, enhanced by the wide range of visits, visitors and activities that the school arranges. Years 4, 5 and 6 enjoy an annual residential visit to a centre in Shoreham. Even the youngest pupils tidy their classroom with minimal supervision. All pupils have a part in the school production and the school is very active in the life of the local community. For example, pupils have decorated the church for harvest festival, planted bulbs around the village and, recently provided the parish council with traffic survey information. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities such as chess club, football training and athletics. Teams represent the school at the annual Carolthon and in the Steyning Race Walk. There is good support for chosen charities, including Children In Need, the Christmas shoe box appeal, the British Heart Foundation and the Seafarers' Association.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The standard of teaching is good and has some very good elements. Although teaching seen in the small sample of lessons during the inspection was very good on the basis of scrutiny of work and considering the standards that the school reaches teaching at the school is judged to be good. During inspection teaching was consistent. Over 90 per cent of the lessons seen were good or better, 40 per cent were very good, and 7 per cent were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The best teaching seen was in Key Stage 1 where all lessons were good or better, 57 per cent of these were very good. This is a considerable improvement on the standards of teaching at the time of the last inspection.

18. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Literacy and numeracy are well taught and teachers are particularly good in using their knowledge of children when planning lessons to ensure that they all abilities and year groups have the correct degree of challenge. This ensures that pupils understanding and thinking is effectively developed and the most able are stretched. Teachers are helping pupils to develop ICT skills more and more through using it in studying other subjects

19. Teaching of phonics and other basic skills is very good. Teachers and classroom assistants have good knowledge of phonics and the school takes every opportunity to stress its development. In this way, the correct use of phonics is effectively emphasised in a range of subjects beyond English and literacy. This leads to pupils learning these skills rapidly. The National Literacy Strategy teaching objectives have been adopted; lessons have a good balance between the various elements. Reading and writing in literacy lessons builds satisfactorily on skills developed in speaking and listening.

20. Lessons are very well planned so lessons can proceed efficiently with no loss of time. Planning is detailed, with clear learning objectives; these are always made clear to pupils.. Work is well matched to pupils' learning needs. Setting arrangements and grouping within sets are carefully done to ensure that all receive the correct degree of challenge and so can progress at the optimum rate. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils were given graded number cards to match their abilities and learning needs so that all were able to make the appropriate progress. Support staff are well prepared for lessons, they are fully briefed about lesson plans, so they can participate seamlessly in all aspects of lessons, providing strong support for pupils' learning.

21. Teachers set high expectations of pupils; for pupils under five and in Key Stage 1 they are very high. Pupils are keen to live up to these. In this small school, teachers know pupils well and are sensitive so the expectations set for individuals is appropriate. Teachers praise pupils warmly, engendering positive attitudes. So pupils develop independence in their work. Pupils in a mathematics lesson, investigating money and real life problems listened closely before setting about their tasks collaboratively, with good independence and strong perseverance. They required the minimum of supervision and asked very few questions to the teacher.

22. Teachers know the individual needs of all their pupils. They plan lessons, grouping pupils logically in the light of their understanding. The support that groups of pupils receive from support assistants and the teacher is well adapted to their needs. This enables all pupils to participate fully in lessons. Class teachers are careful to check the progress of all groups, making appropriate interventions. Classrooms are of sufficient size and are well laid out, so that teachers and pupils can communicate freely. Lessons often encompass a variety of stimulating activities and use resources imaginatively.

23. Teachers manage pupils well. They are calm; they rarely raise their voices and exercise their authority courteously at all times. As a result relationships with pupils are warm and constructive. Pupils behave very well. This means that very little time is wasted in lessons; pupils of all ages

switch from task to task with speed and efficiency showing good productivity. Teachers engage pupils of all ages and abilities in the lesson by questioning and challenging them. All pupils' contributions are greatly valued by teachers and their peers.

24. The pace of lessons is good. Pupils are used to tackling tasks at good speed, improving the rate at which they learn. The way in which the school uses support staff is very good. Teachers and support staff work as close-knit teams. There is effective briefing, so that, in the course of lessons, support staff know what is expected of them. The contributions they make to pupils' learning are a strong contributory element in the quality of teaching in the school. The use of ICT in lessons is very good; there is evidence of ICT being used in most elements of pupils' work. For example it is used in mathematics to check calculations and handle data. Pupils of all ages keep some of their work on floppy discs. ICT is well used as a tool to develop learning.

25. Lessons usually have effective closing sessions, which reinforce learning and provide good opportunities for informal assessment. In most lessons, pupils are reminded of what they have learned, are warmly praised when they provide evidence of what they know and targets are set for future lessons. Teachers modify subsequent lesson planning as a result of this assessment. This provides pupils with knowledge of their own learning. Marking of books is unsatisfactory, overall. It provides some comments about pupils' work but it does too little to develop clear dialogue with pupils and set targets for improvement.

26. Pupils and parents participate fully in the home school reading arrangements. Homework expectations are communicated to parents. Homework fits into schemes of work. It is usefully set to reinforce learning, such as spellings for a test or to lead in to the next area of study.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently good. Planning is detailed, thorough and relevant to the needs of individual pupils. This effective teaching gives pupils confidence, and successfully promotes their self-esteem. Records are kept meticulously and the information is used to plan work and match activities to pupils' needs. The non-teaching assistants are skilled, and offer good guidance to pupils. A visiting specialist teacher also provides an effective programme of learning for pupils and has trained non-teaching staff in phonological awareness. There is close liaison with teachers and careful record-keeping assists curriculum planning well.

28. Pupils learning is good. This is largely because pupils have a very positive attitude to their work. They put in strong efforts in everything that they do, showing good productivity. They relate very well to one another and their teachers. Teachers work well with pupils to ensure that they make strong efforts in all phases of lessons. Pupils also work very well alone and, particularly, in pairs. They are usually very interested in their work and show very good concentration. A Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson was typical. Pupils had clear learning objectives; to help them to solve specific problems. They demonstrated their thirst for knowledge in the energetic way they undertook their tasks. The teacher made opportunities for pupils to check and evaluate other pupils' results; they clearly enjoyed each other's successes offering no criticisms of errors. By the end of the lesson, pupils made very good gains in knowledge and understanding, largely because the teacher had given them the confidence to tackle the problems set.

