

INSPECTION REPORT

**ELMSWELL COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124534

Headteacher: Mrs J L Merrywest

Reporting inspector: Mr William Russell
019237

Dates of inspection: 28th February 2000 – 2nd March 2000

Inspection number: 189333

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oxer Close Elmswell Bury St Edmunds Suffolk
Postcode:	IP30 9UE
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Gruff Rowlands
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
William Russell	Registered Inspector		The school's results and pupils' achievements.
		Art	How well is the school led and managed ?
		Design and Technology	
Brian Cole	Lay Inspector	No subjects	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils ?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents ?
John Harris	Support Inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught ?
		Geography	
		History	
Mary Lowe	Team Inspector	Science	What sort of school is it ?
		Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Equal Opportunities	
		Special Educational Needs	
Fiona Musters	Team Inspector	Information Technology	
		Music	
		Physical Education	
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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Elmswell Community Primary School is an average-sized school for pupils aged five to nine. It has approximately 200 full-time pupils in the school and 39 children who attend part-time in the nursery, which are organised into seven classes and a nursery. Three classrooms and the nursery have been built since the last inspection. There is also a playgroup on site called 'Little Elms'. The school serves the village of Elmswell where the housing ranges from council housing to larger private homes. The percentage for pupils identified for special educational needs is well below the national average. Approximately 11 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is also below the national average. Baseline assessments indicate that the pupils on entry are above the local education authority average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Elmswell Community Primary School is a good school, where the high quality of much of the teaching enables pupils to reach above average standards in most subjects, particularly in mathematics. Pupils have good attitudes to their work, responding particularly well to the challenging tasks, which they are often given to do. The headteacher is a strong leader, but the governing body and senior colleagues, for example, subject and key stage coordinators, play too little a part in making decisions about how the school should be run. At the time of the previous inspection, the school provided good value for money but, due to the fall in standards in English, especially in reading, the school now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics are high.
- Overall teaching is of good quality.
- The school has an effective team of support staff. They make an important contribution to the quality of teaching.
- Children make a good start to their education in the nursery.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and show a high level of interest in their schoolwork.
- Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, especially moral development.
- The building is well maintained and enhanced by numerous displays of pupils' work, which makes it a colourful and stimulating place for them to work and learn.
- The school provides a supportive environment, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress and confidence.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, particularly in reading and in spelling, are not high enough at Key Stage 1.
- The governing body does not play an effective enough part in leading and managing the school.
- Some teachers in Key Stage 1 do not make effective use of assessment information to plan pupils' learning.
- Teaching of five to seven year-olds is not of the same high quality observed elsewhere in the school.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning, as planned by the headteacher, has not yet been implemented.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in September 1996, Elmswell Community Primary School was found to be a good school. This is still so, and there have been a number of further developments in important areas. However, standards in English have fallen at Key Stage 1. Standards in information technology have risen, largely as the result of improvements in teachers' expertise and confidence. This has enabled them to plan pupils' progress more effectively. The teaching of science for the seven to nine year-olds is now much better than it was, for instance, the way that pupils' enquiry skills are developed. There is close liaison between teachers of parallel classes, who plan lessons together to ensure that children of the same age have similar experiences. This is especially effective for the seven to nine year-olds.

Subject coordinators now have greater responsibility for identifying and planning improvements. They are beginning to contribute to the school development plan, which is now more clearly directed at improving standards in the school. However, plans to involve them in evaluating the quality of teaching in their subjects are still to be implemented fully. It is intended to review management responsibilities when the new permanent deputy headteacher is appointed. Although key staff are more involved in the management and leadership of the school, this remains an aspect to be improved further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
reading	C	D	C	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	B	C	C	C	
mathematics	B	C	A	A	

Standards achieved by seven year-olds in 1999 in reading were the same as the national average. However, when compared with similar schools, reading is below average. Standards in writing meet the national average, and standards in mathematics are well above average. Over the last three years, standards in English have varied. The group of pupils assessed in 1998 included a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and this contributed to the fall in standards in English and mathematics. These pupils, by the end of Year 4, have made substantial gains since their end of Key Stage 1 national tests.

The school has set challenging targets for pupils, who are seven, to achieve in national tasks and tests. Inspection evidence indicates that standards for the present Year 2 pupils are broadly average in English, with reading a little below average. Standards in mathematics continue to be above average throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to come to school and participate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good around the school and is also good in the majority of lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are willing to take initiatives. Relationships are very constructive between pupils, and with adults.
Attendance	Good, but with occasional instances of pupils arriving late.

Pupils show a high level of interest in lessons, particularly those which involve them in problem-solving and investigational work. They listen carefully to one another's viewpoints. In a few lessons for the five to seven year-olds, behaviour is not successfully managed by the teacher and pupils interrupt and distract others. Pupils work and play well together, forming good relationships with one another and with their teachers and other adults working in the school. They are tolerant of differences and respectful of other points of view. Instances of bullying or other oppressive behaviour are rare. There have been no exclusions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The teaching of English is good overall, although it is stronger for the youngest and the oldest pupils compared with other year groups. Mathematics is well taught throughout the school. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced effectively.

Many lessons are stimulating and challenging. Pupils are encouraged to solve interesting problems and to find things out for themselves. Consequently, they often try hard and are keen to do their best. All lessons are carefully planned and organised. Activities are tailored to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities, although in some lessons for the five to seven year-olds the younger pupils in the class are not supported as well as they might be.

Overall, 95 per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better, of which 54 per cent is good and ten per cent is very good. Only four per cent is unsatisfactory. Teaching is not as good for the five to seven year-olds as elsewhere in the school. Where this occurs, it is as a result of insufficient subject knowledge, ineffective management of pupils' behaviour or failure to give enough help to younger pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Appropriately broad and balanced. Good attention to the development of enquiry skills, especially for the older children. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good throughout the school. Planning identifies appropriate small steps, and pupils are given sufficient support to enable them to achieve them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Pupils are expected to be responsible and to show initiative. They are given some good opportunities to make decisions about how to go about their work. They clearly understand what is right and wrong. They form good relationships and show respect and tolerance towards one another. The school takes good account of the need to prepare pupils for a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for all its pupils. Systems for monitoring pupils' performance are thorough, although not as effective for the five to seven year-olds as elsewhere in the school. The school has in place all the appropriate policies and procedures for Health and Safety and Child Protection.

Curriculum planning is strong, particularly in the way that teachers of parallel classes work together to ensure that pupils of the same age have similar experiences. There are some inconsistencies, however, in the way that these plans are carried through into lessons for the five to seven year-olds. The school provides a safe, secure and caring environment for its pupils. Teachers know their pupils well as individuals, although there are few procedures for monitoring their personal development after the nursery year. Some teachers in Key Stage 1 do not make effective use of assessment information to plan pupils' learning. Ways of informing parents of their children's progress and of involving them in the life of the school are satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides purposeful and effective leadership which promotes high quality teaching and above average standards, particularly in mathematics. The absence of a permanent deputy headteacher has not enabled the headteacher to share management responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body knows too little about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and does not play a large enough part in deciding how improvements should be made.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures for establishing how well the school is doing are being implemented, but there are weaknesses in the extent to which this involves all those with leadership and management responsibilities.
The strategic use of resources	The school spends its money wisely and directs funding towards planned developments. However, there are still no long-term spending plans to support developments in the school.

The school has a very good standard of accommodation which is used effectively to support learning. Learning resources are plentiful and mostly of good quality. Teachers and support staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Teachers support and learn from one another through working in close partnership. The outcomes of this are less effective in the teaching of five to seven year-olds. The headteacher is beginning to implement procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • The standard of teaching is good. • The school expects children to do their best. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. • They are happy to approach the school with any problem. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that the school does not involve them fully. • Many parents do not feel sufficiently informed about how well their children are doing. • Many parents would like more activities outside lessons. • Some parents express a concern that the quality of teaching depends upon whose class their children are in.

