

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

**QUAINTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND COMBINED  
SCHOOL**

Quainton, Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110447

Headteacher: Mrs S Rowan

Reporting inspector: Julia Elsley  
16892

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> June –29<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number:189670

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lower Street Quinton Aylesbury Bucks
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Appropriate authority:	825 Buckinghamshire
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Fell
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Julia Elsley	Registered inspector	English Music Under-fives Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Christine Murrery Watson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Collins	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Information technology Physical education History Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Janet Edwards	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Art Design technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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Inspection Quality Division  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Quinton Church of England Combined School is a small primary school. There are 148 pupils aged 4 to 11 of predominantly white ethnicity, and none for whom English is an additional language. The school serves the village of Quinton, although thirty-nine per cent of pupils come from the surrounding area. The children come from a wide range of social backgrounds and experiences, but most families have at least one parent in work. There are no pupils eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the national average. The school's baseline assessment shows that the attainment of the children on entry reflects the full ability range, but overall it is broadly average when you take account of their personal and social development, spoken English, listening and early reading and writing skills. About 22 per cent of the pupils are included on the school's register for special educational needs, but most of these are at stages 1 and 2. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need. When children start school they attend mornings only, and it is not until after their fifth birthday that they enter the reception class full-time. At the time of the inspection, there were 14 pupils in the Reception year. Of these, eight children were aged under five years at the beginning of the summer term.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school because there is very clear and purposeful leadership from the headteacher and governors who are committed to raising standards and improving the quality of education. The headteacher values highly the work of her staff, monitors the teaching and makes judgements about their training needs in order to support their commitment to raising standards. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and still improving, as are the standards that pupils are achieving particularly in mathematics, science and information technology. The overall effectiveness means that the school offers good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards that the pupils achieve in English, mathematics and information technology are above average by the age of eleven. Children aged five and under make good progress during the reception year.
- The spiritual, social and moral development of the pupils is good.
- The very good levels of care shown by the adults enable all children, including those with special educational needs to make good progress. The procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development and their academic progress are very good. Individual assessments and the targets set to help them improve their work are made clear to both the pupils and their parents. The partnership with parents is good.
- The pupils' attitudes, interest and enthusiasm towards learning and school are good and this has a positive influence upon their achievements.
- The contribution that the community makes to pupils' learning is very good.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good because they provide a clear direction to the educational development of the pupils. All members of staff have a strong commitment to improvement and a capacity to succeed. The financial management is very good and ensures that funding is used very well to support the educational priorities in the children's learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- The general quality of the teaching in mathematics needs to be raised across the school in order to match the very best practice in each key stage.
- Minor improvements:  
A more systematic approach to the setting of homework needs to be established across the whole school. A regular time should be provided for pupils to respond to the written comments made by teachers in their work books in order to correct errors, amend or complete a piece of work.

*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 inspected four years ago. The weaknesses that were identified then have been systematically and appropriately addressed. The school now has a long-term school development plan, which clearly includes all the key issues raised at that inspection. The staff's strong commitment to improving the curriculum planning and assessment of what the children know, understand and can do is now a strong feature of the school. Strides forward have been made in the marking of the children's work, and individual targets are set to improve the quality of the work. The measures taken to establish progression in the children's learning from the reception class onwards is an area that has been tackled systematically and is still on-going. The organisation for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs has been fully addressed and the level of support is good. The school now provides a broadly based curriculum for design technology and music.

The curriculum planning has improved and the monitoring of the teaching and evaluation of the curriculum is now in place. A thorough, systematic approach to the provision of in-service training now supports the development of the staff's knowledge and expertise in most subjects. Nevertheless, more in-service work in mathematics and music would help to build the confidence of the teacher's in the presentation of the curriculum. Steps have been taken to ensure the health and safety of the pupils at all times. Everyone connected with the school has the willingness and motivation to continue to progress.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	A	B	C	well above average above average average below average well below average
Mathematics	A	D	A	C	A B C D E
Science	B	D	A	A	

The table illustrates that the pupils' standards have fluctuated over the course of time. This is because of the size of cohorts and the numbers of pupils with special educational needs vary from year-to-year. Overall, the school has a consistent pattern of above average standards being achieved by the pupils except in 1998 when there was a marked dip in mathematics and science. In last year's national tests standards were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. However, these results are lower when compared to similar schools (i.e. as measured by the number of pupils entitled to free school meals). The school met its targets for English, and mathematics. The inspection findings indicate that the current Year 6 pupils are achieving similar standards in English and mathematics because of the focused additional challenging support given to them. As a result, there is likely to be a significant proportion of pupils reaching levels above the national average. In science, the pupils are on course to meet the national average. There is a significant proportion of lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6. Nevertheless, because of the good quality teaching and the strong commitment of the staff, a good proportion of pupils is on course to meet the expected levels and to achieve the challenging targets set for this year. By the age of eleven, the pupils are achieving above average standards in information computer technology. Attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are enthusiastic, well motivated and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Whilst the majority of lessons are orderly, isolated incidences of unacceptable behaviour were seen. The pupils generally behave well in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils relate well to each other, to adults and to visitors to the school.
Attendance	Good. Attendance levels are better than the national average.