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

29. The school provides a broad, balanced programme throughout all age groups; this is similar to the provision at the time of the last inspection. All elements of the National Curriculum are met. There are clear, effective links across the various subjects. For example, in the choice of what to design in design and technology the teacher used the history topic of Ancient Egypt as the focus. Everywhere,

ICT is used extensively, to enhance curricular opportunities. This linkage has a positive impact on the development of skills in all areas of learning.

30. Issues of equal opportunity are dealt with in a practical fashion. All pupils are enthusiastic members of the chess club. In lessons pupils of all abilities are fully involved and there is a strong ethos of inclusion in the school. All pupils are valued both by teachers and their peers and work in an atmosphere of open co-operation at all times. There are no issues relating to ethnic minorities in the school.

31. Extra-curricular activities are provided for all pupils. Given the size of the school there is very good provision. The vast majority of pupils participate in the very good range on offer, from chess to a variety of sports, or playing a musical instrument.

32. Children in the reception class experience a very good curriculum. They are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop through independence, exploration and investigation and the activities chosen are very well linked. For example, concentration in a literacy session was maintained by the varied activities for the small groups, who switched from playing with toy monsters in the sand to reading and thinking about describing words for such creatures. Work throughout the school is interactive, exciting and much of it is well displayed, demonstrating the great value put on the inclusion of everyone's contribution.

33. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and other opportunities, including extra curricular activities. Their needs are recognised early and their individual education plans are well focused, with manageable academic or behavioural targets set, and are systematically reviewed.

34. The school has effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and these initiatives are having a very positive effect on the provision for English and mathematics. Good examples of this were seen in geography and science, in data handling and graphical work. Teachers work carefully to ensure that literacy and numeracy receive coverage in other lessons, in order to relate learning in one subject with knowledge in others. The school has taken account of national and local guidance in order to provide a structured curriculum and planning is very effective for the mixed age classes throughout the school. There is awareness of the need to review, refine and evaluate the curriculum and the staff is committed to raising standards.

35. There is good provision for personal, social and health education, which consistently provides pupils with the knowledge upon which to make informed decisions. The local police have been effectively involved in helping to teach elements of this area, such as 'stranger danger' and the officer involved is a well-liked visitor to the school. The governing body has approved an appropriate policy for sex education. The development of good relationships and consideration for others are embedded in the life and work of the school, and pupils are given ample opportunities to be independent and show initiative. They are well prepared for taking responsibility through opportunities such as their school council. Pupils go on various outings and the older ones have the chance to attend residential courses, which are designed to foster personal development, as well as to enhance learning in particular subjects.

36. The school has very strong links with the community, inviting people to visit and going out to sing or carry out surveys. There are very strong links with the local church, which pupils know well from numerous visits. There are very constructive links with the local comprehensive school and work is being done to forge links with other very small primary schools in the county and to learn from their experiences. All adults in this school community observe its values in each aspect of the life of the school and this is clearly reflected in the strong sense of 'family', which pervades the school and its work.

37. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is promoted extremely well through the ethos of the school community. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection.

38. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Daily collective acts of worship contribute very well to pupils' spiritual development and encourage pupils to respect and be sensitive to the feelings of others. The school aims to ensure that everyone is fully included, that everyone is valued and that there is an ethos of mutual respect. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on the beliefs of people of other faiths in religious education lessons. Pupils visit the local church as part of their religious education lessons and the rector is a regular visitor, taking assembly weekly. These opportunities all make a very valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness.

39. The school makes very good provision for both moral and social development. Pupils receive awards and certificates for good behaviour. The weekly "Sharing Assembly" supports the schools' ethos very well. The themes for acts of collective worship indicate that moral issues are often discussed at this time. All staff in the school are very good role models for the pupils, relationships are excellent and staff encourage pupils to relate positively to each other. Pupils of all ages contribute to the school community, taking responsibility for a range of jobs within their classes and around the school. Older pupils are particularly conscientious about looking after the younger ones at all times during the school day. The school regularly supports charities.

40. Provision for cultural development is good. A good range of educational visits are arranged each year and the school welcomes many visitors to the school. These include the local ministers and the police. The school also promotes the involvement of parents and grandparents to share their expertise. Cultural awareness is also provided through art such as Australian aboriginal art and in a link, through regular visits from which a Ghanaian citizen.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Procedures for ensuring child protection and pupils' welfare are very good. Pupils are nurtured in a warm and very clean environment. All adults are aware of the criteria for child protection. There are no health and safety concerns within the general framework of the school day.

42. Adults in school provide very good role models for the pupils and have an excellent rapport with them. Parents realise this and believe the staff help their children to become mature and responsible. They are very pleased that teachers expect their children to work hard and do their best. Teachers work together to ensure pupils are very well supported individually as they move through the year groups. Lunchtime supervision is caring and careful. Pupils can confidently share their thoughts and concerns with any member of staff. The school welcomes parents. Parents can confidently speak to staff at the beginning or end of the day. The head teacher, staff and parent governors are regularly about the playground to listen to parents and share any concerns. Appointments can readily be made for more formal matters.

43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. There is a prompt daily check for any unexplained absences. The educational welfare officer supports the school well.

44. The promotion of self-discipline is very good. Staff have very high expectations, which pupils respond to whole-heartedly. Teachers almost imperceptibly build pupils' self esteem. There are rarely any raised voices in school. The systems of positive rewards for good work and endeavour, are extremely well structured to encourage good conduct from the day pupils enter the school. This is very apparent in the reception classes and lower school. Sanctions are rarely imposed. Assemblies and the

personal, social, health and educational programmes are skilfully used to promote responsible attitudes to work, behaviour, relationships and decision making. The very rare inappropriate behaviour is viewed very seriously and with disappointment. All involved share mutually in sorting things out.