Inspection findings largely endorse the positive response of the majority of parents. There is limited evidence to support their misgivings. There are sound procedures in place to involve parents in the life of the school. For example, parents help in classrooms and there is an active parent teacher association. Meetings are held to inform parents of curriculum developments. Reports are detailed and identify pupils' progress accurately. However, not all parents find the contents of the beginnings of the reports as informative as the teachers' comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the time of the previous inspection, academic standards at Elmswell Community Primary School were above average. Pupils who were seven years old were achieving above average standards in writing and well above in reading. In handwriting, the results were not significantly different from the national average. Results in the annual local education authority reading tests at 6+ and 8+ were above the county average. Standards in mathematics were above average and standards in science were average across the school. Standards in the school for seven year-olds remained above average in relation to national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in 1996 and 1997. However, in 1998 there was a significant fall in standards, with reading falling below average and writing and mathematics becoming average. Although there was a recovery in the 1999 results, with mathematics well above average, reading and writing remained at broadly average. Results in the annual local education authority reading tests at 6+ and 8+ continued to be above the county average.
2. Evidence gathered during the inspection from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils who are seven years old achieve broadly average standards and pupils who are nine above average standards in English.
3. Standards in reading are a little below average towards the end of Key Stage 1 but above average by the end of Year 4. A significant number of seven year-old pupils talk knowledgeably about the stories they have read, but few can talk about books they have enjoyed. Many of these pupils use contents and index pages to locate successfully specific information within books, but make insufficient use of the school library to locate books on specific topics. Pupils of average and below average ability do not always have a secure knowledge of letter sounds and blends and they falter when they come to decode unknown words. Although some more able pupils read their books without difficulties, they are not always engaged or excited about the stories they read. Pupils who are nine years old read well. They make perceptive comments about the books they read and talk animatedly about their favourite authors.
4. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are average, but some pupils at Year 1 are not working at appropriate levels in relation to their age. The progress they make is sometimes hindered by the lack of support they receive from adults in the mixed-aged classes. More able pupils write independently, confidently retell stories and news, and write lists and labels. They are developing from this work an understanding of the complexities of grammar and the purpose of differing genre.
5. Standards in handwriting throughout the school are average, although some pupils in Year 1 are sometimes unsure how to form letters correctly. Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing a neat and fluent handwriting style.
6. However, the standards of attainment in English are not consistently evident across all classes in Key Stage 1. In some classes, pupils do not always punctuate their work with capital letters and full stops. They frequently spell simple words inaccurately and the presentation of work is sometimes poor.

7. Standards in mathematics are high. The results of the most recent national assessments indicate that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are attaining above average standards in mathematics. By the end of Year 4, standards are also above average. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils count confidently in fives and tens, forwards and backwards, and the more able identify numbers (including large numbers) which are divisible by five. By the end of Year 4, pupils know that multiplication reverses division and use this knowledge to write a division sum to match a multiplication sum to good effect.
8. Opportunities are provided to rehearse, across the curriculum, the skills learned within the discrete literacy sessions. These are particularly found in the use of extended subject-specific vocabulary in mathematics and science, the personal account styles of writing in the retelling of Bible stories in religious education and the discussion and debate of topics, such as changes in technology over time in history and the pollution of rain forests in geography.
9. Mathematical skills are particularly well rehearsed in data handling and control aspects of the information technology work covered and measurement in science.
10. Standards in science are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average by the end of Year 4. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have a basic understanding that humans produce babies that grow into children and then into adults. More able pupils make good use of reference materials to answer questions and problems set by the teacher. By the end of Year 4, pupils effectively sort liquids from solids and use scientific vocabulary to define how they differ from each other.
11. Pupils attain at least average standards in information technology in Key Stage 1 and above average standards by the end of Year 4. The standards in Key Stage 1 differ between classes because of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
12. In the other, non-core subjects, standards are broadly average, although standards in physical education at Key Stage 1 and in art throughout the school are above average.
13. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in art and their achievements match the good standards evident during the previous inspection. Many children in Years 3 and 4 paint and draw to a high standard as a result of very good teaching.
14. Following discussion of pupils' progress, the headteacher and staff are setting targets for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 to achieve in the national tasks and tests. Recently, in the light of additional information from curriculum coordinators, these targets have been amended on the understanding that more pupils will achieve the national average and some above. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection and the detailed and informative teachers' planning indicate that the challenging targets set for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 will be successfully met.
15. Well-constructed individual education plans outline clear and relevant tasks and enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Teachers are aware of individual needs and ensure that the tasks which pupils undertake are tailored to their specific needs. The identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs is effective and the special educational needs register and associated documentation are regularly updated.
16. The school has begun to analyse the range of data available. From this analysis, it

has recognised that there are some areas for improvement. For example, the headteacher has identified the weaknesses in standards of spelling following an analysis of pupils' performance in national tests, and has introduced some classroom strategies to improve standards in spelling.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they are eager to learn and have good attitudes to learning. In class they listen attentively and respond to questions and tasks with enthusiasm. In those lessons, which involve them in problem-solving and investigational work, pupils show a high level of interest and enjoyment.
18. Pupils are confident and maintain their concentration for long periods. For example, in art older pupils work purposefully to produce detailed observational paintings and drawings of plants.
19. Pupils with special educational needs equally have positive attitudes to learning and most are attentive and settle quickly to their work. They are keen to participate in class discussions and debates, particularly in literacy lessons. Other pupils are supportive of their efforts and often praise them.
20. Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. They move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. For example, when they enter and leave assembly in the hall, they do so quietly and patiently. Most pupils have a clear understanding of how they should behave. They observe the class rules, which they have helped to establish, and most respond quickly to the teacher's directions. However, in some classes in Key Stage 1, during whole-class discussions, some pupils are restless and shout out their responses to the teacher's questions.
21. Pupils play together well during break and lunchtimes and do not engage in rough or aggressive behaviour. Pupils are polite and well mannered when eating lunch and have warm relationships with midday supervisors. Older pupils are provided with opportunities to take responsibility and use their initiative. For example, they assist in the assembly and oversee all pupils' behaviour during lunchtimes. They take care of younger pupils in the playground and respond quickly when accidents occur. They are confident when talking about their school to visitors. Relationships amongst pupils and with adults are strong. For example, pupils talked with affection about their present teachers and those who had left the school.
22. Most pupils share apparatus and ideas amicably and they work productively in small groups. For example, when a small group of pupils are working with a classroom assistant out of the classroom, they encourage one another and work effectively together.
23. Pupils respond positively to newcomers to their classes, for example, introducing them to the routines of the school and helping their understanding of the differences they may encounter from their previous experiences. This is particularly so for children from American service families, who are fully accepted into the life of the school and made welcome.
24. Most pupils are brought to school on time and attendance levels are good. Registers

are scrutinised by the school secretary on a daily basis, and sustained periods of absence and unexplained absences are quickly investigated. There have been no exclusions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25. The quality of teaching in the school is good overall, with 95 per cent of teaching satisfactory or better, of which 54 per cent is good and ten per cent is very good. Only four per cent is unsatisfactory. Good teaching is to be found in all parts of the school, and in all subjects and areas, although it is better in the early years and in Years 3 and 4 than at Key Stage 1. The school has, therefore, maintained the high quality of teaching reported at the time of the last inspection and, in some important respects, improved on it. A key strength of the teaching now lies in the way children are encouraged to solve problems and to develop their enquiry skills.
26. There is little unsatisfactory teaching. Where this occurs, it is as a result of insufficient subject knowledge, ineffective management of pupils' behaviour or failure to give enough help to the younger pupils in the Key Stage 1 classes.
27. In the nursery, the teaching is rarely less than good. The teacher has a very good understanding of how young children learn, and provides an appropriate balance between activities initiated by the teacher and those chosen by the children. Work is carefully planned in collaboration with the nursery nurse and, in all aspects of work, there is a proper emphasis on the development of the children's language skills. Children are encouraged to organise themselves and to take pride in what they have achieved, for example, in their printed work from the computer. Good teaching continues in the reception year. However, uncertainty about the children's developmental needs occasionally leads to the provision of activities which are inappropriate for their age. This is so, for example, in writing and physical education. Generally, however, children continue to make effective progress as a result of detailed planning and good classroom organisation. Lessons are well paced and hold the children's interest.
28. Throughout Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4, lessons are well structured and carefully organised. Teachers are clear about what they intend pupils to learn and they mostly indicate this to pupils at the beginning of each lesson. Activities are tailored to match the needs of pupils of differing ages and abilities. Teachers explain new ideas in terms that pupils readily understand, and ask questions which help them make sense of what they are learning. Good quality resources are used to help stimulate interest and support the ideas being developed. Lessons are reviewed at the end in order to check whether the intended learning has taken place. All these are key features of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and teachers successfully apply them to their teaching in other subjects too.
29. Teachers ensure that classroom assistants and volunteer helpers are aware of the aims of the lesson and their role in supporting groups of pupils. Extra support in lessons makes an important contribution to pupils' progress, particularly when younger or less able pupils need additional help to ensure that they fully understand what they are doing. Where this support is not available, younger pupils in the Year 1/2 classes are occasionally left to fend for themselves too much. For example, in an information technology lesson, these pupils became off-task and disrupted others.
30. In the Year 3/4 classes, the consistently high quality of teaching is sustained through the close collaboration of the three class teachers. They not only share the planning

but, through constant discussion, ensure that, in all three classes, pupils' learning experiences are as similar as possible. In all subjects, they have a very good understanding of how pupils' learning should develop, and this enables them to have the right balance of challenge and support. Pupils are expected to behave responsibly, and very good relationships and effective management ensure that lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils sustain a productive rate of work, with very little time wasted.

