

INSPECTION REPORT

CRESSING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cressing, Braintree.

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114832

Headteacher: Mrs Carol Leverett B.A. Dip Ed.

Reporting inspector: Peter Sudworth
2700

Dates of inspection: April 3rd-5th, 2000

Inspection number: 189637

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:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Tye Green, Cressing Braintree Essex
Postcode	CM7 8JE
Telephone number:	01376 583397
Fax number:	01376 583804
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father John Corbyn
Date of previous inspection:	30 th September, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Sudworth	Registered inspector	Science; Information technology; Physical education.	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Ron Ibbotson	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Janet Gill	Team inspector	English; Music; Under-fives.	How well is the school led and managed?
Mike Milton	Team inspector	History; Geography; Design and technology.	
Abul Maula	Team inspector	Mathematics; Art; Religious education; Special educational needs; English as an additional language; Equal opportunities.	How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Qualitas Education Consultants Ltd.,
Wickham Court,
Layhams Rd.,
West Wickham,
Kent
BR4 9HH

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cressing Primary School takes pupils aged 4 to 11 mainly from the village of Cressing, although some pupils travel in from the nearby towns of Braintree and Witham. The school was catering for 19 children from traveller families at the time of the inspection, nine of whom are supported by special funding and have the part-time support of a specialist teacher. Some of the traveller children are on permanent sites but others move with their families at different times of the year. This contributes to the high mobility of pupils in the school; around one-fifth of the pupils left or were added to the school's roll in the past year. The number on roll at the time of the inspection was 127, smaller than most primary schools. 15 pupils were still under five. The numbers of boys and girls are roughly equal. Pupils commence their education in the September or January preceding their fifth birthday but pupils whose fifth birthdays do not occur until the following term begin on a part-time basis. Overall, the pupils' attainment on entry is below average. 15 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is about the national average percentage. 17 per cent of the pupils, about the national average, have special educational needs, including a wide range of difficulties. Two pupils have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

In several respects, the school is effective in providing a good education for its pupils. Overall the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. Standards in most subjects are broadly in line with expectations for pupils' ages in both key stages. There are some weaknesses in the curriculum provided in upper Key Stage 2 in music and art. The headteacher's leadership is very good. The school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The very good leadership of the headteacher who is helping to raise standards and improve teaching;
- The overall good quality of teaching which enables pupils to make progress;
- The school's very good links and very good communication with the parents and this makes an important contribution to pupils' learning;
- The good quality of the school's development planning which is helping the school to make curriculum improvements and improve standards;
- The good provision for pupils' social, moral and spiritual development;
- The very good systems for planning the budget, monitoring spending and the excellent support provided by the finance manager;
- The very good arrangements for health and safety, pupils' welfare and child protection.

What could be improved

- Curriculum planning and schemes of work, including the match of work to pupils' different ages and needs;
- Whole-school record keeping to track pupils' progress through the school;
- Pupils' standards of presenting their work, including the standard of handwriting;
- Using the knowledge teachers acquire about pupils' understanding of their work to plan future lessons;
- The curriculum provided for music and art in upper Key Stage 2.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1996. Since that time, the previous well-loved headteacher became very ill and subsequently died. The unavoidable disruption caused by these events has affected the pace of development. Several improvements have been made in planning the curriculum but some work remains to be done. For example, schemes of work are not yet fully in place, although national guidance is being used in some subjects to give a form of structure. Governors are now becoming more involved with school development planning and taking a more active interest in the school's work. A new library has been instituted through the practical contributions and hard work of some governors and parents. The quality of teaching has improved. Standards reported previously have generally been maintained, although they have fallen in art and in music in upper Key Stage 2. In some subjects such as physical education there was insufficient evidence to make comparisons. Resources for religious education are better. Overall sound progress has been made in the light of all the circumstances. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	B	C	C	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	B	B	
Science	B	B	B	C	

The year cohorts of pupils are small and are affected very significantly by the numbers of special needs pupils at any particular time. Despite this, the trend of results has remained at least at average levels compared with both all schools nationally and with similar schools, as judged by free school meal percentages. The school's targets are appropriate and are a true reflection of potential. The standards of work in upper Key Stage 2 in music and art are currently not as high as they could be. This is in part due to current staffing difficulties but also to a lack of opportunities. In other subjects, current standards overall are broadly in line with expectations in both key stages, reflecting the capabilities of the present Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Standards in information technology in both key stages are expected to be in line with expectations by the end of both key stages. Pupils' work in religious education meets local requirements. Overall, progress in pupils' learning is good, despite the occasional subject weaknesses, because pupils' attainment is below average on entry but is generally in line with expectations by age eleven.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to their work are generally good. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is generally good. They work and play well together. One pupil was excluded in the past year but this was for the safety of the other pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and the relationships between pupils are good. The residential visits and membership of the School Council contribute significantly to the development of the pupils' maturity by the age of eleven.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 reading, writing and mathematics is good throughout the school. The teaching of literacy is mostly good in Key Stage 1 and occasionally good in Key Stage 2 but also occasionally it was unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6, a result of the temporary arrangements which had to be made at the time of the inspection. The teaching of numeracy is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good in both key stages. Teachers' knowledge of what they are teaching, the management of the pupils and the quality of questioning to establish what pupils understand are all good. The quality of teaching observed was better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 and it was better in lower Key Stage 2 than in upper Key Stage 2. The teachers do not always consider the ages and abilities of the pupils in the mixed-age classes when planning work in subjects but they usually do in English and mathematics. 95 per cent of lessons observed were satisfactory or better, including just over ten per cent very good and five per cent unsatisfactory. Pupils are particularly co-operative and enjoy learning practically.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school gives an appropriate emphasis to the basics of reading, writing and numeracy. Insufficient teaching time is given to music in upper Key Stage 2 and the work in art in upper Key Stage 2 is weak. Satisfactory provision is made for extra-curricular activities and personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good arrangements are made for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. It is satisfactory for their cultural development. Pupils play and work well together and look after one another.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for child protection and to ensure the pupils are safe. The pupils are well supported and cared for. Whole school record keeping systems are not well developed.
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The school has very good links with the parents and they are very supportive of the school. The provision for music does not yet fully meet National Curriculum requirements in Key Stage 2.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is leading the school very well. She has a clear vision for the school's future development. School development planning is thorough. The deputy headteacher is an effective partner in the management of the school. Together they are contributing to the raising of standards in teaching and learning. The staff has worked well to implement the new literacy and numeracy initiatives.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are beginning to become much more involved in the work of the school and more informed about what goes on. Statutory requirements are met fully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is clearly aware of its strengths and its weaknesses, has a planned strategy for development and improvement and is taking effective action to secure improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school receives excellent advice for planning its financial affairs and it monitors its spending carefully. It is using its money wisely. Learning resources are used suitably in lessons. It links its spending well to the priorities it has set itself and has good procedures to obtain best value.

The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are happy with standards and their children's progress; • Their children really enjoy school; • Individual children are valued and the pupils care about each other and about society; • Behaviour is good and any problems are handled well; • Very good support is given to traveller children and they are effectively integrated in to the school; • The arrangements for homework are good and parents are involved; • Very good relationships exist between school and home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection evidence supports parents' views about what the school does well but is of the view that standards could be higher in Key Stage 2 music and art. They could also be better in handwriting and in the general presentation of pupils' work. A suitable range of extra-curricular activities takes place in Key Stage 2, some of which are privately organised. Few activities are held for younger pupils but this is similar to most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 The school has a comparatively small number of pupils in each year group. As a result the numbers of absentees at the time of national tests and the number of pupils with special needs can have a disproportionate effect on the percentages of pupils who attain particular levels in the National Curriculum end of key stage tests. Notwithstanding this and the below average attainment on entry, the school's results have been most frequently above national averages in the past four years in mathematics, English and science at the end of Key Stage 2. Overall they have been better comparatively than in Key Stage 1. However, results in Key Stage 1 have been most often well above the national average in mathematics, although often below and sometimes well below average in reading and writing. In the most recent national tests in 1999, the end of Key Stage 1 results were well above average in mathematics but below average in reading and writing. Against similar schools, judged by free school meal percentages, the results were well above average in mathematics and well below in reading and writing. Key Stage 2 results were above average in mathematics and in science and average in English. Against similar schools, they were average in science and in English and above average in mathematics.