45. The procedures for supporting and monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs are good. Individual educational plans are used well, to target problems, where appropriate. Teachers remind pupils of the targets in their individual educational plans, when necessary, and how they can work towards them. Pupils are also well supported in their personal development by their teachers and all the other adults who work with them.

46. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good and the information gained is used well to guide curricular planning. Subjects have regular assessments written into curricular planning so that the assessment is integral to their teaching. As a result such planning relates to what pupils do and do not know. The development of portfolios to show exemplar material in subjects is good. However the targets established for pupils by these methods are not incorporated in school reports so are not always clear to parents. Marking of exercise books, while regular, does not do enough to indicate to pupils and parents how each piece of work could be improved.

47. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the personal development of pupils are very good. In this very small school, teachers and other adults know the pupils very well. There is a spirit of openness, which pervades the school. Teachers set high expectations of pupils' personal development and discuss this regularly with individuals and the whole class. A weekly sharing assembly is a happy occasion where all can emphasise success. Class teachers talk eloquently about the successes their pupils have had in the previous week; pupils applaud with spontaneous warmth. The care that the school takes of its pupils has improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The continued strength of the school's partnership with parents since the last inspection makes a considerable contribution to the quality of pupils' education. Parents are very supportive and appreciative of the work of the school. All parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school was well led and managed. All also said that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Almost all parents are confident that their children are making good progress and get the right amount of work to do at home. Some parents, however, were disappointed with both the standard of marking and the length of time teachers took to mark homework; the inspection team supports these observations.

49. The quality and quantity of information for parents is very good. There are regular newsletters with termly consultation evenings and open days. A great deal of valuable information is exchanged informally at the beginning and end of the school day when staff are at the school gate. Annual reports to parents describe pupils' attainment in a lively and informative way but do not contain specific targets for improvement. Each September the head teacher sends home a review and prospect document, which usefully outlines past events and informs parents about what is to be taught. She organizes an induction programme for parent volunteers so that the best use may be made of their help.

50. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school, with several helping regularly in class. There is usually 100 per cent attendance for school events such as productions and harvest festivals. Parents know that they are welcome to come into school at any time. They value the open-door Friday afternoons as an opportunity to discuss homework with their child's teacher. Most parents respond to the head teacher's invitations to contribute their views on such matters as new school policies.

51. The very active Friends Association organizes a wide range of social and fund-raising events, including quiz nights, barn dances and a summer fun day. Each year the Friends raise significant sums of money for school funds and they have to date contributed over £10,000 towards the cost of the new building. The enthusiastic involvement of parents in their children's education is a very positive feature of the life of the school. The mutual support enjoyed by the community, the Church and the school is excellent.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The head teacher gives a very clear educational direction for the school. Staff, governors, and all members of the school community share her vision for the future, both long and short-term. All work closely together to provide the best possible learning environment for pupils. The head teacher leads by example. She has a regular teaching commitment, which has contributed greatly to the effective teamwork in the school. Her aims for high standards in all areas of the school are clearly articulated in long-term plans, and through regular discussion and consultation with staff, governors and parents.

53. Commitment to improvement is reflected in the strong assessment procedures now in place; an area identified as a key issue in the last inspection.

54. The school has very clear aims and values, which are met very well in all aspects of the school's work. Examples of these are independent learning, taking responsibility, promoting Christian values of tolerance, respect and helping others. In addition, all pupils understand the school's philosophy that 'If good is not your best, then it's not good enough!'. This is reflected in their work and achievements. For example, even the very youngest children take great care with activities such as observational drawing. They concentrate and persevere to produce work of the highest quality and show pride in their personal achievement.

55. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching are very effective. The head teacher regularly observes teachers, and areas for improvement are identified. Teachers also complete a self-evaluation of the observed lesson, which assists in agreement about targets for development. The head teacher and an external advisor observe classes together and monitor each other's feedback to teachers. Governors are also becoming more effective in their monitoring of teaching through helpful training. A significant outcome of the school's monitoring of teaching is the improvement in the precision of learning objectives.

56. The school improvement plan is much improved since the last inspection and is now a very valuable tool for the school's development. It identifies the school's priorities very clearly, and contains all the relevant information needed to implement change and improvement. The governing body is fully involved in the consultation, drawing up, and monitoring of the plan. Targets for English and mathematics results at the end of Key Stage 2, agreed with the local education authority, are realistic and based on detailed information from the tracking of pupils' progress and their identified strengths and weaknesses.

57. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. The special educational needs co-ordinator is highly committed to providing the best learning opportunities for these pupils, and all staff have a very good knowledge of how to meet pupils' needs. Provision is very well organised.

58. The governing body is very supportive of the school, and takes a very active part in its development. Committees, and governors with individual responsibilities, take their roles very seriously and make well-informed contributions to the decision-making process. Governors are fully involved withdrawing up priorities in the school improvement plan. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities, for example performance management is firmly in place. It is also well placed to evaluate financial decisions and the work of the school against other similar institutions when the necessary information becomes available, for example through the newly established small school support group.

59. The management of finances is very effective, and educational priorities dictate financial decisions. The school uses its finances wisely. This is evident, for example in the extra adult support provided for the pupils, which contributes effectively to their good progress overall. All grants are used appropriately. The office is well managed, making good use of technology. All financial checks are in place. The school is aware of 'best value' principles and does its best to adhere to them, although this is difficult for small schools as there is little information yet available for comparison.

60. The school has a group of stable, competent, teaching and non-teaching staff, who are totally committed to the school. Teachers take responsibility for several areas of the curriculum and do their best to keep up to date with developments and improvements through external and internal training. New information and existing expertise is regularly shared, for example, when the visiting teacher of special educational needs trained non-teaching staff in phonological awareness. This had a substantial impact on provision for all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs. There is an induction programme for new teachers, should the need arise, and the school has been instrumental in arranging for the training of supply teachers.