31. The Years 1 and 2 teachers also work together effectively, and similar strengths are often to be found in lessons here too. However, the teamwork is less well developed. Teachers work from the same plans, which they produce together, but there are wider differences of interpretation, and variations in the level of skill to implement them. In a number of lessons, classroom routines are not sufficiently well established and pupils' behaviour is not managed as successfully. This leads to some pupils becoming inattentive or noisy and time is wasted while the teacher deals with distractions and interruptions. This is rarely serious enough to prevent pupils from making progress and good order is generally established fairly quickly. However, the variations found during the inspection week confirm the view expressed by some parents that how good the teaching is "depends on whose class you are in".
32. There are common features to the most successful teaching throughout the school. Teachers are enthusiastic and present pupils with interesting yet demanding work to do. They encourage pupils to think deeply about what they are doing and help them to make connections between new ideas and what they already know. There is a strong belief in the ability of pupils to succeed and pupils are able to rise to this challenge. For example, in a Year 1/2 mathematics lesson, pupils speculated confidently about how they would solve the problem they had been set. Motivation was high, supported by the teacher's encouragement that a solution was within their powers. Similarly, in a Year 3/4 art lesson, pupils concentrated very hard to capture the shape, colour and texture of the leaves of different kinds of plant. They were critical of their own work, constantly striving for improvement. They brought all their skills to bear to ensure that their work was the very best of which they were capable.

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

33. The six areas of learning provide the basis for the curriculum offered to nursery and reception pupils. The aim is to encourage positive learning attitudes and there are suitable opportunities for talk, exploration and play, which is especially so in the nursery. All statutory requirements for the teaching of the National Curriculum and religious education are met. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully. The curriculum overall is appropriately broad and adequately balanced. At the time of the last inspection, the high quality of curriculum planning was noted. This is still the case. The school has invested much time in the production of clear and detailed plans for all subjects and areas taught. These are regularly reviewed. The school has successfully ensured that curriculum guidance not only meets statutory requirements but also provides high quality support for the planning of stimulating and interesting lessons.
34. A weakness noted in the last inspection report concerned inconsistencies in the planning for parallel classes. This has been effectively remedied. Curriculum planning is now a strength of the school. Throughout the school, teachers work well

together to ensure that the workload is shared and personal expertise is made available to one another. Curriculum plans are checked for continuity and progression by subject coordinators, who give helpful advice on improvements.

35. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is similarly strong. Systems for support are well established. Clear individual education plans are drawn up by class teachers in consultation with the special educational needs coordinator. These plans identify small achievable steps in learning and are regularly evaluated. Teachers often note pupils' targets in their daily planning and this guides them in providing the appropriate level of support. Pupils are reminded of their targets during lessons and this helps them to concentrate on what they need to do to improve. The school is committed to providing an equal opportunity for all pupils to learn and is generally successful in achieving this. In some lessons in Year 1/2 classes, however, the teaching concentrates on the needs of the older pupils to the detriment of the younger. Where this occurs, it is a weakness, which needs addressing.
36. Links with partner schools and with the playgroup are good and ensure that pupils make a smooth transition from one stage of their education to another. The school is used extensively by community organisations, some of whose activities are attended by pupils of the school. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest and by visitors to the school. These include regular visits from the ministers of local churches, and Harvest and Christmas celebrations are held in the local parish church. The school choir sings in the community and the school hosts an exhibition of village artwork. Years 3 and 4 pupils visit museums and art exhibitions and, in their final year at the school, have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit for a few days. Events such as these contribute to many aspects of pupils' personal development and are greatly valued by them. Some parents feel that extra-curricular activities provided by the school are too limited and this was also an issue raised at the time of the last inspection. The school is currently offering fewer such opportunities than many similar schools, some planned for this term having been cancelled.
37. The school's provision for pupils' moral development was identified as a strength at the time of the last inspection and this remains so. All members of staff demonstrate the attitudes they seek to develop in children. They are considerate and respectful towards them and expect similar behaviour of pupils to one another. Pupils devise their own code of conduct for the classroom and for the school. They are taught to be tolerant of other points of view and to listen carefully to one another. The rights and wrongs of various situations, both within the school and in the wider world, are openly discussed. For example, in geography lessons about the rainforest, Years 3 and 4 pupils wrestled with complex questions about environmental damage and what should be done about it, while recognising that the inhabitants have to make a living.
38. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to extend their social skills. For the youngest children, the nursery provides a structured environment and routines in which children are encouraged to make choices and take responsibility. Older pupils are given responsibilities within the classroom, such as being 'table helpers', or within the school, as when switching the music on and off for assemblies. They are expected to take care of their own belongings and those of the school, and they do this well, collecting resources as they need them and putting them away afterwards. In lessons they are mostly proficient at organising their own work, or deciding how they will go about a task. Pupils regularly take small initiatives, for example, noticing when the classroom door needs to be closed. They work well with one another when asked to cooperate. However, the skills of working collaboratively are seldom

explicitly taught within lessons. This leads to insufficient levels of independent learning and is an area which could be improved.

39. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through planned opportunities to engage with values and beliefs. Many of these occurred in religious education lessons and in assemblies, which meet the requirements for the collective act of worship. Years 1 and 2 pupils considered the parable of the lost sheep and reflected on their own uniqueness. Years 3 and 4 pupils thought about what it means to forgive someone. The strong emphasis on promoting enquiry and problem-solving skills creates many further opportunities for pupils' self-discovery and wonder. Thus, a Year 2 pupil claimed to solve a mathematical problem 'as if by magic' and another, having put to the test a rule she had discovered, exclaimed "Wow! It really works." Pupils also increase their capacity for self-knowledge through reflecting on their achievements during the plenary sessions at the end of lessons, or when selecting items for their 'Record of Work' folders. Although pupils are listened to and their contributions are valued, there is no formal framework for ensuring that their views are taken into account, for example, through a school council.
40. The school takes good account of the need to prepare pupils for living in a multicultural society, although the school itself is not ethnically diverse. Lessons in art, music, geography and history, for example, help pupils to discover the richness of the world cultural heritage. In religious education lessons, they learn about the customs, values and beliefs of major world faiths. A good collection of artefacts used in religious practice is held in the school. Regular use is also made of the local education authority's loan scheme for works of art from other cultures. At the time of the inspection, a collection of African textiles was displayed and was used to stimulate artwork in Years 1 and 2. Pupils also learn about important aspects of their own cultural traditions. Very good use is made of the work of artists such as Rousseau and Klimt, as the starting point for developing pupils' own artistic skills.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school provides a supportive environment, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress and confidence. Despite the lack of formal procedures to monitor the personal development of pupils beyond the nursery class, teachers and their assistants know their pupils well and establish good relationships with them. Parents bring their children into the playground at the beginning of the day and collect them when school ends. Parents of children in the nursery are welcomed at the start of each session and help them to settle to activities.
42. The school has effective procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress, including those with special educational needs. Systems for regular and focussed observations used by teachers in the nursery and in Years 3 and 4 enable staff to be well informed of what children know and can do. This has a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Practice in continuous assessment is less well developed in other classes of the school and, as a result, learning is not always as accelerated as it could be. The school has plans to coordinate and develop assessment and record keeping for the under fives to meet new national guidance.
43. The school maintains a portfolio containing samples of pupils' work. This is used by staff to help with judgements about the standards that pupils achieve. The school

complies with the national requirements for testing and uses some parts of optional test material to assess pupils' progress at the end of units of learning.

44. Supervision at playtimes is adequate, with the younger pupils having a separate break and there is adequate supervision during lunchtimes. Qualified First Aid help is available throughout the school day.
45. Procedures for promoting the health, safety and the well being of pupils are good. Child Protection procedures are in place, with the staff aware of the guidelines. Notes concerning pupils with medical conditions and prescribed treatment are included in each class register. The special educational needs register identifies pupils and the provision of their needs.
46. Regular health and safety checks are completed and hazards are dealt with efficiently.
47. Registration is taken promptly at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions and complies with statutory requirements. Class registers are carefully monitored and prolonged periods of absence are followed up with parents involved and action taken to prevent persistent late arrival of some pupils. Effective arrangements are in place to promote good levels of attendance and parents are aware of their responsibilities in informing the school about pupils being absent. The educational welfare officer is also contacted when necessary.
48. The strong emphasis upon moral and social values in the school ensures a good standard of pupil behaviour. Pupils in each class devise a set of rules and this is displayed on the classroom walls. The school is a safe and orderly community where pupils feel safe and happy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Most parents are supportive of the school. They are positive about what the school provides and the progress their children make, and are generally happy with the teaching and the standards achieved in the school.
50. A regular newsletter informs parents about school events and communications between teachers and parents are generally effective. For example, there is a frequent exchange of comments in the home/school reading diary about the progress children are making with their reading and guidance on how to improve. New parents receive an informative school brochure that clearly describes the life and work of the school. At the beginning and end of the school day, the headteacher and teaching staff are available for parents to discuss any pressing issues or concerns.
51. Many parents were complimentary about the links promoted by the school, but a view presented by a significant minority of parents was that the school did not work closely with them. The school has developed appropriate procedures to improve communications between themselves and parents, but they are more successful with some parents than others.
52. Annual reports provide detailed information about what pupils have learned and the progress they have made over the year. They are discussed with parents at one of the termly meetings. At the meeting prior to the inspection, many parents indicated

that the reports are bland and do not provide a sufficiently informative and individual picture of their children's achievements.