2 The under-fives make good progress in all areas of their learning including mathematics and language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Most of the children attain the national expectations for young children's learning by age five. They participate well in a good balance of directed and free choice activities and cooperate, take turns, share and play fairly. They enjoy physical activities and use classroom tools, such as scissors and glue spreaders carefully to refine their cutting and pasting skills. They also manage larger play equipment to develop their all round confidence and coordination. They know that words and pictures in books carry meaning. They form letters correctly, learn to copy write and some begin to write their own words. They show good levels of interest in story. They learn mathematical vocabulary such as positional words and write and recognise numbers to ten. Higher attaining children add up two single digit numbers or sets of objects. They are beginning to appreciate their own place in time in relation to people and events. They learn about the world from going on visits to places of interest. They are becoming familiar with some of the function keys on the computer.

3 The current attainment of most pupils in Years 2 and 6 towards the end of the key stages is broadly in line with national expectations, although few pupils are expected to attain at the higher levels in English, mathematics and science in the national tests. These standards are lower than the results of the 1999 tests in mathematics and science because the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils include more pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills in both key stages are appropriate for their ages, although there are some pupils in both key stages who find difficulty in speaking clearly and confidently, and have a limited vocabulary. Pupils in lower Key Stage 1 are beginning to make better progress in reading because of an intensive phonics training programme. By Year 6, pupils know about index, contents, glossary and the blurb and can scan for information but their skills in book selection, particularly when seeking reference books, are not yet well developed. A new library, which will be more accessible to pupils, is currently being arranged. Pupils throughout the school write for different purposes in lessons. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils write about old toys in history and Key Stage 2 pupils about the results of their experiments in science. By age 11, many pupils punctuate their writing correctly and spell accurately, although some still find it difficult to write consistently in paragraphs. Handwriting and presentation of work could be improved with more effort and use of appropriate handwriting tools.

4 In mathematics by age seven pupils can tell the time using different types of clock and measure using standard and non-standard measures. By age 11, pupils have suitable competence with data and

can present information, which they have gathered in different kinds of graphs. Many have good multiplication knowledge, which helps them with their mental work. They develop good strategies to work out calculations in their heads. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in science are currently in line with expectations in both key stages, whereas in 1999 results were above the national average and average against similar schools. This is because the current cohort of pupils includes more special needs pupils and there have been changes of class teacher which have disrupted the pupils' education. The pupils carry out science experiments enthusiastically and have a good understanding of fair testing, although the pupils do not yet often raise their own questions to pursue.

5 As indicated by Key Stage 2 national tests, girls have consistently been outperforming the boys in English over the past four years, which is similar to the national picture. In mathematics and in science, the performance of boys and girls has been almost identical.

6 Pupils' attainment in information technology is expected to be in line with expectations by the end of both key stages when some planned intensive work is completed in Key Stage 2. Pupils can combine text and graphics, produce presentations and understand the usefulness of spreadsheets. Standards of attainment in geography meet national expectations by the end of both key stages. They are in line by age 11 in history and but there was insufficient evidence to make judgements in Key Stage 1. Attainment in art is in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 but standards of work are below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. There was insufficient evidence to judge attainment in physical education and design and technology because very few lessons were scheduled during the inspection period. Pupils have insufficient musical experiences in Key Stage 2 to meet the expectations in the National Curriculum Programme of Study. Pupils' attainment in religious education meets local expectations.

7 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the pupils' make good progress, because of the specialist teaching they receive. However, those who are attaining more highly are not always challenged sufficiently well, because pupils in mixed-age classes often do the same work, except in literacy and numeracy. Year 5 pupils, who were split between classes containing Year 4 and Year 6 pupils, because of accommodation difficulties, were being taught different curriculum content, because of the school's arrangement of study themes, and this was not ensuring that these particular pupils were making the best possible progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8 As reported in the previous inspection, pupils generally have good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Pupils, including the under-fives, settle down well to their lessons and most can sustain sufficient concentration to complete their work. They listen carefully to their teachers and are eager to answer questions and contribute to discussions. They collaborate well when working together in groups and also work well independently. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the help they receive from teachers and support staff. The generally good attitudes of pupils are a positive contribution to their learning.

9 Behaviour of children in lessons is generally good, reflecting the previous inspection findings, but some pupils in upper Key Stage 2 can be unco-operative at times. Pupils play well together in the playground, and boys and girls of different ages mix freely with one another and are pleasantly sociable. When they change classrooms or go out to play, pupils walk in an orderly way. They enter assemblies quietly and participate well. They are reverent during prayers and sing hymns with enthusiasm. During the inspection, there were no signs of bullying or any oppressive behaviour. The school operates a positive behaviour policy, which is consistently implemented by the caring teachers and support staff. Pupils appreciate the rewards for good behaviour, attendance and effort. In assembly, cups are presented to classes and to individuals for good conduct and hard work. The system of graded sanctions for inappropriate behaviour allows members of staff to deal with such behaviour promptly and firmly. School Council members confirm that they regard the behaviour

policy as fair and that they feel secure at school. In the past academic year there has been one pupil exclusion for the safety of others.

10 The attendance rate is slightly below the national average but has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory overall. Most children attend school regularly and punctually but there is a small core of poor attenders, which includes some travelling children, who come and go.

11 Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are good and are a major contribution to learning. Pupils listen to one another and share and respect one another's feelings. Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors, hold doors open for them and give a friendly greeting.

12 Pupils' personal development is good. They show initiative and are willing to accept responsibilities offered by the school. They are keen to serve on the School Council when elected by their peers and they comply with its rules. They cheerfully accept positions as team captains, librarians and monitors. Children support charities such as National Children's Home and the Children's Society. They express their concern for others in less fortunate circumstances by a willingness to raise money for others, such as the recent Mozambique appeal.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13 Overall the quality of teaching observed was good. It was consistently good in the under-fives, mostly good and occasionally very good in Key Stage 1. It was sound overall in Key Stage 2, where the lessons observed ranged from occasionally unsatisfactory to occasionally very good. In total, one half of all lessons observed were good and a further one eighth of lessons were very good. Almost all the 40 lessons observed were at least satisfactory but two lessons in upper Key Stage 2 were unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

14 Strengths in teaching include the very good relationships between the staff and the pupils. There is mutual respect between the pupils and teachers in almost all classes. This assists the teachers in the management of behaviour, which is good on the whole. Teachers question pupils well enabling them to check the pupils' recall of earlier learning and to interest them in current learning. They prepare resources well and use them effectively and, as a result, pupils usually gain a good understanding of what they are being taught. Teachers usually balance the time given in lessons to explanation, discussion and to pupils' activities. In this way, the pace of lessons is usually maintained well, although it sometimes slows during the pupils' activity sessions as a result of pupils' lack of application in some lessons, particularly in parts of Key Stage 2. The teaching of literacy is mostly good in Key Stage 1 and occasionally good in Key Stage 2 but also occasionally it was unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6 because of the temporary arrangements which had to be made at the time of the inspection. The teaching of numeracy is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good in both key stages. Mental sessions are often brisk and pupils are asked to explain their thinking, which encourages the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Teachers usually group pupils according to their levels of current achievement in mathematics and English and this helps the teachers to match the work appropriately to their stage of learning development. Teachers have good knowledge of phonics and the teaching of reading is good. They also teach numeracy well. The National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks are used to good effect.

15 Teaching also has some aspects, which could be improved. Noise levels in some Key Stage 2 lessons are too high and pupils do not exercise a sufficient degree of self-discipline. As a result they do not always fulfil as much work as they could and the presentation of their work sometimes suffers. Lessons are occasionally too long, particularly in numeracy and literacy. A major weakness is the lack of match of the content and challenge to the pupils' ages and abilities in lessons, other than in English and mathematics, particularly for the Year 5 pupils who are split between Years 4 and 6.