61. The school is well resourced overall, and is eagerly awaiting the arrival of three new computers, which will give an above average ratio of computers to pupils. Accommodation has improved considerably since the last inspection with the addition of the new partitioned area, which can be used as a hall, but there is no fixed apparatus for more advanced gymnastics. Children in the Foundation Stage do not have their own outdoor area, nor do they have access to climbing and balancing apparatus.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

No major issues were identified during the inspection. Governors may wish to consider the following minor issues for improvement:

- ❑ Improve the quality of the marking of pupils' work, by:
 - developing clear criteria for marking pupils' work in all areas of the curriculum;
 - indicating clearly to pupils the strengths in their work and the improvements they can make.
- ❑ Improve the school's accommodation, as resources allow, by;
 - providing a separate, covered, outdoor play area for pupils in the Foundation Stage;
 - providing large fixed apparatus for pupils' physical education.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	40	53	7	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	44
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	7

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Test and examination data are not included because of the very small groups involved.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Test and examination data are not included because of the very small groups involved.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	44
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.45
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.8
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	0
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Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	133,410
Total expenditure	134,153
Expenditure per pupil	3272
Balance brought forward from previous year	2390
Balance carried forward to next year	1700

Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

44

Number of questionnaires returned

41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	51	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	42	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	39	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	49	2	5	0
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	20	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	25	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	77	19	2	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	17	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	23	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	37	19	0	2

Other issues raised by parents:

Parents support the school strongly. However, a number expressed concerns about the quality and frequency of teacher's marking.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. Children attend the Reception class part-time for an induction period, and there are currently seven children of Reception age in the Key Stage 1 class, which also caters for pupils in Years 1 and 2. All children have had pre-school experience and their attainment on entry to the Reception Class is above average overall. Careful planning, based on effective observation and assessment, builds on children's previous learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Good teaching and effective teamwork between all adults ensures that children progress at an appropriate rate. By the end of their time in Reception, most children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals. A part-time teacher works very effectively with children of Reception age each morning, with priority given to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Teaching in each area of learning is good. Since the last inspection, there have been satisfactory improvements in provision in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development through well-planned activities. Standards are above average. Children are enthusiastic learners who take a full part in all activities. They are fully co-operative with adults and each other, and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom. Behaviour is very good and children follow established rules and routines well. They enjoy being able to help each other. They share resources well, and show good concentration and perseverance in completing tasks. When one child said that he thought he was not strong enough to push all the cubes into place to make the shape he wanted, a friend told him to keep trying. He eventually succeeded. Personal independence is encouraged, both in choice of activities and in personal matters. All adults and the older pupils in the class promote children's confidence and self-esteem. Older pupils listen appreciatively to the younger ones in discussions; this helps the younger children to feel that their contributions are valued.

Communication, language and literacy

64. This area of learning is taught well and children are provided with a wide variety of activities appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children communicate very effectively with adults and each other, whether speaking in a group discussion, responding to questions or offering opinions. They listen very attentively and follow instructions well. Children enjoy sharing books with each other and listening to stories. Their knowledge of letters and sounds is developing well and most children are reading simple books with enthusiasm and confidence. Good attention is given to writing, and children are making good progress in both letter formation and in the content of the texts, which they write independently. Role-play areas are changed regularly to reflect the current topic. Standards are above national expectations.

Mathematical development

65. Children make good progress in mathematical development. Their levels of attainment are above average. Provision in this area is planned well to ensure that all activities meet the needs of the children; sessions provide a combination of direct teaching and structured play. Children have a good knowledge of number. They count and clap to 30, and count back from ten. They recognise number patterns on dice, match them with the corresponding numerals and count out the correct number of linking cubes. They understand 'more than' and 'less than'. A monster drawing game successfully reinforced these concepts. Good questioning by the teacher encourages children to solve practical problems, for example, 'What would complete our monster?' or 'Would all the arms fit on one side?' Children have a good knowledge of shapes, and use them in pictures and tessellation. They measure the height of their constructions, for example, 'My tower is seven cubes high'. Children are encouraged to recognise patterns, such as the step effect of a structure that uses one less cube each time.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well through a broad range of activities and well-chosen topics. Their attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. They learn about the features of their local environment, for example birds, animals and buildings. They know about the conditions necessary for plant growth from their experience of planting bulbs in the nursery. The travels of Barnaby Bear give children opportunities to understand about life in other countries. Children produced interesting models of transport that Barnaby might have used to reach Canada, which included a helicopter and a digger! Regular cooking sessions provide opportunities for children to observe the changes to ingredients when they are mixed and cooked. Computers are used well to support learning, for example by dressing Barnaby in suitable clothes for his travels, or clicking the mouse to eliminate objects on the screen until a designated number remains.

Physical development

67. Children's manipulative skills are developing well. They handle paintbrushes successfully, cut and stick competently and have good pencil control. They develop skills using small equipment either in the hall or outside, but do not have access to appropriate climbing and balancing equipment. There is limited space around the school building, and children in Reception do not have their own designated area. Children do not have access to wheeled toys such as bicycles and prams, which restricts their large muscle development. However, their standards in this area are as expected for this age.

Creative development

68. Provision for creative development is stimulating and varied. Children show above average attainment. Children have many opportunities to express themselves through art, music and imaginative play. Children are taught new art techniques, such as painting onto fabric to make tabards for the role play area. They draw from careful observation, and this was particularly successful when contributing to the millenium quilt. Children looked closely at plants and fruit and drew them. The designs were put onto fabric and painted. Children also used simple needlework to enhance them. Children enjoy singing, for example, number rhymes and songs in assemblies. They are all learning to play the ocarina and are eagerly anticipating the time when they will be able to accompany 'twinkle, twinkle, little star'.