53. Occasionally, additional parents' evenings are held to inform parents about curricular developments, such as the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and how parents can best help their children.
54. Parents are actively involved in the school and help in classrooms and assist with educational visits. Parent helpers are linked to individual classes and they are well briefed by the teacher about what children will do and learn in the lesson. The active parent teacher association organises a range of very well supported fundraising and social events. Parental fundraising has substantially enhanced the resources of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher provides purposeful and effective leadership, which promotes high quality teaching and above average standards, particularly in mathematics. This is reflected in parents' comments, a high percentage of whom feel that the school is well led and managed. The headteacher has firm ideas about how the school should function and develop.
56. An acting deputy headteacher ably supports the headteacher and arrangements are in place to make a permanent appointment shortly. However, the lack of a permanent deputy headteacher has hindered the development of a senior management team where management responsibilities and tasks are appropriately shared. The teachers who have responsibilities for the overall coordination of older and younger children are also insufficiently involved in the overall management of the school.
57. The teachers work well together, particularly in the Year 3/4 classes, where the good quality of teaching is promoted through the close collaboration of teachers. Plans are shared and discussed with subject coordinators who check that the work planned is suitable for pupils of different ages and abilities. Coordinators provide useful advice, support and suggestions to their colleagues. They also ensure that teaching and learning resources are regularly updated.
58. The headteacher and staff discuss pupils' progress, and use the information gained to set academic targets for children to achieve in the national tests. Recently, in the light of additional information from class teachers, these targets have been reviewed and raised as they now feel pupils will achieve higher targets.
59. However, data analysis is insufficiently used by the governors to come to an understanding of the school's performance and where priorities for development should occur. The headteacher and staff do make use of the outcomes of data analysis to identify areas for improvement as, for example, in the recent work on spelling.
60. The governors, led by the headteacher, are beginning to compare the standards the school achieves with similar schools. Some governors are dismissive of the process, but this is an important area of development that will enable them to challenge the standards the school is achieving. The school seeks competitive

tenders on major purchases when, for example, the ICT suite was established and computer equipment was updated. However, the governors do not consult parents or gauge the opinion of pupils and staff to gain their views on how the school is performing or how it could be improved.

61. In the previous inspection report, developing the role of the subject coordinator was identified as an area for improvement and the school has made some progress recently in meeting this issue. However, there is still only a partial involvement in leadership and management, and this limits the contribution coordinators can make to improving the school. For example, one core subject coordinator had not been involved in analysing data about her subject and, therefore, had a limited idea where weaknesses existed when interviewed.
62. The special educational needs coordinator, although new to the post, effectively assists teachers in the identification and assessment of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and develops with them suitable programmes of work for these pupils.
63. Teaching staff are regularly appraised and, where areas for improvement are identified, they are reflected in the school's professional development plan. The headteacher has completed one full appraisal cycle in the local authority's appraisal scheme. Governors, informed and guided by a detailed policy, have agreed annual performance targets for the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher.
64. Teachers new to the school are successfully inducted and provided with good levels of support. The school's 'Supply Teachers Handbook' provides useful guidance on how the school works for teachers covering temporary absences.
65. The school has a suitably experienced and qualified team of teachers and support staff. Teachers are particularly good at teaching mathematics and, consequently, pupils achieve high standards in the subject. Skilful support staff make a positive contribution to the high quality of teaching evident in the school and particularly the progress of pupils with special educational needs. All staff update their professional knowledge and skills through a comprehensive programme of in-service education and training.
66. Most of the school's aims and objectives are woven into the life of the school. The pupils are self-assured and happy, and their teachers are committed to presenting them with interesting yet challenging lessons.
67. The most significant educational priorities for the school are clearly detailed in the development plan. Those identified include raising standards of attainment in English and evaluating and improving teaching. The methods the school has identified to measure the success of its plans lack clarity. For example, the school states that the monitoring of teaching will be judged to be successful when a programme of observations is agreed, rather than evaluating the impact of the observations on refining teaching skills and improving learning.
68. Good use has been made of the National Grid for Learning grant to update information technology facilities in the school and already this has had a positive impact on raising standards in the subject throughout the school.

69. The governing body does not have a detailed understanding of the major strengths and weaknesses of the school, nor does it have a clear view of how the school should develop. Governors meet regularly and delegate some of their work to key committees. They are all supportive of the strong leadership provided by the headteacher. A few governors help in school regularly and assist pupils and teachers in the classroom. The majority of governors do not visit the school frequently when it is in operation and, therefore, do not have a detailed knowledge of how the school functions. They are generally unknown to pupils, teachers and parents. For example, of the few governors available for interview during the inspection only one had some idea of the school's priorities identified in the school development plan. However, the reports provided to the governing body by the headteacher are not always detailed enough and do not focus sufficiently on how the school performs or how it could improve.
70. The school development plan only focuses on next year and it is not clear how some priorities will be developed over time.
71. Priorities for improvement identified in the school development plan are appropriately costed and timescales are realistic. The school has some plans for the use of financial reserves by, for example, employing an additional reception teacher in the summer term and providing a secure play area for under fives. However, governors do not have detailed long-term spending plans for this use of these funds, or effective ways of evaluating the effect of their spending decisions. Equally, it is not apparent how they intend to fund some of the other priorities over a longer period, for example, the upgrading of computer equipment in classrooms.
72. Day-to-day financial administration systems are efficient and effective and good use is made of information technology to track the school's spending and to keep the headteacher and governors aware of trends and patterns. Administrative staff are welcoming and conscientious in their work.
73. The latest school audit judged the principles and operation of financial control to be sound. Recommendations made by the auditors, in respect of income and banking procedures, have been implemented.
74. The well maintained, modern school building, enhanced by numerous displays of pupils' work, presents a colourful and stimulating place to work and learn. Classrooms are clean and tidy due to the conscientious cleaning and caretaking staff. Very good use is made of the shared 'work stations' between classrooms, where pupils often work independently on practical or creative activities. The recent additions of the ICT suite and the nursery complement the school's extensive facilities and have a significant impact on the standards the pupils achieve. However, the hard outside play area in the nursery is limited even for the small numbers of children in the nursery. The school library is centrally placed, well organised and satisfactorily resourced. However, insufficient use is made of it as a resource to promote higher levels of literacy by, for example, using it as a place for quiet reading, teaching of library skills or individual personal study.
75. Learning resources throughout the school are plentiful and mostly of good quality. These are used effectively to support the pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to improve the quality of education provided, the school should -

(1) Raise standards in English by:

- developing further strategies for the teaching of spelling (paragraphs 1, 3, 6, 16, 27, 59, 83, 84, 93, 94, 99, 101, 105, 106);
- improving pupils' enjoyment of literature and encouraging their discussion of books and authors more widely, making more effective use of the library (paragraphs 3, 6, 7, 74, 83, 96, 97, 98, 107, 108);
- improving pupils' information retrieval skills in order that they use these to know and process information with confidence (paragraphs 3, 10, 17, 74, 88, 98, 107, 119, 151).

(2) Improve the consistency of teaching across Key Stage 1 by:

- improving teachers' subject knowledge (paragraphs 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 52, 61, 79, 80, 107, 114, 116, 123, 147);
- establishing successful methods for managing pupils' behaviour (paragraphs 20, 26, 29, 30, 31, 105, 114, 121, 142, 147, 158, 163, 167).

(3) Improve the leadership and management role of the governing body by:

- increasing its level of understanding about the school's strengths and weaknesses (paragraphs 59, 60, 67, 69, 71);
- devising more effective systems for holding the school to account for its standards and quality of provision (paragraphs 60, 67, 69, 70, 71);
- developing long-term spending plans that will provide a clear indication of how priorities will be supported over time (paragraphs 71);
- establishing procedures that enable governors to evaluate the success or otherwise of their spending decisions in raising standards (paragraphs 59, 60, 69, 70, 71).

(4) Implement plans for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching to ensure that:

- strengths are shared more widely throughout the school, and weaknesses identified and remedied (paragraphs 30, 31, 32, 35, 41, 42, 56, 57, 61, 67);
- curriculum coordinators are actively involved in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in order to have a clearer idea of what needs to be done to bring about improvements (paragraphs 56, 61, 62, 67, 107, 116, 123, 130, 152, 156, 168).