16 The teachers have good subject knowledge in most subjects which they teach but teachers' skills in teaching art and music in upper Key Stage 2 are not as good as in other areas of the curriculum. As a result, standards of work in these subjects are less strong and, in some instances, pupils receive insufficient teaching in these subjects.

17 Teaching assistants often make a good contribution to lessons by taking groups of pupils for focused work. For example, good teaching was observed in information technology when a teaching assistant taught groups to program a toy robot.

18 The teaching of special needs pupils is often good. Effective use is made of teaching games and equipment to motivate those who find learning difficult and this use raises their levels of concentration and interest and at the same time teaches them basic skills, such as letter blends and spelling rules. Their individual education plans are well written and there is a clear emphasis on these during their focused work with the special needs co-ordinator and with teaching assistants.

19 The traveller pupils are effectively integrated in to classes and well provided for by the class teachers. The specialist traveller teacher provides a sound level of support, knows the children well and has built up a good relationship with the children and their families which has resulted in generally good attendance.

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

20 The overall curriculum provided for the under-fives is good and is based on the national recommendations for young children's learning and also includes aspects of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The arrangements of the curriculum are good and ensure that the children have access to a good range of learning opportunities.

21 The range of curriculum opportunities is sound overall. Current statutory requirements are being met. In the light of circumstances at the school in the past three years, it has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in developing a curriculum structure. Progress, nevertheless has, understandably, not been consistent because of the serious ill-health and subsequent death of the previous headteacher. In the past twelve months, progress in updating the curriculum has accelerated and schemes of work or national guidance materials are being used in most subjects. These schemes are giving a firmer structure to the curriculum, although some aspects are as yet undeveloped, as in art, music, design and technology and history. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy materials are guiding the work in these two subjects well and have been introduced effectively in most classes. They were not as effective in upper Key Stage 2, in which temporary teaching arrangements were in place during the inspection. The school has used the good quality local Agreed Syllabus of religious education as a basis for its own scheme. It has secure frameworks in place for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. These schemes are ensuring appropriate curriculum coverage. Some attempt is being made to address the current lack of suitable computer facility through part-time use of the computer suite at the local secondary school. The school is implementing its own computer suite in the very near future.

22 Schemes of work provide teachers with insufficient practical guidance as they plan their lessons for several subjects, including design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Schemes for art and personal, social and health education policy have not yet been formalised. However, the school makes suitable provision for pupils to be made aware of the dangers of drugs and caters for their personal, social and health education, partly through the science curriculum, through sex education lessons and partly through other activities across the curriculum. The school has a good policy for sex education, which meets requirements. The school recognises that all the schemes of work will need to be reviewed in the light of the new National Curriculum changes in September 2000 and has plans in place to do this. The school has developed an overall

curriculum plan, which the schemes support and which are often linked to a thematic approach. This helps the overall curriculum structure and the balance of subject activities.

23 However, there are some weaknesses in the organisation of the curriculum. The strict adherence to a thematic or topic approach sometimes causes the work to be contrived. For example, in the Key Stage 2 theme 'weather' the associated history element is 'the history of weather forecasting'. This is neither appropriate for the pupils' ages and interests nor does it fit the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There is some inconsistency in the curriculum provided for the Year 5 pupils who are split into two different classes, one half working with Year 4 pupils and the other half with Year 6 pupils as a result of accommodation problems. The Year 5 pupils are, therefore, receiving two different types of curriculum at the time of the inspection. Teachers do not plan their time-tables well enough, for example some lessons are too long. Some literacy and numeracy lessons last for one and a quarter hours and the pupils begin to get restless and the lessons lose their sharpness. Occasionally another English lesson, such as reading, follows on directly from an already long literacy lesson. A further weakness is the fact that, except in mathematics and literacy, all pupils are receiving the same experience and mostly the same level of challenge, despite the mixed-age classes. This results in those with higher prior attainment being under-challenged and not enough opportunity for pupils to reach the higher levels in the National Curriculum.

24 The arrangements the school makes for the special needs pupils are good. There is a good balance of adult help in class and withdrawal sessions, which are carefully timed to ensure that pupils do not miss key inputs of learning in other subjects. Special needs pupils usually receive suitable adult support to assist them with the tasks which they are given.

25 Homework arrangements are adequate. Activities mostly consist of reading, spelling and multiplication tables work and occasionally some research or investigative activity. The majority of parents are happy with these arrangements and many contribute to their children's progress by ensuring that the tasks are completed. Homework activities are appropriate and sufficient time is allocated to them for the age of the pupils and they assist them in acquiring the basic skills.

26 The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' broader education through extra-curricular activities, such as participation in inter-school sporting events, a recorder group and training for team games, such as netball and football. Some of the soccer and netball coaching is privately organised and fee paying. The school does not have after school study support provision.

27 The school has good links with further education establishments and supports the training of students who intend to work with young children. It has suitable links with teacher training establishments and good links with the main feeder secondary school.

28 Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is good for their spiritual, moral and social development and satisfactory for their cultural development. In daily assemblies, pupils think about their lives and the lives of others, and they develop an awareness of prayer and what it means to worship. In school activities, they find pleasure in their learning and at times opportunities to marvel. In a 'science day' during the inspection period, an outside presenter amazed pupils by letting off a 'rocket' consisting of a plastic bottle with only a little water and compressed air inside it. The pupils were thrilled by what happened.

29 There is a good ethos in the school that encourages a strong sense of morality. Pupils display humanity towards people less fortunate than themselves and support several charities. Often pupils choose the charities after seeing television programmes, for example the suffering in Mozambique. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. They appreciate the fairness of the school's positive behaviour policy and respect its implementation.

30 For social development the school council brings pupils of different ages together to discuss matters affecting school life and in the meetings they listen to other pupils and accept their views, even though they may not agree with them. Key Stage 2 pupils benefit from residential visits. Social responsibility is also fostered through assemblies where the importance of getting on together harmoniously is emphasised. Throughout the school, pupils form good friendships with one another and with adults, work together well and enjoy day-to-day contact with others. Pupils' knowledge of the world is enhanced by outside speakers, some of whom participate in collective worship.

31 Pupils develop a sense of belonging to a particular culture through lessons such as history, but also learn to appreciate cultures other than their own in religious education. For example, during the inspection week a Vicar spoke about the traditions of Jewish people at the Feast of the Passover and gave a practical example of a Passover meal. Pupils are also reminded of other cultures through displays of paintings, costumes and artefacts from other countries. However, art and music do not provide enough opportunities for cultural development at Key Stage 2.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32 The school takes good care of its pupils. The arrangements for health and safety meet all statutory requirements and very good records are maintained of health and safety inspections and the resultant work carried out. Risk assessments are done both for the school and for school visits, and these are carefully recorded. There are established procedures for child protection and teachers are alert to any signs of child abuse. The headteacher is the named person for child protection matters and there is good contact with outside agencies should they be required. The good care the school takes of its pupils reflects the positive comments made in the previous report.

33 The knowledge that teachers have of their pupils enables them to give good support and guidance. The support given to children with special educational needs is particularly good. Members of staff are considerate to their pupils and make good role models for pupils to emulate. Teachers implement the school's positive behaviour policy consistently through a system of rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. Pupils have access to a quiet room for board games or reading should they wish to escape from more boisterous activities in the playground and they respect the opportunity. Mid-day assistants work well with children at lunch-times.

34 Attendance is promoted well by the school and rewarded by merit certificates. Paragraphs in the school brochure and in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents emphasise the need for children to attend regularly. The headteacher interviews every parent who wishes to take their child on holiday during term time. There are good procedures for the monitoring both attendance and punctuality. The school works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer and also the Travellers Education Service in investigating unauthorised and unaccounted for absence.