ENGLISH

69. In very small schools assessment data can vary significantly from year to year and is not an infallible guide to trends in standards. However, in 2000 national assessments the standard of reading of pupils in Key Stage 1 was well above national averages and well above average in comparison

with similar schools. Standards of writing were well above the national average and above those of similar schools. Over the years 1998-2000 high standards have been maintained in both areas. Standards in English assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 were also well above national averages and above the averages of similar schools. Again, high standards have been maintained.

70. Pupils' standards of speaking and listening are above average. In the reception class, pupils have a good spoken vocabulary. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are competent speakers. They convey meaning well with good clarity, when explaining their delight with a story they had been reading. Their listening is also better than expected; they grasp instructions well, thus contributing to their own learning. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 discuss matters of interest with growing maturity. A number of them can adapt the way in which they speak to a variety of purposes.

71. Pupils' attainment in reading is above national averages. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show a broad knowledge of books. They all use the library regularly. Strong teamwork between parents and the school engages pupils in reading from the earliest age. They are keen to read and show good expression as they read aloud. They are confident, accurate and fluent readers. Pupils know what they like in reading and can explain why. Most are familiar with dictionaries and use them automatically when they cannot understand a word. Pupils know the basic vocabulary associated with books. In one lesson they gave appropriate names to the title page, the author and the blurb when they were pointed out in a big book. They are familiar with the use of contents and index pages in non-fiction books. Pupils show considerable fluency in their reading and have great confidence and good expression. They pay close attention to punctuation, which aids their clarity of expression. For example, in a whole class reading, most pupils varied their expression correctly when reading a word printed in italics. As they read they can identify adverbs and conjunctions. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 show good familiarity with non-fiction texts. The accessibility and regular use of the school library mean that pupils find using the library for research purposes easy. Pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses with practised ease

72. Attainment in writing is well above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. It is above expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Variations in the aptitudes of the tiny groups of pupils concerned account for this variation. Pupils in Year 1 write accurately and neatly; over half of them can compose and write simple sentences without help. Year 2 pupils have a good vocabulary, choosing their words adventurously for effect. Their spelling and handwriting are consistently good. Many show a sophisticated use of punctuation as they write in a variety of styles, using quotation marks and question marks in composing dialogue. Most pupils are able to write long, coherent sentences. At the end of Key Stage 2 writing is enlivened by pupils' confidence in using an adventurous vocabulary. In a lesson, pupils successfully completed poems using graphic phrases like 'violent twitch' and 'burned with rage' Spelling, punctuation and handwriting are invariably correct. Pupils successfully attempt a variety of styles of writing. Some longer pieces of writing are thoughtful and, in studying history for example, show good empathy with historical figures. Pupils can develop sustained ideas in written work.

73. Teaching of English is good, with some very good elements. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and have used it to develop children's interest and to raise standards. The strategy's teaching objectives are used sensibly to give structure to termly and lesson planning. Lessons are very carefully planned, with activities usually adapted for the wide range of abilities in the classes, which can span four years. Pupils of all ages and attainment are given a good degree of challenge. Individual education plans ensure that pupils with special educational needs have work carefully adapted to their needs. Support staff are always well informed, so that they are able to participate fully in all elements of lessons. Teachers have good knowledge of phonics and take every opportunity to emphasise these areas to the benefit of pupils' learning. Teachers are calm and

understanding in their very good management of pupils. Classes have a warm but purposeful atmosphere and so pupils enjoy their work. This is clearly beneficial to their rate of learning. Teachers know their pupils very well and so are able to group them in a way that promotes higher standards. They are courteous and unflappable and exercise authority clearly. In a very good lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils there was spontaneous joy from the pupils as they re-visited a poem seen the day before. The teacher skilfully harnessed this energy so that pupils learned about rhyme, rhythm and words ending in -ck, while all present appreciated the jolly tone of the poem. The quality and use of support staff is very good; they are carefully briefed on the content of lessons and fully involve themselves in all elements of the literacy hour. They invariably make very valuable contributions to pupils' learning. Resources are well used; there are good opportunities for pupils to draft and produce work on computer programmes. Work is satisfactorily marked but there is too little written dialogue with pupils. Plenary sessions offer opportunities for informal assessment and are carefully used to inform pupils and teachers of desirable patterns for future study.

74. The co-ordination of English is very good. The head teacher, who co-ordinates the subject is enthusiastic and thorough and is determinedly driving up attainment. Assessment has been developed to focus on target setting and this is done as a continuous process, with termly updates and regular monitoring. Pupils have individual targets written in their journals. Using this thorough analysis of attainment, the school has identified standards of writing as an area for improvement. Pupils have books to write in different styles and genres, independently with a specific timetabled session for this, beyond the provision for the literacy hour. Since the last inspection standards have improved considerably both in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Teaching of English has improved across the school and the formal assessment of pupils work now comprises a thorough and practical system to raise attainment.

MATHEMATICS

75. The results of the 2000 national assessments for pupils in Key Stage 1 were very high compared with both the national average, and similar schools. For pupils in Key Stage 2, results were in line with the national average, but very low when compared with similar schools. Results at Key Stage 2 have fluctuated over the past three years, but this does not reflect weaknesses in the school's teaching of mathematics. The number of pupils taking the test each year is very small; the significant factor last year was the lower mathematical aptitude amongst the few pupils. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Key Stage 2 this year are likely to achieve well overall. This is similar to the standard noted in the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.

76. At the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils count in fives, forwards and backwards from odd and even numbers. They work confidently with numbers to 100. They are aware of negative numbers, and higher attaining pupils have a sound knowledge of halving numbers up to 1000. Pupils construct and interpret pictorial representations of information, such as block graphs. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils are confident and competent in number work and apply their skills well in problem-solving tasks. They have quick and accurate recall of multiplication tables and see number patterns quickly. They use effective strategies in mental calculations. High attaining pupils have secure knowledge of fractions and decimals, and how to solve simple algebraic equations. All pupils construct appropriate graphs to show data and can successfully extract information from them.

77. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good, and pupils make good progress. Teaching is very good in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 2 who were adding simple numbers in September, are now adding two or three-digit numbers confidently. Teachers plan lessons very carefully, with appropriate tasks to match the needs of individual pupils and year groups. For example, pupils were given graded

number cards in a task involving the nine times table, which were to be placed on a Venn diagram according to whether they were multiples of four and/or nine. Learning objectives are clear, and communicated effectively to pupils at the beginning of lessons. This ensures that everyone is focused on what they intend to achieve. Good use is made of available staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to provide smaller teaching groups for pupils and the success of this was reflected in a Year 2 lesson where pupils made very good progress in working with numbers up to 1000. Able pupils at both key stages benefit from suitably challenging extension activities and problem-solving tasks. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils respond by showing enthusiasm and curiosity for the subject and great respect for adults and each other. They enjoy the challenge of new activities because the subject is made interesting for them. Teachers use an appropriate variety of methods to sustain pupils' interest, for example question and answer sessions and problem-solving tasks. Occasionally, there is a loss of pace in lessons at both key stages, for example, a little too much time was spent by pupils in Key Stage 2 completing a multiplication grid (Eratosthene's Sieve). Most pupils try to present their work well, but the standard is variable. Presentation is slightly better for younger pupils, but some work in the upper part of the school is untidy and contains unnecessary spelling errors, which have not been noted by the teacher.

78. All staff implement the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. In lessons, all elements were planned and taught well. Pupils were fully involved at all times, work was well matched to pupils' abilities, and the closing session was effective in reinforcing key facts from the lesson. Pupils' enthusiasm for mental mathematics is evident in lessons, and strong priority is given to developing and discussing strategies for quick and accurate calculations, for example how to recognise and use divisibility rules to solve problems.

79. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge well across other areas of the curriculum, for example in preparing accounts for a proposed residential trip and in science and design and technology, where they measure accurately. There is frequent use of computers during lessons, for example to check answers to calculations or handle data.

80. Assessment procedures are good overall. Pupils strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified and are taken into account when teachers plan lessons. Overall, progress is effectively tracked, and accurate predictions of test results are made. However, day to day marking of pupils' work varies in quality. Although it is done regularly, the approach is not always consistent. Some comments are very general, whilst others are better in that they give targets for improvement. There is limited evidence of pupils responding to the comments made. Occasionally, marking is inaccurate. In a task of rounding up the nearest 10, a pupil had written $39=40$. There were no comments on this from the teacher.

81. The subject is very well managed and staff development has a high priority. Provision of mathematics is closely monitored and staff have a shared commitment to improvement and raising standards. There are good links with the local grammar school, where some pupils have the opportunity to attend 'master classes'. The provision of resources is good.

SCIENCE

82. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 shows standards to be below national averages for pupils reaching level 2 and above. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was very high in relation to the national average. These extremes indicate the unreliability of such tests as an indicator of attainment in schools when there are very small numbers of pupils. This also applies to national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2, where science standards in 2000 were above national averages but in line with those for similar schools.

83. Inspection findings show standards above national expectations at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

84. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can explain what they did in experiments and make clear, written observations. Most can identify the organs of plants such as petals and stamen and show good awareness of how seeds develop. They have a knowledge of different properties shown by materials and can group them according to criteria, like weight. They show good understanding of physical processes in writing about how ice melts under varying conditions. In a very good lesson, which included a trip to find flowers in a local field, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 showed good knowledge of the correct conditions for plant growth and were aware that most plants become dormant in winter months. They knew that they should not pick wild flowers and used a good vocabulary when explaining what they knew, using words like sap and fungus appropriately. Pupils' very good behaviour and great pleasure in their work contributed strongly to their learning. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can choose from a range of information sources and are able to make predictions based on scientific knowledge and understanding. They choose appropriate apparatus independently for particular tasks. They have a good knowledge of the needs of plants to thrive and know about the classification of living things. They can describe the main organs of humans and plants. They show an increasing understanding of aspects of materials and their properties, for example they how mixtures like salt and water can be separated. They start to use ideas to test and explain changes, such as in the volume of sound. While investigating solutions, pupils in Year 6 could use equipment carefully to ensure consistency and were able to identify the key factors in making an investigation. They understood fair tests and were able to predict results with some sophistication, for example whether solids mixed with water were reversible or not.

85. Teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan well for individual lessons and give very clear explanations and instructions to the class. This includes paying due attention to health and safety issues. Good questioning enables pupils of all abilities to demonstrate their knowledge; this promotes pupils' discussion. For example, in teaching Key Stage 1 pupils, the teacher posed open questions like, 'What does evergreen mean?' and 'How did all the trees get here?' These led to the development of a keen and interesting discussion, well handled by the teacher to meet the lesson's learning intentions. More able pupils are extended by challenging, additional tasks. A balance between whole class, group and individual tasks helps maintain interest and provides good opportunities for pupils to work at their own level. Thus pupils are able to show great independence as they work. They collaborate with one another naturally and easily and are strongly motivated to succeed at their tasks. With wide age ranges in each class the management of the classroom is paramount; teachers show good skills, allowing independent work to continue but making effective interventions as required. Resources are well chosen for the investigation in hand and effectively deployed. Support staff are very well briefed and play an important part in encouraging pupils' learning.

86. The co-ordination of science is good. The co-ordinator is well qualified. She has ensured that clear guidelines are used in planning the curriculum across the school. Assessment is done at the end of each unit of work but little action is taken as a result of these tests. Standard assessment tasks done at the end of Years 3,4 and 5 are better used. For example they are used to predict grades in Year 6 national assessments and modify the way in which science is taught. ICT is well used in writing up experiments, for example to draw graphs to demonstrate findings. The school has a good range of resources and makes good use of the local environment in undertaking investigations.