(5) Improve the use of assessment to inform future planning by:

- refining systems for collecting information about pupils' progress (paragraphs 15, 26, 41, 42, 43, 52, 61, 67, 80, 121, 151);
- ensuring that planned tasks and activities are based on a thorough understanding of what pupils already know, understand and can do (paragraphs 31, 35, 42, 52, 80, 88, 103, 114, 115, 119, 121, 122, 142, 145, 147, 160).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	10%	54%	33%	4%	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 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	189
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	15

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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.2	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	19	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	19
	Girls	18	19	21
	Total	32	33	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (88)	83 (92)	98 (92)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	17	19	18
	Total	31	34	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (81)	83 (83)	80 (94)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	159
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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27 : 1
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR– Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16 : 1

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8 : 1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	379078
Total expenditure	384918
Expenditure per pupil	1681
Balance brought forward from previous year	54943
Balance carried forward to next year	49103

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	229
Number of questionnaires returned	118

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	36	7	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	52	5	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	54	3	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	49	12	2	8
The teaching is good.	42	46	3	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	51	18	8	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	42	5	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	54	3	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	24	45	20	5	6
The school is well led and managed.	31	47	6	3	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	49	8	1	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	25	24	14	24

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

77. Most children start school in the nursery for two terms and then transfer to a full-time place in the reception class either at the beginning of the September or January terms. Many children have attended the playgroup within the school grounds and enter the nursery with a broad range of skills across the six areas of learning designated for this age group. On transfer to nursery they have acquired good personal and social and speaking and listening skills. Children's baseline assessment results, on entry to the reception class, show the school's results to be higher than the county average in language and literacy and mathematics, but they are slightly lower than the average in personal and social development. Most children will have achieved the expected outcomes by the time they start Year 1 and a great many will have exceeded them.
78. Since the last inspection significant improvements have been made in the provision for children under five. A 39-place nursery has been built and the local playgroup has moved into accommodation in the school grounds.
79. The teaching for the children under five is generally good. It is almost always good in the nursery where the staff show a good understanding of the six areas of learning and how young children learn. The nursery staff work as a strong team and know the children well. They provide meaningful and stimulating activities which engage the children and deepen their understanding. Consequently, children maintain high levels of concentration and make good progress in their learning. Nursery staff ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the activities which are directed by an adult and those which children choose for themselves. All children try new activities. They have opportunities to extend their own interests and to manage some of their own learning. In the reception class and the nursery, all staff understand the importance of helping children to use language confidently and they are effective in teaching the elementary skills of reading and mathematics. The teaching of writing is less confident but generally satisfactory. Support staff are very well deployed and used effectively to enhance children's learning. They are particularly skilled in talking sensitively with children of differing abilities within the same group, and they encourage and support less confident children while extending and challenging more able children. Through informal observation, they take very good account of each child's emotional and personal development, ensuring that children maintain good levels of confidence and develop good dispositions to learning.
80. The teachers for children under five provide a wide range of stimulating activities, which promote progress across the six areas of learning. This is well planned and documented in the nursery. Staff in the nursery make regular observations and assessments of the children's progress. As yet, this is not established practice in the reception class. There are some inconsistencies for children under five in the curriculum planning and teaching approaches between nursery and reception. However, the school recognises that further development is required in planning and assessment to meet new national requirements. There are plans to include the playgroup in these discussions and in curriculum planning so that the foundation stage is well coordinated. The nursery has established good links with the playgroup, with a weekly visit of playgroup children for stories and action songs. Provision for

personal and social development is a strength of the nursery. It is carefully integrated into the teachers' planning and assessment procedures and permeates the daily routines and activities offered to the children.

Personal and Social development

81. Attainment on entry is generally above average and children are likely to exceed expected outcomes by the age of five. At the start of each session, the nursery staff greet children and parents and welcome them inside. Children enjoy coming to the nursery and some take a pride in showing their parents new features or completed work. They settle quickly to self-chosen activities and work well together, revealing good skills in communication and collaboration. They share equipment and space amicably and, when playing a game, they take turns cooperatively. In the reception class, they resolve small differences independently and in a friendly way. The nursery children are eager to explore new activities and often concentrate for lengthy periods of time. Through the use of photographs, children at work in the nursery receive positive images of themselves as learners, which enhances their sense of identity. The children have good relationships with the staff and are keen to work alongside them. Good care of equipment is taken and children play an active part in clearing away activities. They show good skills of independence in finding their name card to register themselves at the beginning of the nursery session and in dressing and undressing for a range of activities. A sense of right and wrong is well established for most children.
82. In the nursery, high priority is given to personal and social development. The clear organisation and accessibility of resources and the daily routines enable children to make choices. This leads to the development of good levels of independence. Staff provide activities and first hand experiences which are imaginative and enjoyable, for example, when exploring the sensations of jelly and cornflakes through touch. Snack time is well used to promote healthy eating patterns and develop social skills of sharing food and conversation.

Language and literacy

83. Children's attainment is above average and they are likely to exceed the expected outcomes by the age of five. The children listen carefully and speak confidently. They respond to what they hear with relevant comments and actions. When playing together in small and large groups, they use language successfully to express their ideas and feelings and to negotiate plans and activities. In the nursery, children freely recognise their names in the written form and are beginning to learn some common words. They identify words that rhyme and take pleasure in making new rhyming pairs. Children know the difference between pictures and writing and understand that print can be read. They are beginning to learn the sounds of letters well. In the reception class, children make good progress in their reading. They read books with simple sentences but are not yet able to talk confidently about the characters or the sequence of events. Children in the nursery are beginning to learn how to write their name and to know some different purposes of writing, for example, shopping lists, birthday cards and letters. Many children write and draw with confidence in play situations. In the reception class, some children write simple words independently and use their knowledge of the alphabet to attempt to write less familiar words.

84. Significant attention is given to teaching the early skills of speaking and listening. There are many opportunities for children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings to adults and to each other. This is successful in promoting these important skills. Staff offer many and regular opportunities for children to share stories, rhymes and poems. The practice of taking books home is well encouraged. Books are supplemented with games and activities to extend children's learning and to involve parents more closely. There are also many opportunities for children to see adults writing. Staff frequently record children's dictated ideas and thoughts. Pens and paper are freely available for children to write when they wish. In the reception class, there are some good opportunities for children to explore and practise writing in the post office in the role-play area. When children transfer from the nursery to the reception class, insufficient attention is given to what the children already know and can do in order to build on their previous experience. During some reception class lessons, not enough attention is given to correct letter formation and the holding of the pencil effectively. For some children, the use of lined paper is unhelpful because their hand control is insufficiently well developed to make use of the lines.

Mathematical development

85. Children develop good mathematical skills and are well on the way to achieving the expected outcomes by the age of five. Children in the nursery recite number names up to 20 and estimate and count small groups of objects with growing accuracy. They recognise numerals up to five when using computer games. They are beginning to use comparative language correctly, for example, lighter and heavier when using the weighing scales. They know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes and know how many sides and corners they have. They recognise and repeat simple sequences and patterns in numbers. In the reception class, some children recognise numbers up to one hundred and understand that the order of numerals makes a difference to the correct number, for example, transposing 78 for 87. Children count to 20 both forwards and backwards and find one more, or less, than a number from one to ten.
86. All of the staff teach mathematics confidently and provide many good opportunities for children to learn through practical activities. These are well supported by discussion to promote their mathematical vocabulary. The teaching in the reception class takes good account of what children have learned in the nursery and extends and challenges children in their mathematical thinking.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

87. Children are well on the way to achieving the expected outcomes for those of five years old and exceed them in their use of the computer. In the nursery, children investigate objects and materials by using all their senses. They learn to look closely at the similarities and differences of familiar objects and identify pattern and change. They identify external parts of the body and, in the reception class, they recognise the difference between pulling and pushing and have learnt about objects which are made from glass. When using the computer, children use the mouse with confidence and skill to enter commands and change screens. They can select programmes from a menu and lift and drag pictures from one part of the screen to another. In the reception class, they use the mouse effectively for line drawing and filling in blocks of colour. Children build and construct with a range of equipment and use a number of ways to join and assemble materials as when making simple hats or cardboard clocks.
88. The staff provide a range of first hand experiences for children to make sense of the

world around them as, for example, the postman and a nurse visiting them. However, the frequent use of printed material in the reception class often limits children's free expression of ideas based on their own understanding. During the week of the inspection, there were few opportunities where children could predict and develop their critical thinking. This is often related to teachers' questioning skills which tend to be of a closed nature and, therefore, limits children's contributions.

Physical development

89. Children have good levels of fitness. They move with good coordination and use space well. When using the hall, nursery children listen carefully to instructions, concentrate and persevere. They use wheeled toys with confidence in the small hard outdoor play area. Children in the nursery and in the reception class show good coordination and hand control. They use pencils, scissors, paintbrushes and other tools effectively and with care. They are developing the use of their hands for three-dimensional work through the moulding and manipulating of 'Playdough'. Staff in the nursery give good attention to teaching basic skills of fine movement. For example, they help children to use paintbrushes without dripping paint and to hold the brush with an effective grasp.
90. Staff offer a range of challenging activities to develop physical fitness. In the nursery, they are skilled at encouraging and supporting children who are reluctant to try new large movements and they demonstrate their care and concern for children's emotional and personal development. Planning for physical development is confident in the nursery. Staff make movement fun for children by incorporating short focused activities with a good balance of direction as well as opportunities for free expression. They are aware that there are currently unequal opportunities for five year-olds to access a larger all-weather outdoor play area and wish to address this problem. In summer months, the swimming pool and adventure play area are used.