35 The school has recently begun to overhaul its inadequate record keeping systems and whole school procedures for assessing pupils' work. These were reported on favourably in the last report and indicate that the school has not kept its previous good quality systems up to date with curriculum developments. It has produced a draft assessment guideline and marking policy. It recently introduced a new good quality reading record to track pupils' progress throughout the school. It has started to look at assessment as part of planning and there is a little evidence that assessment is beginning to inform the planning of lessons, although it is still under developed. It has been introduced to the half-termly planning format. However, not all members of staff fully understand the need to be specific in planning assessments as part of the teaching, learning and planning process. Some assessment is linked directly to the published mathematics scheme and assists the teachers to check the pupils' levels of understanding. A recent initiative has been the setting of targets throughout the school and these are analysed half-termly. Good analysis is made of the results of national tests to inform its work. Tests are in place to monitor pupils' progress and these enable the

school to set targets for further improvement. Whole-school procedures are not, however, fully in place and assessment of work does not consistently inform the planning and teaching throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36 The school has established good relationships with parents. The majority of parents are very satisfied with the school and with the progress and development of their children. Some parents come into school regularly to help, for example by listening to children read or by giving general assistance in the classroom. Parents also help with extra-curricular activities, such as helping with football and netball clubs after school hours. Other parents help the school by decorating the new library, weeding in the school grounds and planting trees. A mother has recently offered to run cycling proficiency classes. Parents' involvement in the school and the interest they have in their children's work make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning helped by the school now providing more information for the parents about what is taught than was the case at the time of the last inspection.

37 The Parents and Friends Association actively raises funds for the school and gives money to it to spend on projects or ideas suggested by parents, for example the whole school visit to a pantomime at Christmas, playground paintings and a donation towards the adventure playground. The Association also arranges a Christmas bazaar and discos for parents and children which provides opportunities for the school and the community to meet socially, as well as raising funds.

38 The quality of information provided for parents is good. The headteacher sends out a weekly newsletter to advise parents of school events and any school matters. Annual reports on pupils' progress meet statutory requirements and give parents a good understanding of their children's progress. Reading diaries enable parents to listen to their children reading, appreciate their children's current reading level and the progress they are making. The school brochure is well presented but omits to include authorised, as well as unauthorised, absence rates. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents is very informative and complies with statutory requirements. The home/school agreement allows parents to understand the responsibilities of school and parents. Apart from written information, the school ensures that staff are available each day to meet parents who have concerns about their children. The main opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress are through open meetings provided each term, which are well attended and much appreciated. Two meetings are arranged at different times in each of the autumn and spring terms to give parents a greater chance to attend. In the summer term, the school holds an open afternoon for parents to discuss pupils' annual reports with class teachers.

39 Some parents, replying to the parents' questionnaire, feel that the school gives insufficient information about their children's progress but the inspection team's judgement is that the information available to parents about their children is good. Some parents are also dissatisfied with the range of activities provided by the school outside lessons. The inspection team's judgement is that, whilst activities for Key Stage 1 children are limited to a football club, there is a suitable selection of activities for Key Stage 2 children, such as recorders, soccer club, netball, country dancing and juggling. The quality and range of these activities is similar to most schools of comparable size. Some dissatisfaction was raised about the amount of homework given to children but the findings of the inspection are that the amount and type of homework given is appropriate for the pupils' ages.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40 The leadership and management of the school are good. The school benefits from the effective leadership of the recently appointed headteacher who has a clear educational vision, and has set out the direction for the school to improve. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and together

they form an effective partnership where their skills and roles are complementary. The headteacher, supported and encouraged by members of the Governing Body, many of whom are recent appointments, has taken positive steps to address the key issues raised in the previous report. Day-to-day administration is good, with effective communication both within the school, and with the wider community, which includes the parents and governors. The school's aims and values are reflected in the positive ethos, where harmonious relationships and positive attitudes contribute to the standards achieved and the life of the school.

41 The Governors' role is a developing one. Governors are becoming more involved in the strategic management of the school. New members of the Governing Body, and those new to different committees, voluntarily undertake training in order to remain updated or to acquire better skills in school management. This training is beginning to have some positive benefits. Governors have recently re-organised the membership of committees and different subjects have been assigned to individual governors, although the full impact of this new initiative cannot yet be measured. Many visit the school regularly and have developed positive links with the subject co-ordinators to ensure they are fully informed about the curriculum. They have begun to identify the significant strengths and weaknesses and have made a promising start to address the issues identified in this way. They are aware that the school needs a period of stable staffing to be able to continue many initiatives. They are becoming more aware of the outstanding issues and are well placed to move forward under the direction of the headteacher. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities.

42 Curriculum co-ordination has been disrupted by recent staff changes but in the light of all the circumstances it is satisfactory overall. Nevertheless the co-ordination of work in geography, history and design and technology have been unsatisfactory because checks have not been made to ensure that there are sufficient resources to cover the schemes of work nor done enough to raise standards and to promote good teaching. This is planned for the next academic year. The work of the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators is good. When subjects are the focus for development, release time is given to the co-ordinators to manage their subjects. This is particularly valuable, as it allows them to offer guidance and advice to colleagues, and to monitor standards. They have helped to implement the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well, monitored teaching and learning, together with the headteacher, and shared their work with the governors. The headteacher has developed good systems to monitor, evaluate and improve teaching, the curriculum and planning and has begun to implement these systems, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

43 The school development plan is a very effective way of improving the school. It covers many aspects of school life, with success criteria being set in terms of raising achievement. The process of formulating the plan is developing well, with staff and governors now more involved. Governors are exploring ways of monitoring value for money with various initiatives.

44 The school has an appropriate number of teachers and learning support assistants and almost all teachers were appropriately qualified at the time of the inspection. They have a good mix of experience. In view of recent events at the school, which has witnessed several changes amongst both the teaching and ancillary staffing, the inspection team concurs with the school's view that a period of stability is required to take initiatives into action. The system for identifying teachers' developmental needs is good. All staff receive appropriate and well focused training in relation to both school and individual needs. However, job descriptions are insufficiently linked to the specific roles that members of staff fulfil in the school. The school recognises the need to review them. There are good procedures in place to monitor and support new members of staff.

45 The school makes very good use of specific funds for pupils with special educational needs with a positive impact on their progress. The special needs co-ordinator works effectively to support pupils and, with the staff, ensures that the majority of these pupils make good progress.

46 The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but in Key Stage 2 classroom sizes are too small and have an adverse effect on the quality of education provided. The lack of suitable accommodation is resulting in one whole year group being split and the pupils receiving a different curriculum, dependent on the year group they work with. The library is being re-organised and so the school is taking appropriate action on this key issue from the previous report. The new building is in place and currently being furnished. The separate kitchen and dining hall, although an asset, is old and in need of considerable repair. A new administrative building with adequate office, reception and staff areas and the enclosed outside play area for the younger children are improvements since the last inspection. The grounds are particularly attractive with an adventure play area, seating and grass and hard areas. Display is used well in most classrooms and corridors to create a stimulating environment.

47 Resources of equipment and books are satisfactory overall. Literacy and numeracy have benefited from large amounts of money being spent to implement the strategies. Resources in these areas are now good, helping to improve pupils' achievements in these subjects.

48 The school's budget planning procedures are very good. The school receives excellent support from the Local Education Authority's finance manager. All grants, including those for traveller education and special needs, are used for their intended purposes and amounts spent on specific grants are carefully noted. The residual budget, after allowing for salaries, is allocated according to school development priorities and on the basis of other prioritised subject needs. Day-to day management of the budget and procedures to obtain best value are very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In seeking to improve the quality of education further the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- review the systems for planning the curriculum and the organisation of timetables and complete the schemes of work. In so doing they need to ensure that: (Paras 22, 23)
 - a) the lessons in mathematics and literacy are not too long;
 - b) the links made between subjects are valid and worthwhile and that topics/project work is well matched to the National Curriculum; (Paras 23, 87)
 - c) the needs are met of the mixed-ages and differing levels of prior attainment in most classes; (Paras 5, 23)
 - d) the curriculum provided for the split year class, currently Year 5 pupils;

- take steps to implement an adequate whole school record keeping system so that: (Para 35)
 - a) pupils' progress can be tracked across the school;
 - b) new teachers will be provided with a secure knowledge of what pupils understand and can do;
 - c) pupils who move from the school will be able to continue their education without serious interruption to their progress.