There is a very good ethos within the school, which reflects the aims and values set by the headteacher, governors and staff.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is consistently good across most of the school, although there is a slight variation in the teaching of mathematics within Key Stage 2. During the inspection 95 percent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better. Within this figure 43 per cent of the lessons were good and a further 21 per cent were either very good or excellent. Five per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and this mostly reflects insufficient progress made in the lessons by the pupils. Nevertheless, the majority of whole-class lessons, group and individual sessions are very well organised to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The teaching of English and information computer technology is a real strength and the skills of literacy and numeracy are appropriately transferred across to other areas of the curriculum. This is because the teachers have a secure knowledge and are careful to structure the planning of their lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects the national priorities for literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils make good all-round progress because they are well taught.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is good. Cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The systems for monitoring the pupils' personal and academic progress and reporting to their parents are strong features of the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher give a clear direction to the educational developments at the school in order to maintain and improve upon the achievements of all pupils in their care.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body fulfils all its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has effective systems in place to monitor the strengths and weaknesses because it evaluates most aspects of its work with a quiet rigour. The priorities of the school development plan are appropriate and implemented well. As a result, the school continues to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good.

The headteacher provides very clear direction so that the management of the school continues to improve. The governors work very closely with the staff and are applying the principles of best value in all their financial decisions. The members of staff, including the support staff, are well qualified and their expertise is very effectively deployed to meet the demands of all pupils in their care. The school's accommodation is adequate to meet the demands of the school's curriculum. The overall levels of educational resources are good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like coming to school. They are well taught and make good progress.</li> <li>• Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to succeed and benefit from the targets they agree with their teachers. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and to take responsibilities for themselves and their actions.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small minority of parents are concerned about the behaviour of the pupils.</li> <li>• A few parents would like to feel that the school is more approachable when problems occur.</li> <li>• The parents would like to see a more systematic approach to the setting of homework across the whole school.</li> <li>• A significant number of parents would like the school to provide more after school activities.</li> </ul>

The inspectors' judgements support most of the views expressed by the vast majority of parents about the school, in the questionnaires and in meetings with parents, both at the pre-inspection meeting during the course of the inspection. The inspection team agrees with parents that there are some isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour, and that homework is not systematic through the school. The inspection team found that the school is welcoming and all members of staff are accessible and provide good support to both parents and pupils. The school provides a wide range of clubs throughout the year as good as or better than similar sized schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

1. In last year's national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were above the national average in English and well above in mathematics and science. When results are compared with those of schools with similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards in science remained well above average, but English and mathematics were average.
2. Analysis of the results of national tests shows that the school maintains a consistent high standard overall. Although levels of attainment have generally exceeded the national average, the rate of improvement has kept pace with the national trend.
3. The tests held at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that standards in reading are above average when compared with schools nationally, but below when compared with similar schools. Standards in writing and mathematics are average in comparison with schools nationally and well below that of similar schools.
4. It was evident from the inspection that the proportion of pupils in the current Year 2 reaching the expected levels is above average in reading, and mathematics. Writing is in line with the national average and has improved considerably to ensure that a significant proportion of pupils is reaching a higher level. This is because the teaching is of a high calibre in both the literacy and numeracy sessions. The standards in science are in line with that expected of pupils of similar ages. This represents good progress because the achievements of the pupils entering the school in reception are broadly average when judged against the school's approved baseline assessment. For instance, most of the current reception children will meet the national targets for the foundation stage, and a significant proportion of children will exceed them by the time they enter the Year 1 class.
5. The inspection findings indicate that this year's Year 6 has a significantly higher number of pupils with special education needs than last year's. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels in English and mathematics continues to be above average. In science, a significant proportion of the pupils is achieving in line with the national average.
6. The results of eleven-year-olds for the past three years shows no significant pattern overall. Whilst these results show some differences between the performance of boys and girls, they are not significant because in each small cohort the numbers of boys and girls vary considerably from year-to-year. The inspection findings show no evidence of gender bias within the teaching; both boys and girls work productively in the majority of lessons, although there was some evidence that on occasions some behavioural difficulties did adversely on their learning. It has to be recognised that the significant increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs adversely affects the school's results despite good teaching.
7. The school has a strong commitment to raising standards. The evidence shows that the school has set challenging literacy and numeracy targets for every child. The pupils' work is very closely monitored and analysed, and all pupils, including the higher attaining pupils, receive extra adult support in order to boost their understanding in areas of weakness. The targets are challenging, and a significant majority of pupils will reach them by the age of seven or eleven because of the good teaching at the end of each key stage.
8. By the end of both key stages, standards in English are good overall. This is because of the quality of the teaching ranges from good to excellent. At the time of the previous inspection the planning of pupil's work was criticised but the implementation of the literacy hour has now fully addressed this issue. The structured planning is rigorous and, as a result, is raising the levels of the pupils' reading, writing and spelling across all areas of learning. All children in the reception class enjoy books. They find stories are a source of pleasure and have a growing understanding of the written word. At Key