87. Since the last inspection standards have remained above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Teaching has remained good

ART AND DESIGN

88. The school has maintained above average standards in the subject since the last inspection. Display and portfolios of work reflect a rich variety of experiences incorporating all elements of the curriculum. Observational drawing is given a high priority, and pupils of all ages are taught to look carefully, and use techniques they have learned. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 studied plants and fruits that they had collected from the local area, and used viewfinders and magnifying glasses to sketch them. The drawings were photocopied and traced onto fabric and subsequently painted and embroidered. They were assembled together to form the school's millenium quilt, of which pupils are very proud. Older pupils' work in three dimensions reflects skilful use of clay and card to make models of local houses and homes in the village, and Tudor figures. Cross-curricular links are well planned. For example pupils painted sportsmen and women, following science work on the human body and healthy living. Pupils looked at pictures in newspapers, modelled the sporting poses and sketched each other. They then made anatomical sketches of their chosen sporting action, concentrating on getting the correct proportions for different parts of the body. The results were very effective.

89. No art lessons were observed during the inspection, but it is evident that lessons are planned well and that teachers have high expectations of pupils. They provide appropriate challenges and inspire pupils to do well. This can be seen in work around the school, for example sculptures, ceramic work, textiles and paintings. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and, on occasions, decide to repeat an activity because they feel they have not done their best.

90. The subject is managed well, and there is a very good supply of resources. Visiting artists bring additional expertise to the school, for example when pupils in Year 2 designed new role-play clothes. They were helped to make a paper pattern and to cut the fabric. Overall, the results were impressive. Pupils use ICT widely in their art work, for example, they use a painting programme for illustrating nursery rhymes, research, or as a tool for planning and designing.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. No lesson were seen during the inspection, but work on display and discussions with pupils and teachers show that pupils' attainment at both key stages is above that expected for their ages. This reflects improvement since the last inspection and pupils now make good progress in both key stages.

92. Pupils in Key Stage 1 build successfully on previous good learning in the Reception class. They plan effective strategies to solve problems, for example in making a vehicle with moving wheels from reclaimed materials. This work was inspired by the book, 'The Mice and the Clockwork Bus', where pupils discussed the movement of several large model cars, looking at how they moved and what the parts were called. They then chose appropriate materials, planned what their model would look like, whether it would have a fixed or moving axle and made labelled drawings of what they expected the model to look like. After making the models in groups, they evaluated them against the task set. The results reflected considerable thought and care during the project. Pupils in Key Stage 2 link projects with other subjects, for example, history and geography, and tasks are appropriately graded for each year group within the class. In a topic on Ancient Egypt, pupils in Year 3 made models which used syringes and balloons to represent a pneumatic system to frighten away tomb robbers. Pupils in Year 4 designed an alarm system to protect a mummy in a museum. They designed an electrical alarm, which used a metal ball to make an electrical connection if the mummy was moved. The circuit then lit a red bulb making the mummy glow. Pupils in this group were rightly proud of their achievements. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 very successfully designed a vehicle powered by an electric motor for an explorer to

travel to the pyramids. It also included a pulley system to move large rocks from the doorway and to load treasures onto the vehicle.

93. The subject is well managed. Teachers and pupils, particularly girls, have gained more confidence in design and technology and planned activities are stimulating and challenging. Good use is made of ICT in the subject. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 designed an advertisement for Victorian times, which had to include programmable lights, sound, and a motor. Pupils used a programmable robot to control the outputs. It was also used in a food technology project when older pupils made bread to their own recipe and advertised it. Other groups designed sandwiches and biscuit packets.

GEOGRAPHY

94. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards of work seen are above the national average. Pupils can use their own observations in recognising and explaining human activities in places beyond the immediate locality. Pupils have an understanding of different ways of life in other parts of the world and can contrast this with their local area. They start to select relevant evidence from source materials. They know how to use an index in an atlas to locate places. As they use atlases they recognise common symbols, for example that a dot represents the capital city. They know the basic features of a number of countries; for example they say that Canada is cold because it is near 'the top of the world'. Maps are drawn clearly and show good understanding of the use of symbols to represent features.

95. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is very good. Lessons are carefully planned so that all pupils have the correct degree of challenge. They are planned so that pupils develop skills logically. Lessons reinforce the development of literacy and numeracy; for example pupils estimate the length of a flight to another country and read mock postcards from visits to different places demonstrating a good understanding of terms like 'capital city' and 'beautiful scenery'. Pupils listen carefully and respond sensibly and thoughtfully. Pupils are gently, but effectively managed and display a positive work ethic. Their interest, concentration and independence are high, so that they learn quickly. Pupils are well questioned and a wide range of resources are deployed, to maximum effect. As a result of these qualities pupils learn well. Due to the school timetable no geography teaching was seen in Key Stage 2.

96. The school has good resources for the teaching of geography and these have a positive impact on learning. There is a range of interesting books in the school library, which stimulates pupils' interest. Teachers show good subject knowledge, they use this to plan in the most effective way. Support staff are carefully deployed to ensure that the flow of the lesson for all pupils is uninterrupted.

97. Co-ordination of geography is good. Planning is based on a national scheme of work. The plans are monitored and evaluated by all teachers and effectively ensure that the subject conforms to the National Curriculum. Fieldwork is done in the local area, which is an excellent resource and this stimulates their learning. Pupils tackle local issues; for example, older pupils conducted an interesting survey of the traffic on School Lane, which adjoins the school, and had written to the local council about their findings. Monitoring of planning, assessment and some teaching has been done and has raised attainment.

98. Since the last inspection standards of attainment in Key Stage 1 have improved. It is not possible to comment on standards in Key Stage 2. Policies and schemes of work are much improved.

HISTORY

99. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reach standards in line with what is expected at this age. They have a good factual knowledge of some major historical events. Year 2 pupils start to perceive why

events occurred and why people acted in the way that they did. They have a developing awareness of time, can complete timelines and know a number of significant differences between the past and the present. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 attain above average standards. In their work on the Victorian era most show good knowledge of elements of social history. For example, they know about conditions in workhouses. They know salient facts about a number of eminent Victorians like Livingstone and Brunel. Because they read well they can use various source materials easily and this helps their growing knowledge and understanding. At both key stages, presentation of work is good and shows that pupils take considerable pride in their work.