- improve the general presentation of pupils' work and the quality of their handwriting and inspire the pupils to take a greater pride in their work. (Paras 3, 63)

- sharpen up the way teachers plan to assess what the pupils will gain from lessons and the methods and use of assessment within lessons so that teachers can; (Para 35)
 - a) build on pupils' understanding;
 - b) revise work which groups of pupils have found to be difficult;
 - c) match more accurately work to pupils' stage of learning development.

- improve the curriculum opportunities for pupils in music and art in upper Key Stage 2 by; (Paras 16, 21, 31, 80, 93)
 - a) increasing teachers' confidence and expertise through training courses;
 - b) providing pupils with a greater range of experiences in these subjects and devoting more teaching time to them.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	13	50	33	5		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		121
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		21

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	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 For the latest reporting year	1999 (98)	10 (11)	11 (4)	21 (15)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	8
	Girls	8	10	11
	Total	15	18	19
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	71 (73)	86 (80)	90 (93)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	8
	Girls	8	9	11
	Total	15	17	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (80)	81 (80)	90 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999 (98)	6 (6)	12 (7)	18 (13)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	10	11	12
	Total	15	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (92)	94 (100)	100 (100)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	15	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (85)	89 (85)	100 (100)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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	127
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

* one pupil

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.2
Average class size	25.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	12*	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
	£
Total income	274193
Total expenditure	279485
Expenditure per pupil	2201
Balance brought forward from previous year	47005
Balance carried forward to next year	41713

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	125
Number of questionnaires returned	51

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	49	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	53	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	49	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	53	12	0	6
The teaching is good.	57	37	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	41	16	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	35	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	37	6	4	10
The school is well led and managed.	45	39	8	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	39	8	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	45	25	4	2

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

49 Two intakes of children enter the Reception class during the year. Children whose fifth birthday falls between September and January start school in September, whilst children whose fifth birthdays occur in the spring and summer terms commence in January. At the time of the inspection, fourteen children were still under five. The induction arrangements for new entrants are good. Positive links have been established with the parents through a programme of meetings and visits for the children in school. This helps all the children, including children from travelling families, to settle well when they start school full-time. Children's overall level of attainment when they enter the school is below average, particularly in language and literacy. Children make good progress and, by the time they are five, the majority attain standards at least in line with those expected in all areas of learning. A few children attain higher standards, particularly in language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. Standards of attainment are similar to those in the last inspection.

50 The classroom is used well to promote an attractive stimulating environment based on all areas of the curriculum. Since the last inspection, there is now a secure outside area and large wheeled toys to extend the range of opportunities for physical development. The overall curriculum provided for the under-fives is good. It is based on national guidance for young children's learning and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The arrangement of the curriculum ensures that all children have access to a good range of learning opportunities. The children are assessed during their first few weeks in school, and the results are used effectively to inform the activities the children are given, particularly in language and literacy and mathematics. These assessments confirm that, overall, children are below average when they enter the school. Teaching is consistently good which helps the children to learn effectively and make good progress

51 Children's personal and social development is given a high priority and, as a result, pupils make good progress in this aspect of their learning, attaining the expectations for children aged five. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices about their activities, which they do well. They co-operate with one another and take turns, as when they play in the toyshop or work on the computers. They are interested and responsive. They take part in all the activities provided for them with enthusiasm, as in the daily phonic sessions. Even the youngest children are able to work with concentration and persevere in their learning. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Adults act as good role models for the children and help them to form positive relationships with one another. The teaching is good in this aspect of the children's learning.

52 In language and literacy, teaching is effective and helps the children to make good progress and, by age five, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with expectations. On entry to the Reception class, some children have limited language use and a restricted vocabulary. Speaking and listening skills are given high priority across all areas of learning. Imaginative role play is planned carefully and is very effective in helping pupils to become confident in expressing themselves verbally. Children are encouraged to use appropriate language when playing in the toyshop, with the aid of appropriate posters and resources. They talk enthusiastically about their experiences in school. They understand that words and pictures carry meaning and most recognise their own names and can write them. All the children enjoy stories, listen well, enjoy sharing books and handle them with care. The most able read simple text. Others can talk about the pictures, using appropriate language. By the time they are five, the most able can write recognisable letters to form words, which are then constructed into simple sentences. Pupils' writing is promoted effectively, as in the writing corner and in the toyshop when children have opportunities to use symbols, letters and words.

53 On entry to the Reception class, children's mathematical skills are below average overall. The quality of teaching of mathematics is good. Provision for children's development and awareness of

mathematical language and skills is effective. Children make good progress, and the majority reach the expected standard by the time they reach statutory school age. Through practical activities, children extend their mathematical vocabulary and understanding. They compare, sort, match and count everyday objects, know most colours and some two-dimensional shapes. Many match appropriate objects to the numbers and some of the youngest children recognise, write and order numerals to ten. The more able children carry out simple addition to ten.

54 Suitable provision is made for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make good progress because of the good teaching, and reach the expected standard by age five. The children use computers confidently, know some of the main parts and can use the mouse well. They can use it to select icons and drag them in to position and use it to select from the menu. In science, children begin to learn about materials and know the difference between wood and plastic when they talk about toys. Through visits such as those to Hatfield Forest, they gain an awareness of different habitats. They are developing a sense of the past, when they compare old and new bears, and by five children are beginning to understand their own place in time.

55 Pupils make good progress in their physical development and, by age five, their level of attainment is in line with expectations. In the last inspection, children had insufficient opportunities to use large equipment outdoors as there was no enclosed area specifically for them. This has now been addressed. They can make two-footed jumps in different directions and jump in and out of hoops. They listen and respond to instructions appropriately. They get themselves undressed and ready for physical education lessons. Teaching is good. There are good opportunities planned to develop finer control of their fingers and hands when children use scissors, glue sticks and paint brushes in creative work and writing, and drawing tools to form letters and numbers and to make their own visual representations of their experiences. Through their work with a variety of equipment, they show a growing control and ability to manage smaller items, as evident by the results of some of their artwork and when cutting out words to sequence in literacy lessons.

56 The quality of teaching is good in creative development, in which children are offered a wide range of activities and make good progress. Children express their ideas in art well and by the time they are five, most achieve the standards expected. They use a range of different media and develop their skills in handling paints, pastels and materials to produce work in both two and three dimensions. They look carefully at their teddy bears and use pastels well to create recognisable pictures and skillfully paint hyacinths applying paint with care. Even the youngest produce good representations of flowers with appropriate colour and shape. They make imaginative puppets from a variety of materials and children can explain in detail how they made them. There is a good balance of free activity and teacher-directed work in which skills are taught. Children enjoy singing and joining in with action songs. They remember the words and tune well.

ENGLISH

57 In the 1999 national tests, the school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 were below average in both reading and writing and well below average when compared to similar schools on the basis of free school meal percentages, although there was some improvement in writing on the previous year. The small cohort of pupils is resulting in some fluctuations from year to year in both key stages. Inspection findings confirm a continuing improvement through Key Stage 1 as a result of the literacy hour teaching. The pupils' results in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in English were overall in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils, which achieved the expected level or above, was higher than the national average, but the percentage achieving the higher level was well below the national average. Compared with the performance of pupils in similar schools, pupils' performance was broadly average. The school has been realistic when setting targets for the present Year 6 pupils, with around three-quarters of pupils expected to achieve the expected level and one-fifth the higher level.