Creative development

91. Children do well in their creative development and are well on the way to exceeding the expectations by the age of five. In the nursery, children enjoy singing and know a range of tunes and songs and action rhymes. They move well to music. Due to the inspection timetable it was not possible to see reception children in their planned music lessons. Children in nursery and reception explore colour and texture, in two and three dimensions, through skilful use of a variety of art materials.
92. The nursery provides a rich environment in which creativity and expressiveness are valued. Resources from different cultures, such as those displayed to celebrate the Chinese New Year, stimulate new ways of thinking. Musical instruments are freely available and music is played as the children tidy up at the end of a session. The nursery nurse provides rich opportunities for children to extend their understanding of music in her playing of the guitar and piano. Role-play is used for all under fives and resources, such as model aeroplanes and 'Duplo', help children to develop their own stories through play. This facility has improved in the reception class since the last inspection.

ENGLISH

93. Standards in English for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have fluctuated over the last few years. In 1996 and 1997, the school achieved above average standards in reading and writing, but in 1998 there was a significant dip with reading falling below the national average and writing becoming average. In 1999, standards in English rose and reading and writing matched the national average. However, when compared with similar schools, writing is average and reading is below average. On the other hand, standards achieved by pupils at age eight, as indicated by the local education authority screening tests, have been consistently high.
94. In the previous inspection, standards, at the end of Key Stage 1 in handwriting, were average, in writing they were above the national average and well above in spelling and reading. Results in the annual reading tests at ages six and eight were above the county average.
95. The inspection evidence indicates that standards in speaking and listening throughout the school are above average. The pupils listen intently to teachers' explanations and to one another. They respond to questions confidently, offering many perceptive comments. Pupils in Year 3/4 engage willingly in discussions, reflect on the issues and respond thoughtfully.
96. Standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are a little below average. Pupils know how different books are organised and the purpose of simple punctuation. Some pupils talk knowledgeably about the stories they have read, but only a few talk about their preferences for different authors. Pupils of average and below average ability do not always know their letter sounds and blends and this makes it difficult for them to decode unknown words. A few more able children identify unknown words by reading on and thereby using context to make sense of difficult words.
97. Standards in reading by the end of Year 4 are above average. Pupils are interested in, and enjoy, reading and many read fluently and with good expression. They successfully compare the styles of different writers and make perceptive comments about the text. For example, when in one lesson they read two versions of 'Alice in Wonderland', they were able to analyse and discuss the differing styles of writing and the vocabulary used.
98. Many pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 use contents and index pages successfully to locate specific information within books but, as yet, do not use these skills to know and process information with confidence. They use the central school library infrequently and are unsure how to locate books on specific topics.
99. Although standards in writing overall at Key Stage 1 are average, some pupils at Year 1 are not working at the expected level. This is due to an over-reliance on the teaching to provide spellings and guidance.
100. More able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 write independently, for example, to retell stories and news and to write lists and labels. They also use commas, full stops, speech and exclamation marks with increasing accuracy. Pupils are beginning to recognise the importance of character and setting. For example, in one lesson pupils discuss the difference a change of setting would make to some characters in the traditional tale 'Rumpelstiltskin'.
101. Some pupils in Year 1 use capital letters and full stops infrequently. Their spelling of simple words indicates a weak knowledge of sounds and blends. Letters are

incorrectly formed and the pride they take in the presentation of their work is sometimes poor.

102. Standards of writing by Year 4 are above average. Pupils' writing is expressive, thoughtful and well planned. They make adventurous use of language in their descriptive stories, for example, 'the swish of the skirt, and the beat of the feet'. Their spelling and punctuation are generally accurate and handwriting is neat. Overall, handwriting is satisfactory throughout the school with some exceptions in Year 1. Most pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are forming their letters correctly and many older pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing legible joined up handwriting.
103. The teaching of English throughout the school is never less than satisfactory and more often good. In Key Stage 1, teaching is evenly split between satisfactory and good, but in Years 3 and 4 the teaching of English is consistently good and sometimes very good. The most successful teaching in the school is characterised by clear planning and a detailed understanding of what pupils are to learn. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils and use their expertise to develop basic skills, not least in the teaching of phonics. There is good knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and teachers produce lively and enthusiastic lessons, which challenge and inspire pupils, leading to good progress for most in lessons. Teachers make good use of the final part of literacy sessions to review pupils' learning and to ask searching questions to check pupils' knowledge and consolidate their understanding.
104. Where they are available, excellent use is made of experienced and skilled classroom assistants to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. They are also effective in encouraging and supporting less able pupils, particularly in extending their knowledge of letter names and sound blends.
105. Nearly all teachers manage pupils' behaviour successfully. However, although no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, there are a few weaknesses in teaching in some Key Stage 1 classes, particularly in the management of pupils' behaviour and the teaching of spelling. The teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are inconsistent. For example, one teacher allows pupils to shout out responses to her questions one moment and then later rebukes others for calling out.
106. Spelling is not taught consistently across all classes in Key Stage 1. Pupils are unsure of the ways to begin to spell unknown words. Some sound out the word, but others resort to asking adults in the classroom for the word and then copy it out without any close examination of its features.
107. The subject coordinator provides sound leadership and is clear about what the school must do to improve standards in English. She regularly scrutinises planning to ensure there is an equal balance in lessons between teaching reading and writing. She has recently visited other classes and evaluated responses to the Literacy Hour. The headteacher also regularly evaluates samples of pupils' written work and discusses the outcomes with the coordinator. Although the school has plans to introduce systems that will enable coordinators to evaluate and develop teaching, this has not occurred. This does not allow the subject coordinator to attend to weaknesses and share the obvious good practice that exists in the school.
108. There are a satisfactory number and range of books in classrooms and good use has been made of specific grants to update and extend other literacy materials throughout

the school. However, the school library, although centrally placed and satisfactorily resourced, is underused. There are few opportunities for pupils of all ages to use the library for independent research or quiet reading.

109. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy. Opportunities are provided to rehearse across the curriculum the skills learned within the discrete literacy sessions. These are particularly found in the use of extended subject-specific vocabulary in mathematics and science, the personal account styles of writing in the retelling of Bible stories in religious education and the discussion and debate of topics, such as changes in technology over time, in history and the pollution of rain forests in geography.

MATHEMATICS

110. Standards in mathematics are high. In the most recent national assessments for seven year-olds (1999), the percentage of pupils attaining the expected standard was well above average and compared favourably with other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. This was a marked improvement on the results of the previous year, when there had been a dip in the school's performance. The proportion of pupils who did better than expected was particularly high.
111. Pupils achieve high standards throughout the school. For example, by the age of seven pupils rapidly add and subtract simple numbers in their heads and read and write numbers greater than one hundred with confidence. They know about odd and even numbers. They count confidently in fives and tens, forwards and backwards, and the more able identify numbers (including large numbers) which are divisible by five. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of nine, pupils find all the factors of numbers such as 12 and 24. They know that multiplication reverses division and use this knowledge successfully to write a division sum to match a multiplication sum. Pupils in all years show a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. In one lesson, for example, a Year 3 pupil stated that "fifteen can't have two as a factor because it isn't an even number".
112. At the time of the last inspection there were weaknesses in the planning of the mathematics curriculum. These have been rectified. Teachers make effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy framework to ensure that pupils in parallel classes cover the same ground. Planning is clear and detailed and shows what pupils of different ages and abilities are expected to learn. A major strength in the school's mathematics curriculum is the way that pupils are encouraged to search for relationships and patterns. Challenging and interesting tasks are set which foster the development of their thinking and problem-solving skills. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of predicting, hypothesising and generalising. One Year 2 pupil, for instance, could say that, "once you see the pattern it's a waste of time adding up because they all make the same". It is this kind of reasoning that underpins the high level of mathematical understanding that children demonstrate in all year groups.
113. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. Opportunities are provided to rehearse, across the curriculum, the skills learned within the numeracy lessons to other often problem-

solving activities. For example, mathematical skills are particularly well rehearsed in data handling and control aspects of the information technology work covered and measurement in science.

114. There are variations in the quality of the teaching in the Year 1/2 classes. It is satisfactory overall and often good, but there are some shortcomings which should be addressed. For example, all teachers are not equally confident in their own mathematical knowledge. This means that they do not always identify pupils' misunderstandings, or ask the right kind of questions to move pupils' learning forward. The management of pupils' behaviour is not wholly secure, so that sometimes the pace of lessons is slowed by interruptions and distractions. Sometimes the youngest and least able pupils are not supported sufficiently to enable them to make the progress expected. This is so both in whole class sessions and when pupils are working in groups.
115. On the other hand, in the Year 3/4 classes the teaching is consistently good and often very good. A particular strength in this age group is the way that the development of pupils' skills of mathematical investigation is carefully structured. Very clear instructions and explanations are given, so that pupils fully understand how to go about the task and what they are expected to learn from it. Activities are carefully matched to pupils' capabilities and teachers' questions take good account of the full range of attainment. The class discussions, which conclude all lessons, are used to reinforce key points by drawing everyone's attention to what has been learned. For example, in one lesson in which pupils were solving magic number squares, the teacher invited pupils to look for similarities in all the solutions found. This enabled a pupil to spot the pattern and observe that, "if a magic number square adds up to fifteen, then five will always be in the middle because five is a third of fifteen".
116. The development of the subject, including the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, has been capably led by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic coordinator. However, although the school is aware of many of the subject's strengths, monitoring of teaching is not yet sufficiently rigorous to identify continued improvements.
117. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their mathematics and approach their work with energy and confidence. They are willing to experiment and persevere because they know that they can learn through their mistakes. In many lessons they show real enthusiasm for the work they are doing. For example, in one Years 1 and 2 lesson a pupil, having found the rule for an investigation, applied it to a new situation. She could hardly contain her excitement when she discovered that it worked.