100. Only one history lesson was observed. Thus it is not possible to comment on Key Stage 1 history teaching. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good. Teachers plan very carefully, using resources well to provide a stimulating learning environment. This benefits their pace of learning. Pupils write at length from as early as Year 3. Throughout the school marking is satisfactory but does not offer helpful comments to pupils how to improve their work. Teachers hold and know pupils' individual education plans and use these skilfully in setting group work of the correct standard and in questioning different groups of pupils. Thus all groups of pupils have appropriate access to lessons. The teachers' high expectations and pupil management skills form the basis for the good quality of learning in history. Pupils undertake some trips to sites of historical significance and the subject stimulates pupils.

101. The co-ordination of history is good. The National Curriculum is being put into place as a rolling programme. Assessment of the subject is good and results are recorded systematically; analysis of the results leads to improvements in teaching. There is good use of ICT within the subject, especially word processing. The use of graphs within the subject contributes to numeracy development; pupils write in a number of styles and forms, thus improving their literacy skills. The subject is well monitored. There is a good range of resources, including some interesting artefacts.

102. Since the last inspection standards of attainment in Key Stage 1 have remained similar. Standards in Key Stage 2 have risen. Policies and schemes of work have been considerably improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards in ICT are well above average at both key stages. This reflects a very significant improvement since the last inspection. Planning for the subject has improved, and staff are more confident in their teaching of the subject. ICT is an integral part of school life; pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject. The school has its own website and is developing links with other schools.

104. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have very good computer skills. They build on a good foundation set in Reception, where they learn how to control the mouse well, for example in 'dressing teddy' or supporting their mathematical development. They use CD ROMs, for example in finding out about animals, use a simple graphics program confidently to draw images, colour areas, and experiment with a range of effects. All pupils have their own disk, on which they save their work. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages make good use of information and communication technology. For example they word-process and illustrate poems or save time by using processed text and highlighting the phrases they wish to amend or use. Aids to spelling are used well by older pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 2, make extensive use of spreadsheets and databases to make pictorial representations of information and analyses, such as analysing the cost of next year's residential trip, based on this year's expenditure. They use a programmable robot in making a flashing traffic light sequence. They program Roamer to respond to an input, use touch sensor to make a predetermined turn and play a tune. They also make lights come on in a tunnel, and go off when coming out. Using a

design program, pupils make patterns, for example, based on squares and triangles. They use a variety of commands.

105. Computers are based in classrooms and used as a natural part of learning in almost all lessons, for example, using a programme to make labels for a display on seed dispersal, or in exploring databases. Older pupils keep their own reading records and, in music they compose on keyboards.

106. The subject is managed very well and curriculum planning covers the full range of activities in the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils use e-mail confidently, and staff are working on ways of making this more meaningful, perhaps by exchanging information with other small Victorian schools. The digital camera is used frequently, for example, in taking pictures of the school for the website. Pupils make effective use of calculators in mathematics, such as when checking an inverse operation.

MUSIC

107. Attainment is in line with that expected for pupils' ages. They perform confidently, and listen carefully to music by well-known composers. They are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of the elements of music, but have few opportunities to compose music of their own. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, sing enthusiastically and rhythmically in assemblies, and words can be clearly heard and understood. They are not given a starting note, but manage to become in tune with one another shortly after they have begun singing due to the strong lead from teachers. Pupils in Key Stage 1, learn to read music from a very early age, and are all taught to play the recorder. They have a good sense of rhythm, and clap a beat confidently. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen well to music such as 'the carnival of the animals' or 'the flight of the bumble bee' and make sensible comments about how the music portrays an elephant or a bee. They have a good knowledge of instruments and recognise when a double bass or cello is playing. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a wide repertoire of songs, which includes favourites such as 'Human Drumkit', a round where body percussion combines to make the sound of a drumkit, and 'Poverty, Poverty Knocks', a Victorian industrial folk song where the overall sound represents the sound of the loom. All pupils play the recorder and some pupils play the flute. Two flautists played 'Slave Dance' by Mozart very well during assembly, reflecting much effort and hard work in playing together to produce a tuneful, rhythmical performance.

108. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, as only one lesson was observed during the inspection. A part-time music teacher provides music lessons for pupils at both key stages on alternate weeks. In a lesson at Key Stage 1, teaching reflected confidence in the subject, based on good musical knowledge. The elements of the lesson were varied and there was a smooth transition from one activity to another, culminating in an action song linked to their geography theme of Barnaby Bear in Canada.

109. Planning for the whole curriculum is good, and good use is made of electronic keyboards and music programs for the computer. Resources for the subject are generally sufficient, but there are few multi-cultural percussion instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and this was in Key Stage 2. Other evidence was gathered from teacher's planning, documentation and discussion. Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 was in line with that expected for their age in the work seen. No judgement could be made on standards in Key Stage 1.

111. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have good control of the ball when developing football skills. They vary their speed around the pitch well, play enthusiastically, and are good-natured when younger pupils make errors in four a-side games. They understand the need to warm up before vigorous physical activity, but cooling down periods are occasionally overlooked. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in all physical education activities.

112. The subject is well managed overall, despite the restraints of the accommodation. Since the last inspection, there have been considerable improvements to the building, and there is now a partitioned area which can be opened up for use as a hall. However, there is no large, fixed apparatus. This restricts development in gymnastics. There is a large grass area where games lessons can take place in good weather. The school provides after school athletics and football clubs. Good links have been made with a local leisure centre to provide specific football training. The whole school goes to a swimming pool three times each term, and approximately 75% of all pupils can swim 25 metres. Pupils use ICT in physical education to record results, such as tournament scores.