58 Inspection findings from pupils' current work show attainment in English to be broadly average at the end of both key stages. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment in English, with particularly low scores in the assessments on entry to the Reception class of the children's speaking and listening skills. All children make good progress in language and literacy and when they leave the Reception class, many are just in line with the national average, with a few attaining higher levels. Progress continues to be good in English skills through Years 1 and 2, and it is sound overall in Key Stage 2. In the present Year 2 cohort, a few children reach the higher level. However, in the Year 1 class, there is a larger percentage of higher-attaining pupils. The current Year 6 pupils are on average in line with the national expectations for pupils aged 11. Pupils with special educational needs and traveller children receive effective support and make good progress throughout the school.

59 Standards of attainment in speaking and listening by the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with the national average. Many pupils listen well, respond confidently to questions and many speak clearly. Some pupils, however, have poorly developed skills in speaking and, although confident speakers, they have a limited vocabulary. Good opportunities are presented to pupils to develop their skills, as in the Key Stage 1 assembly when children described what was happening in the story of Red Riding Hood and related it to their own lives. By the end of Key Stage 2, speaking and listening skills are in line with national expectations. Some pupils express themselves clearly and with confidence, although some have difficulty in explaining their work with clarity and have limited vocabularies. This hinders their progress, as observed in the Year 6 additional literacy lesson, where pupils could only describe characters from the text in limited detail.

60 By the end of Key Stage 1, reading is in line with the national average, and some pupils reach higher levels of attainment. They are benefiting from the introduction of the literacy hour, and the increased focus on phonics in Key Stage 1. The phonics programme is effective in helping pupils look at words carefully and learn the sounds. Enthusiastic teaching makes learning phonics fun and these skills are transferred well when the children are reading, even for the youngest. In the Year 2 literacy lesson, many pupils could successfully read a variety of adjectives describing the characteristics of the wolf and Red Riding Hood, and then assign them to the correct character. Most pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction, know how to find words in a dictionary using alphabetical order. They read simple texts with increasing fluency and enjoyment and understand what they have read.

61 Attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress. A few pupils are attaining the higher levels but a significant number do not always deduce underlying themes in text, such as in 'Goodnight, Mr Tom', even though they had learnt about the war and evacuees recently in history. The most able readers are beginning to use good expression and many are beginning to read with increasing accuracy. They make reference to the text when they explain their opinions about the book. They access information in reference books and know how to use the contents page, index and a glossary. Pupils are not taught library skills systematically and they do not have a good understanding of how to use a classification system. They have had limited access to the library and their opportunities for independent study have been restricted. Both the co-ordinator and headteacher are keen to develop the use of the new library facility as soon as possible.

62 Writing, by the end of Key Stage 1, is broadly in line with the national average; few pupils achieve above expectations. Good progress is maintained throughout the Key Stage from the below average level at intake. Many current Year 1 pupils are attaining above expectations for their age. Teachers encourage pupils to write in a variety of forms in other subjects. For example, in history there are particularly good descriptions of old toys in the class museum guide in Year 2 and posters with prices in the toyshop in Year 1. Most pupils still print, but many of them are forming their letters satisfactorily so that they are able to read back their own writing. Teachers are encouraging pupils to write at length and simple punctuation is used correctly most of the time, although quite a number still forget to use capital letters and full stops. Spelling is satisfactory, with children prepared to 'have a

go' and attempt to spell words according to letter sounds. At times the use of exciting and interesting vocabulary is limited and pupils do not write sufficiently often in extended sentences.

63 Progress in writing is satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and a few pupils attain higher levels. However the quality of handwriting and presentation is variable. At best, pupils write in a neat cursive script, but a significant proportion of pupils write using a mixture of print and cursive script in pencil, showing some deterioration since the last inspection when handwriting was considered to show increasing control and maturity. In their writing about their study themes, presentation is much better. Many Year 6 pupils understand the basic skills, but do not use exciting and interesting language when writing. Punctuation and spelling are usually correct, and pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the use of paragraphs and parts of speech, although too often use is inconsistent. Pupils write in a variety of forms, including letters, stories and poems. They write reports of their experiments in science and accounts in history such as those of 'The Jarrow March' in which facts are reported well. A little use is made of information technology to word process writing such as 'My Grandad's memories of the war'. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to write at length.

64 Teaching is good in Key Stage I and ranged from good to unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2, but overall is satisfactory. The teachers have worked hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy, which they teach effectively. They have a good knowledge and techniques for teaching the basic skills and letter sounds. Teachers use the good quality resources well and deploy support staff very effectively. However, sometimes teachers spend too long in teaching English lessons and pupils can become restless and then can disturb others. In the most effective lessons, teachers' expectations are high and the management of pupils is good. At times in Key Stage 2, work is not suitably matched to pupils' prior attainment and all pupils carry out the same tasks. Sometimes expectations are too low and too little work is expected from some pupils, limiting the amount of progress made in lessons. Teachers often question pupils effectively to help them extend their knowledge and to check their understanding. Most pupils have positive attitudes in English work and concentrate and persevere with their tasks.

65 The subject meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator is at present collecting planning to devise a scheme with the local authority advisor to ensure progression for the mixed-age classes. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed to raising standards in literacy. She has had good opportunities to monitor teaching and learning and discusses her observations supportively with staff. The school is aware of the need to develop library and independent study skills further, an issue which remains unresolved since the last inspection. Displays are used effectively to illustrate the range of English work and sound use is made of pupils' writing in work in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

66 The Key Stage 1 results for 1999 were close to the national average. In the 1999 National tests for eleven year olds, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was well above the national average but the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was below the national average. Pupils' attainment in comparison with similar schools was above average. Taking the four years 1996-99, standards in mathematics are improving in line with the national trend of improvement. This confirms that standards in the subject have been sustained since the previous inspection. These results broadly reflect the standards being achieved by the current pupils in Years 2 and 6.

67 The Numeracy Strategy has started to have a positive impact on pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. Data handling is a sound element of the curriculum, as seen in Key Stage 2, for example in some pupils' work on analysing their favourite fruits. Pupils' have a suitable knowledge of shape and space. The Numeracy Strategy has improved pupils' capabilities in mental mathematics and they can explain the different mental strategies they use, although this approach was not receiving sufficient attention at the top end of Key Stage 2. The use of plenary and homework consolidates and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding.

68 Key Stage 1 pupils can count in twos unaided to 100. They know the difference between digital and analogue clocks. Almost all pupils can work out half past using the digital clock. Younger pupils can order, measure and describe classroom objects using non-standard measures. Key Stage 2 pupils can collect and record data on a tally chart and transfer it independently on to a block graph. They can work with four figure numbers and have a good understanding of place value. They understand about equivalent fractions and can use these in appropriate contexts, for example when working practically. Some pupils demonstrate well developed mental calculation strategies while others understand that the place value of a number after a decimal point is 'tenths'. Older pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of the likelihood of some events occurring and predicting outcomes.

69 The quality of learning observed was good overall. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about mathematical activities. They are capable of sustaining concentration, and many keep on task even when sessions are too long. In the main, they are well behaved and respond positively to opportunities for collaboration. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in developing concepts of number and shape and Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress overall in consolidating and extending their mental calculation strategies involving the four operations and the use of appropriate notation. Older pupils learn about the need to take a large sample in order to have sufficient data to predict outcomes while dealing with probability, though occasionally their learning is less than effective. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, overall. There is no significant difference in the progress being made by boys and girls.

70 Overall the quality of teaching observed was good in both key stages. Occasionally it was very good. Most teachers question pupils effectively enhancing their participation in activities. Their skillful response to pupils' answers and their well timed interventions in their written assignments have a positive impact on their learning, for example, enabling a Key Stage 2 class to order their graphs according to the most popular fruit. Some teachers were observed using games to heighten pupils' interest and to ensure their participation. This approach accelerated the pace of learning. These strategies demonstrate good teaching knowledge. Their lessons are generally well prepared and resourced. Most lessons make a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills by focusing on relevant mathematical vocabulary. However, teachers occasionally do not match the work to pupils' different prior attainment in the mixed-aged classes sufficiently well.