SCIENCE

118. Teacher assessments in 1998 indicate that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 attained above-average standards. Results for 1999 show a decline. Although standards are below average in comparison with national data, inspection evidence demonstrates that standards in science are average.
119. Standards in science lessons for Key Stage 1 pupils are average. Pupils know about the three-stage life cycle of the butterfly and demonstrate this successfully through their dramatisation of the story about the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Older pupils begin to apply their knowledge of life cycles to other animals such as the frog. They know

about forces and that humans produce babies and these grow into children and then into adults. A few Year 2 pupils extract information from books and charts to answer a set of written questions. Analysis of pupils' past work reveals that standards of presentation vary from class to class and that first-hand experience and opportunities for focused exploration and investigation are fewer than would be anticipated.

120. Standards by the end of Year 4 are above average. Pupils effectively sort liquids from solids and begin to correctly use scientific vocabulary to define how they differ from each other. They acquire appropriate scientific knowledge through focused investigation and exploration. They recognise that some changes to materials can be reversed. For example, water can freeze and return to water in the process of thawing. Pupils in Year 4 are on course to achieve the national average by the end of Key Stage 2.
121. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Teachers use links with other lessons and subjects to help pupils develop a breadth of understanding. A variety of resources is used, but a proliferation of printed worksheets in one lesson made it difficult for pupils to manage the activities and the final quality of presentation was unsatisfactory. Good teaching is evidenced by the effective use of time to consolidate learning and confident subject knowledge. Questioning is used effectively to challenge the older pupils and classroom assistants are available to support pupils' learning. In a minority of lessons, there are some weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour and their use of time. More accurate day-to-day assessments and more clearly focused lesson planning for the range of pupils' abilities would enable learning to be more secure, with higher achievement at the end of the key stage.
122. The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4, in the one lesson seen, was well structured and a good pace was maintained throughout. The very good subject knowledge of the teacher, her skills of questioning and assessment of all pupils' understanding, enabled the pupils to make very good progress. Individual pupils' progress is tracked for each lesson. Pupils show a very good attitude to their work and to each other. They understand the routines of working together in a purposeful community and work independently and successfully share their findings in small groups.
123. The curriculum is well planned and continuity and progression is achieved through teachers sharing their planning. The coordinator monitors planning and pupils' work, but, as with other subjects in the school, does not yet observe and evaluate the quality of teaching. Resources are adequate for the subject and are stored centrally. The coordinator contributes to the overall school development plan by identifying aspects for development and improvement.
124. Since the last inspection, standards and teaching have improved in Years 3 and 4. Skills of investigation and experimentation are now more evident than at Key Stage 1. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the accompanying additional support are having a positive impact on pupils' abilities to write their scientific findings. Good links have been established with the local middle school to facilitate the smooth transition for pupils between the two schools.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

125. It was not possible to see any teaching of design and technology during the inspection but, in discussions with pupils about their work, they talked with interest and enjoyment about the subject and the projects they had undertaken.

126. The scrutiny of pupils' work reveals that pupils throughout the school are making satisfactory progress in design and technology. The scheme of work incorporates guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the local education authority and provides a clear structure for the sequential development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
127. The curriculum, which is provided for the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, gives them many chances to make models, using construction kits and join a variety of materials in different ways. Although some pupils are beginning to learn about the principles of designing before making, for example, when planning and constructing finger puppets, others are less certain of the link between design and the finished article.
128. An area for development in the previous inspection was the insufficient evaluation of work by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, but this has improved. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have made and how they would improve the process in future.
129. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are building upon skills acquired earlier and the planned curriculum provides opportunities for them to investigate, disassemble and evaluate simple products and assess their particular components. For example, pupils constructed their own picture frames, after closely examining different shapes and types of frames, assessing their stability and ease of use.
130. The new subject coordinator has expertise in the subject and provides colleagues with advice and support. She has many positive ideas about developing design and technology throughout the school, specifically monitoring and improving the quality of teaching of design and technology.
131. Resources for the subject are plentiful, well organised and accessible to pupils and teachers. Good use is made of the local authority's loan scheme to extend pupils' interest in design and technology. For example, photographic evidence demonstrates that the school was able to display a range of modern gadgets borrowed from the London Design Museum for pupils to handle and discuss.
132. The school has responded to the recommendation from the last inspection and improved the range and quality of constructional apparatus.
133. Pupils enjoy their art work. They concentrate for long periods on their paintings and drawings and work purposefully at their printing and weaving. They behave well and talk with understanding about the work they have undertaken. One pupil in Year 2 explained clearly the techniques she and others had used when making a collage in the style of the artist, Klimt. She then went on to describe how proud she and others felt now the collage was displayed in the classroom.
134. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in art and their achievements match the good standards evident during the previous inspection.
135. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have explored an appropriate range of art activities, the results of which are seen in the stimulating displays in classrooms and around the school. They use painting and drawing techniques well to express freely their ideas. In one lesson, following a detailed examination of African textiles and artefacts, pupils worked with sustained concentration, carefully choosing colour and objects before printing their patterns on textile. Other pupils successfully wove paper and textiles on looms of different size and shape. The teacher's well chosen interventions and good

subject knowledge enables pupils to produce good quality work.

136. Many pupils in Years 3 and 4 paint and draw to a high standard as a result of very good teaching. Their observational studies in pastel and charcoal demonstrate increasing understanding of line and tone and their painting reveals a sophisticated use of colour and knowledge of composition. In one lesson, pupils looked at the work of the artist Rousseau and then produced detailed observational paintings and drawings in his style. They exhibited a willingness to experiment with the media chosen and paid close attention to detail.
137. The teaching of art is good. Indeed, examples of very good teaching were observed throughout the school. All teachers have a good understanding of how to teach art. They use questions well to encourage pupils to reflect on their work and to make judgements about its quality. The detailed guidance in the scheme of work enables teachers to plan effective lessons successfully to build upon pupils' artistic knowledge and skills. The coordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about art. She supports her colleagues with advice and suggestions and has a clear idea about improving standards in art throughout the school, for example, by securing more opportunities to observe teachers and to improve their practice.
138. Resources for art are good. They are organised well and accessible.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

139. History and geography are taught in alternate weeks. This is a satisfactory arrangement which maintains continuity while avoiding too many lesson changes. A sample of four geography lessons was observed during the week of the inspection, but it was not possible to see history being taught. However, pupils' work was looked at and discussed with them and the planning for history lessons was examined.
140. A strong feature of history is the way the subject is used to develop pupils' enquiry skills. This enables them to attain standards which are better than those normally found for their ages. For example, seven year-old pupils use their findings to explain some ways that shops and shopping habits have changed over the past hundred years or so. They show good understanding of the chronology represented by a timeline in their classroom display and find on it when the first electric tills were introduced, or when bar codes were first used. They are aware of the usefulness of photographs in providing evidence of what it was like to live in the past. By the time they leave the school, pupils know that the past can be usefully divided up into different periods, such as the Victorian age. They remember some of the key dates, such as when Victoria became Queen or when Prince Albert died. They discuss aspects of the period, which are different from today, for example, the clothing which people wore or the work poor children had to do. They understand how artefacts, stories, photographs, buildings and other forms of evidence can all tell us about the past.
141. In geography, standards are similar to those expected. For example, the seven year-old pupils demonstrated a thorough understanding of the sequence of farming activities during the year and how these depend on the changing patterns of weather. They recognise clearly the busiest times of the year for the farmer and offer good reasons why. They gained a sound working knowledge of the crops grown locally and their uses. They developed a basic understanding of crop rotation and that some crops cannot be sown until spring because of the winter cold. Pupils in the older classes are knowledgeable about localities beyond their own and make comparisons with regard to weather conditions, terrain and plant life. They consider and debate

with energy complex questions, such as "Is man a friend of the rainforest?" They gain a thorough understanding of the ways in which environments can be changed and sometimes damaged and how this affects people's lives. They reflect on what might be done about it, thinking, for example, of alternative sources for some of the rainforest's products, or whether they are needed at all.