71 The introduction of the Numeracy Strategy has enabled the mathematics curriculum to be broad, balanced and focused. The use of a published scheme soundly supports the Numeracy Strategy. The resources for mathematics are good, though the use of information technology to support the mathematics curriculum is currently limited. The subject is soundly managed. There is insufficient focus, particularly at the top end of school, on the development of pupils' mental calculation strategies and the use of the plenary to re-inforce learning.

SCIENCE

72 Pupils' progress in science is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The standards the current Year 2 pupils are likely to reach by the end of both key stages are broadly in line with national expectations and at least in line by the end of Key Stage 2. This continues the satisfactory performance of pupils in Key Stage 1 and good performance at the end of Key Stage 2. In the last four years results in the national tests have been at least in line with national averages. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards have been consistently better than the national averages and sometimes well above, and boys and girls have been performing equally well. In the most recent national tests, the results of Key Stage 1 pupils were average and Key Stage 2 results were above the national average. However, when comparisons are made between schools of similar types, as judged by the percentage of free school meals, the performance of pupils in both key stages in 1999 was above average.

73 Pupils are taught all the elements in the National Curriculum programme of studies for science and a strong feature of the curriculum is the opportunity given to the pupils to work practically. During the inspection, Key Stage 1 pupils had to make circuits with different strips of insulated wire to make a bulb light up and discovered that the light was brighter when two batteries were being used. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of fair testing. These opportunities are not only strengthening the pupils' understanding of the principles involved in science investigation but, at the same time, increasing their knowledge and understanding of different aspects of science, such as physical and life processes. As a result they make increasing gains as they progress through Key Stage 2 and have secure understanding by age eleven. In one lesson seen, Year 6 pupils were investigating the best conditions for dissolving sugar. Groups of pupils undertook different aspects of the investigation, for example the time taken to dissolve different types of sugar and whether the amount or temperature of the water made any difference. They predict well what they think will happen and are given opportunities to explain their thinking.

74 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have acquired good knowledge about caterpillars changing into butterflies, understand the life cycle of frogs by observing the changes to frog spawn over time and been to the local play park to do work on forces. They investigated pushing and pulling movements with the equipment. By the age of eleven, pupils know that light is required to make shadows and they can draw shadows with reference to the direction that the light is coming from. They know the difference between chemical and physical changes and can carry out experiments with suitable levels of independence. They understand about solids, liquids and gases. For example, they know that water is a liquid and when it is frozen it changes into a solid. They know that trees produce oxygen and breathe in the gas called carbon dioxide and that this is one of the balances within nature.

75 Pupils work well in groups and apply themselves well in lessons, showing much interest, particularly when working practically. They are less well motivated when writing about their work and sometimes work in pupils' books is unfinished. They do not yet devise their own ways of recording results sufficiently well and do not yet raise enough of their own questions to investigate in either key stage.

76 The quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to good in both key stages but it was good overall. The strengths in teaching in both key stages are: the good opportunities given to pupils to work practically and to develop their understanding; the discussions which take place when pupils are working; and the good quality of questioning which checks pupils' understanding of what they have learned previously and the way it helps them to think carefully about what they are doing currently. Teachers are not, however, giving sufficient thought to how they might challenge the pupils who show above average skills or to the older pupils in mixed-age classes, so they can attain the higher levels in the National Curriculum and thus make even better progress. They do not hand over enough opportunity to the pupils to think of different ways of recording their work.

77 During the course of the inspection, pupils were taught by a visiting space scientist. He taught each class and the theme of the work undertaken related to the work classes were currently undertaking. The youngest pupils investigated toys such as paper aeroplanes, Klackers and magnetic marbles whilst older pupils explored the effect of air pressure on liquids in bottles and pneumatics, including the launch of rockets. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed these activities which contributed to their enthusiasm for practical science activities and inquiry and to their knowledge of air pressure.

78 The science co-ordinator has only recently had responsibility for the subject. He has good science knowledge and has a clear plan to improve the science curriculum, for example by checking the current scheme against the new National Curriculum requirements, how teachers are approaching the teaching of science in the mixed-age classes and reviewing resource provision. Resources for the subject are good in some aspects for example, for electricity but less good in others such as light. Overall, they are satisfactory although storage arrangements are not as good as they might be.

ART

79 By the time they are seven, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations for their age, though standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below expectations. Key Stage 1 pupils demonstrate sound observational skills. They can draw recognisable bears with pastels. Some of them have started using the computer to draw their own pictures. They use the mouse well to colour in their pictures.

80 Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 pupils observed were enthusiastic about drawing, and make good progress in developing their artistic skills. They demonstrate good levels of concentration, and are well behaved. Year 3 pupils are learning to experiment with pencils to draw line patterns, showing fairly well developed observational skills. Many are making good progress in holding and using the pencil from different angles, though they cannot yet produce light or dark shades with sufficient confidence. An increasing number of pupils are learning to improve their work by evaluating each other's drawing. There was no significant gender difference in pupils' progress during the inspection. The quality of art in upper Key Stage 2 was below expectations.

81 The quality of teaching observed was generally good and occasionally less than satisfactory, mainly at the upper end of Key Stage 2. Effective teaching is marked by good intervention and encouragement, and this enabled the majority of pupils to improve their work in the lessons observed. On one occasion, teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory as it did not advance pupils' knowledge or skills in designing stained glass windows. There is little evidence of challenge for pupils who show more flair. Relationships are well established, and the majority of teachers show good management of time and pupils. Their intervention to highlight teaching points and imaginative use of resources such as their personal sketches reflect good knowledge of art.

82 There is some evidence of cross-curricular link such as designs of Roman jewellery, and of sewing and weaving patterns. The co-ordinator is resourceful and involved in the local schools' initiative. A parent, who is a professional artist, works with groups of pupils with a focus on portraits. The level of resourcing is satisfactory. Art was not, however, time-tabled for some classes during the inspection and evidence was obtained from displays of work. Opportunities for visits to art galleries are limited. The subject policy and scheme of work are not yet in place. The assessment of pupils' work is not strong, and there is no whole-school approach to monitoring and evaluation of the subject – a weakness identified in the previous inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83 Standards of the pupils' work seen are appropriate for their ages at Key Stage 1. For example, younger pupils made simple puppets and decorated them well. Their planning involved choosing the type of puppet to make. They use construction kits and recycled materials to make satisfactory models of playground equipment following a visit to the local park. Older pupils made more advanced puppets with moving parts and used a wider range of materials. This work was based on the evaluation of some manufactured puppets. There was very little Key Stage 2 work available to examine and so it is not possible to evaluate standards. At the previous inspection, pupils' design and evaluation skills were below average and there was no evidence of these skills during the present inspection.

84 The school follows a national scheme of work but some units of work are allocated to particular classes because they link with the overall thematic title for the term rather than because they can help pupils gain particular knowledge and skills. The units in the scheme of work have not been adapted to the school's needs as yet. At present, the scheme does not ensure that pupils improve their skills of designing and making year by year. There is a lack of staff expertise for the subject. The co-

ordinator was appointed recently. In the past, the co-ordinator has not done enough to raise standards and promote good teaching.

GEOGRAPHY

85 The very small amount of recorded work for geography so far this year is of an appropriate standard for the pupils' ages. The youngest pupils drew good quality maps of the local park and of their routes to school. Older Key Stage 1 pupils use information technology to record the weather each day. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils knew and used the points of the compass to identify countries and cities in the British Isles, and located weather symbols on a map. They created their own weather symbols and used these to write their own weather forecasts. In this lesson, the teacher used good subject knowledge to make links between geographical skills, places and the theme of the weather.

86 The school follows a national scheme of work but the units in the scheme have not been adapted to the school's needs as yet. Teachers receive little guidance apart from the scheme itself. The co-ordinator was appointed recently and has had no in-service training for the subject. In the past, the co-ordinator has not done enough to raise standards and promote good teaching. A check has not been made to ensure that there are enough resources to cover the teaching of the scheme of work.

HISTORY

87 The school follows the national scheme of work which states the study units to be taught. For Key Stage 1, these link well with the general themes studied. At Key Stage 2, in addition to the necessary study units, additional history units are added if they appear to link to a particular general theme. Some of these links are contrived as, for example, is the inclusion of the history of weather forecasting in the water and weather study. There is not clear planning for these additional aspects and so they do not contribute to the pupils' development of historical skills year by year.

88 There was very little recorded work at Key Stage 1 available to be examined and so it is not possible to evaluate standards. At Key Stage 2, much of the work seen was of an appropriate standard for the pupils' ages. For example, younger pupils sequenced the events of the Roman invasion of England, drew maps of Roman towns and showed a good understanding of Anglo-Saxon laws. However, some of the work does little to improve pupils' historical knowledge and skills, as when they design their own Roman mosaics rather than using real Roman mosaics as a historical source. They produce good drawing of Roman artefacts but do not use these as evidence about the Romans. Older pupils studying Britain since the 1930s used their sound historical knowledge to write letters as members of the Jarrow March and as a wartime evacuees. They interview older people about their experiences of the Second World War, and give their views about the changes that have taken place in Britain since then. From the evidence of this work, there is not a clear improvement in pupils' historical skills year by year. For example, they have insufficient opportunities for historical enquiry.

89 The co-ordinator's role is to provide advice to teachers but does not do enough to raise standards and promote good teaching in both key stages. A check has not been made to ensure that there are enough resources to cover the teaching of the scheme of work.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

90 The school is at a significant point in its development of the information technology curriculum. It is about to form a suite of eight computers but, until now, the curriculum has been limited, particularly in Key Stage 2, despite the good link with the local secondary school, which allows the school to use their suite for a small part of the school year. Present teaching arrangements enable

pupils to meet expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, but they would be inadequate to enable Key Stage 2 pupils to fulfil all the requirements for age 11 without the support of the secondary school. For example, pupils' competence in control and sensing by the end of Key Stage 2 relies on the secondary school facilities. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can merge text and graphics and know the fundamentals of word processing. Pupils' progress overall is sound in both key stages and pupils' attainment is broadly in line with expectations by the end of both key stages.

91 Very little teaching took place in information technology during the inspection. A Key Stage 1 lesson was observed but other use of technological devices such as computers was confined to small amounts of time in the school day. For most of the time, the computers remained unused. In the one lesson the teaching was good. There was effective use of questioning as pupils considered how to program a moving toy, which could roam along the floor according to the commands stored in its memory. Good use was made of prediction to estimate how far the machine would travel when given particular commands. The pupils gained much from the experience, such as learning how to give repeat commands and sequencing commands correctly. The pupils were well behaved, very attentive and keen to be involved. They were interested in the work and achieved well and made good progress.

92 The school has an adequate number of computers for the way in which the subject is currently taught but will require extra machines when the new suite is installed to allow for the formal teaching in the suite and classroom opportunities at other times.

MUSIC

93 As in the last inspection, insufficient music was observed to enable judgements to be made for overall standards and progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator is aware that very little class music is offered to the older pupils but they listen to music as they enter and leave assembly, and they take part in school productions.

94 One lesson was observed in Year 2, in which children had good opportunities to perform, listen and compose music. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, made good progress and thoroughly enjoyed their lesson. Effective teaching helps Key Stage 1 pupils to make good progress and reach appropriate expectations by age seven. Pupils could successfully compose a pattern using symbols from words such as 'action man', 'car' and 'teddy' and then play the rhythmic patterns. Very good teamwork between the class teacher and learning support assistant ensured pupils listened and performed well, while enjoying the rhythm of the music. Pupils responded enthusiastically to performing using instruments. Effective intervention by the teacher ensured pupils concentrated on the activity and worked hard together to improve the standard of their performance. Very good co-operation between the pupils ensured that they played the appropriate instruments together on time. This kind of activity is helping pupils' personal and social development, as they have to consider one another and work together. The teacher effectively moved the lesson on, consolidating previous learning and extending and developing new skills. The pupils listened attentively and made good progress as they built on their previous skills of using the percussion instruments and composing. Although no music lesson was observed in Year 3, evidence was gained about music from pupils' work and discussion with the class teacher. Pupils learn to appreciate music as they listen to Sibelius when drawing and painting. They compose their own songs about jobs people do. Rhythms are then tapped out based on the work of such people as builders and mechanics.

95 The school has traditionally arranged opportunities for pupils to perform in public, for example, during class assemblies, Christmas and summer productions, Infant and Junior Music Festivals. A small group of pupils benefit from the teaching from peripatetic teachers. Pupils are required to pay for this and learn to play the clarinet and brass instruments. The school does not have a music

specialist at present and the headteacher is acting co-ordinator. She is aware of the limited musical experiences for pupils in Key Stage 2 and is hoping to address the issue with national guidance materials and with a supportive framework for the staff.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96 Only two lessons, one in each key stage, could be observed in full during the inspection, because of the school's time-tabling arrangements. In these two lessons, pupils made sound progress. The pupils are taught an appropriate range of activities, including swimming at Key Stage 2, which enables most pupils to swim the recommended 25 metres by age 11. It was not possible to judge overall attainment or progress in PE because of the limited opportunities for observation.

97 In the lessons observed, teaching in the one Key Stage 1 lesson was good and in the Key Stage 2 dance lesson it was satisfactory. Progress in the two lessons observed was sound. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils could jump two-footed between hoops and around a spread out skipping rope, although they did not show much initiative in varying their type of jumps, despite being encouraged to do so by their teacher. In the Key Stage 2 dance lesson, the pupils performed country dance to a satisfactory level of performance with the girls having a better sense of rhythm and general enthusiasm than the boys. The lessons contained much fun within the constraints of formal dance steps. The steps became a little complicated towards the end of the lesson and many pupils found it difficult to manage them.

98 Some pupils engage in after school football and netball activities for which they pay fees. The school teams, however, are coached free of charge. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in inter-school competitions in various sports at local venues. Years 5 and 6 pupils undertake outdoor pursuits activities on residential visits. Resources for PE are adequate and facilitate the range of sport offered. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, although the hall is on the small side but generally adequate for current class numbers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

99 Only one Key Stage 2 lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on teachers' planning, work sampling and discussion with staff and pupils.

100 Standards of attainment in religious education are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus throughout the school. The majority of Key Stage 1 pupils show a developing awareness of festivals and celebrations relating to Christianity and Judaism through assemblies. For example, they know about the journey of Jesus into Jerusalem, which was dramatised by some pupils. They are also aware of the customs associated with Jewish Passover and how it is celebrated as an important family occasion.

101 Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the celebration of Easter and its significance to Christians. Many of them know that Jesus came back to life after death, and how Easter is associated with new life. They also know about other major religious festivals such as the Jewish Passover, as was observed in an assembly led by the local vicar. Such occasions enable the pupils to look at some similarities and differences relating to world faiths, albeit in a limited way.

102 Pupils of all abilities, including those with special needs, made good progress in the lesson observed. They gained from the lesson considerably in that they built on their previous learning, which was focused on spring as a symbol of new life, and collaborated with each other in small groups. Most pupils were enthusiastic about thinking of ideas relating to Easter. They had a meaningful discussion with the outcome being recorded. Some pupils made good use of the

opportunity to share their work with the whole class while several of them made a good presentation of their work involving word processing. The pupils displayed very good standards of behaviour.

103 The quality of teaching observed was good. The group discussion reflected sound planning and led to a focused plenary. The effective link with the assembly theme, which was well focused on Christianity, and good contribution to pupils' literacy skills were rooted in good knowledge of religious education. More able pupils were used to act as scribes for group discussion, and pupils were encouraged to share their ideas in the plenary.

104 The religious education curriculum is consistent with the Agreed Syllabus, which has been adapted to fit the school's two-year programme of work. Improvements since the previous inspection include the recent development of the scheme of work and an upgrading of resources. However, the way in which pupils record their work is not consistent and arrangements for the revision of policy and the use of assessment are not yet in place.