142. The teaching of geography is satisfactory throughout the school, and often good in the older classes. The main strengths lie in the quality of the planning, which takes account of different learning needs. There is effective use made of resources to capture pupils' interest and to give structure to their learning. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject, so that explanations are lively and informative and questions help children to develop their reasoning skills. The best lessons provide a variety of pace and an effective balance of teacher instruction, discussion and pupil activity. Where these features are less evident, as in some Years 1 and 2 lessons, the learning sometimes loses its momentum and interest wanes, particularly for younger pupils who are in need of additional support.
143. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils enjoy history and geography lessons. They work with care, are keen to display their knowledge and show satisfaction in their achievements. Pupils show particular enthusiasm for visits to museums and other places of interest, or for visitors to the school, such as the farmer with her lambs and her 'shiny red tractor'.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

144. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' achievements in information technology did not completely meet national standards. Curriculum planning was in need of improvement. There was no coordination for the subject and much of the hardware was outmoded. This position has improved significantly, with the pupils showing many advanced skills and standards are now above average. The subject is well led and resources are now of a high quality, with a specialist suite in place.
145. Pupils from the reception class move into Key Stage 1 with good skills in controlling a computer mouse to match, select and move words and pictures. They effectively use some functional keys to create spaces, move the arrow key and select programmes. They make good progress in learning how to use blocks of colour and are beginning successfully to use the eraser to modify and to adapt their artwork. Standards in Key Stage 1 are generally average and sometimes above. Where there is variability in standards, this is directly related to teaching. Pupils type in simple sentences quickly and accurately, using capital and small letters correctly and selecting appropriate words from a word bank. When complete and satisfied with their work, they know how to print the finished article. This follows from clear instructions in the teaching. On the other hand, when the teaching lacks vital structure and sequencing of activities, the work is of lower quality because the pupils lack confidence.
146. Standards by the end of Year 4 are above average. Pupils recognise some main features of layout, such as fonts, size and colour and successfully alter them for emphasis and directions. Some older pupils read LOGO, predict the pattern it will make on the screen and test their hypotheses. They quickly see how to make a square with four repeated moves. Pupils competently use text and graphics to present information in other subjects.
147. Although lessons are similarly planned across Key Stage 1, there are some weak teaching skills in the management of pupils, the clarification of exposition and

instructions and the organisation of lessons. This has a direct impact on the quality of pupils' work and the confident development of skills. Where teaching skills are good, pupils make faster and more confident progress and have a sense of achievement. The quality of support which classroom assistants offer is consistently good.

148. The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good. Learning objectives are clear and suitably challenging. Teachers clearly set the scene in lessons and build on pupils' prior experiences. They give clear explanations and instructions and are quick to identify when pupils require further guidance and support.
149. Pupils enjoy their work on the computers and there is usually a buzz of excitement and anticipation when they are working in the ICT suite. They successfully work with a partner, sharing and supporting one another's ideas.
150. The new ICT suite is used as the main teaching resource for information technology. Although the room is small, it is used effectively by timetabling groups of pupils between the use of the computers and carrying out related activities in the adjoining work bay. Pupils throughout the school have equal access to the specialist room. However, pupils in the reception class proportionally do not have quite the same degree of access due to current supervision arrangements. Careful thought is generally given to lesson planning and requirements for supervision whilst half the class is using the computer suite. However, in one class this is not working well and the difficulties compound the slower progress made by these pupils. Older computers are available for use in the classrooms and, although they do not offer the same range of opportunities as those in the designated room, they do facilitate additional practice opportunities.
151. Curriculum planning is well coordinated and the staff, including classroom assistants, are confident in using the hardware and software. They have a good knowledge of the subject of information technology and have satisfactory expectations of pupils. Skills in information technology are linked with other curriculum areas. For example, the retrieval of information contributed ideas to the humanities topic on the rainforest. The Years 3 and 4 teachers keep thorough and continuous records of the pupils' skills and use of programs beside the class computers. The same attention to detailed assessment was not evident in Key Stage 1.
152. The coordinator for information technology has identified further targets for the appropriate development of the subject, and these plans are incorporated into the school development plan. The school has recently purchased concept keyboards and there are long term plans to update old computers in classrooms. There are good opportunities for staff to develop their expertise through nationally funded in-service training. Regular monitoring of the teachers' planning takes place and, as with other subjects, there are long term plans to observe lessons. Effective leadership in information technology has led to significant improvements since the last inspection.

MUSIC

153. Music is taught mainly by a part-time teacher who attends school one day a week. There were insufficient opportunities during the inspection to see music being taught and, therefore, judgements cannot be made on the standards pupils achieve or the quality of teaching at either key stage. However, in assemblies, older pupils sing in tune to taped music with a good sense of rhythm.
154. Music is satisfactorily planned throughout the school. Musical experiences are enhanced with occasional visits from professional musicians and players from the local middle schools. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4 attend a weekly recorder lesson. There is also a school choir, which is run as a club after school. The pupils receive opportunities as members of the choir to sing at functions within the community. In the recorder lesson seen, pupils were able to play a one-note tune and maintained reasonable finger positioning. However, there was limited confidence demonstrated in their playing.
155. There is currently a designated room for music teaching, in which a satisfactory number and range of musical resources are stored. Resources include instruments from other cultures. A variety of taped music is used to support assemblies, but this lacks a system to ensure that the music reflects the diversity and richness of other cultures.
156. Leadership and management of the subject have been temporarily changed. The headteacher is aware that, in appointing permanent staff, an opportunity may arise to select a teacher with expertise in piano playing and to coordinate and lead subject development. It is not possible to judge any changes in standards since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

157. Standards seen at Key Stage 1 are good. Pupils use good control techniques for dribbling footballs within a designated space. They know how to stop a ball using the skills of foot control. They are beginning to cooperate in team games and dodge and chase with some quick changes of directions. Standards in games by the end of Year 4 are satisfactory. Pupils are in the early stages of learning the tactics of team working in adapted games of volleyball. Their throwing skills are frequently accurate, but their catching skills are less well developed.
158. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall, although the lesson seen was a little slow in starting due to weak organisation of pupils and resources. Lessons are well structured with appropriate warm-up activities and learning objectives are clear for the main part of the lesson. Pupils' confidence and knowledge of what they do well is maintained through the teacher's good use of specific praise. The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good. In the lesson seen, planning and preparation are good. Lesson objectives are clear and shared with the pupils. The lesson is well structured with a suitable warm-up activity, a main activity and a period for cooling down. Good use is made of observation and assessment to extend and challenge pupils. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own system of scoring a game and are given good

opportunities to reflect on their performance and the use of different equipment. Pupils are managed very well and kept on task.

159. Throughout the school, resources for games are good. Pupils enjoy their games lessons, listen well to instructions and concentrate. They are suitably dressed for physical education lessons and good attention is given to issues of health and safety.
160. Teachers' plans for the year show a broad range of opportunities for physical development, which include swimming and orienteering and the use of the timber trail. These plans are reviewed regularly by the physical education coordinator. As yet, observation of teaching does not take place, although there are indications that this will be developed in the near future. A useful scheme of work has been adopted by the school. However, insufficient links are made between the scheme and the planning for the under fives. Very good use has been made of the training and the resources provided by Top Sport and Top Play schemes.
161. Since the last inspection, the role of the coordinator has been clarified and extended and there is greater consistency of teaching approach through the sharing of teachers' plans. In the small sample of lessons seen, standards have improved and the quality of teaching has risen.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

162. Standards in religious education throughout the school meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There have been improvements in attainment by the end of Year 4 since the last inspection, where pupils achieved average standards, but recommendations to develop the monitoring of religious education throughout the school have not been met.
163. Most pupils listen carefully in religious education lessons. They are well behaved and work cooperatively with one another. They are keen to answer questions and pose queries of their own. However, a few of the younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are restless due to the long time they have to sit and listen to the teacher.
164. In Key Stage 1, pupils listen to Bible stories and compare them with their own experiences. They make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of Christianity. For example, after listening to the story of the lost sheep, pupils discussed with others their experiences of being lost and used it as a stimulus for their writing. As a consequence of their discussions, the writing they produce is thoughtful and of high quality.
165. Further up the school, pupils increase their knowledge, not only of Christianity but also of other major religions, such as Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils have an extended knowledge of churches and their features. For example, they were able to name and identify the purpose of the lectern, pulpit and font and place these and other key features accurately on a plan of an Anglican Church.
166. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching throughout the school. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject and are confident when teaching religious education. Their lesson planning is good and enables them to match successfully the activities and tasks to pupils' differing needs. Teachers make good use of class discussion to deepen pupils' knowledge and to use

questions strategically to test their understanding.

167. However, in one lesson the pace was slow, a few pupils become restless and the teacher does not have successful strategies to deal with the misbehaviour.
168. The coordinator provides sound leadership for the subject. Effective use is made of the locally agreed syllabus to provide a scheme of work for the school on a two-year cycle. The coordinator has oversight of all lesson planning to check that it is in line with the locally agreed syllabus but, as yet, does not observe lessons and provide support.
169. The school has a good range of resources and artefacts to draw on to stimulate pupils' discussions and to extend their understanding.
170. Assemblies, which make good use of visiting speakers, make a positive contribution to the teaching of religious education in the school.