Stage 1, the pupils spoken English and listening skills are good. The pupils enjoy a range of reading and writing tasks and are making good progress. Much time is spent on discussing writing tasks with good use of text to develop the pupils' ideas and use of vocabulary. The use of punctuation has been taught well, and the pupils' spelling has improved because of the good strategy employed by teachers in the teaching of phonics, that is to say the sound structure of English. The pupils are aware of the need to learn spellings and to check them when writing. This is beginning to eliminate some key errors. The recognition for example, of initial consonant sound blends is enabling the pupils to produce reasonable spellings for less familiar words. A similar progression is evident in the development of reading. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils standard in spoken English and listening skills are good. They find reading a source of pleasure and through the use of a wide range of texts continue to maintain good standards. Additional time has been made available for imaginative and factual writing, and this has been successful in further enhancing the use of grammar and punctuation. This work has also had a direct and beneficial effect upon the standards of writing in other subjects. The pupils make good progress. Throughout the school, the pupils' handwriting skills and the presentation of their work are good.

9. In mathematics, the overall standards are good at the end of both key stages. The pupils' achievements at Key Stage 1 are a direct result of the school's recent work in numeracy. This can be observed in the way pupils show their enjoyment and enthusiasm in the mental mathematics sessions. The teachers have worked extremely hard to improve their own knowledge of the subject and to increase the pace and the demands of their lessons. However, at Key Stage 2, there is more headway to be made by some teachers in order to match the best teaching within the school and continue to raise standards. By the end of Key Stage 2 however, the teaching ensures that the pupils are confident and competent in mental calculations and have very secure skills and knowledge when calculating large numbers in a variety of ways. They can also competently identify patterns in number. In science at both key stages, the pupils are achieving standards in line with those of pupils of similar ages and their progress overall is satisfactory. Their investigations are carried out with sustained concentration and determination, and their conclusions are thoughtfully drawn and accurately recorded.
10. At the end of both key stages, the overall standards in information computer technology have improved since the last inspection. The pupils' achievements at Key Stage 1 are in line with the expected levels and by the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 they are reaching standards beyond those expected nationally. This is because the school has provided all the staff with not only a good training in information technology skills to build their own confidence in the use of the computer but also the opportunity to teach pupils the necessary skills in separate information technology lessons. The pupils confidently use art programs, and are learning to use music explorer, to access the CD-ROM for information on history and geography projects, and to use the LOGO control program well. The Year 6 pupils are confident in designing a web page for the school's Internet service.
11. Attainment in religious education is satisfactory and meets the standards expected for pupils of similar ages, as outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained and all pupils, including those with special education needs, are making steady gains in their knowledge and understanding through a combination of lessons and assemblies. The pupils have a sound understanding of the main beliefs, writing and customs of the major world religions. They have, for example, a good knowledge of Bible stories and an awareness of other religions such as, Islam and Judaism.
12. The overall standard and quality of work seen in art, geography, history and physical education is in line with the expected levels at the end of the key stages. Achievements in music and design technology have improved since the previous inspection and are now in line with those expected of pupils of similar ages. The individual instrumental playing is good and the pupils are encouraged by the school to celebrate and share with the whole school their musical achievements. This is another strong feature of the school.

13. The pupils' attitudes to their work, their personal development and relationships with adults and each other are good. Their behaviour is satisfactory.
14. The pupils take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them, both within classes and in the extracurricular activities. Of particular note is their enthusiasm for research, fostered by the school's recent provision of new computers and access to the Internet. This carries over into work undertaken at home. Examples were seen of extensive project work, in history and geography for example, where pupils had extended the task set because of the interest generated in school. This willingness to work at home is found in other subjects, such as science and design technology, and amongst even the youngest pupils in the school. Levels of attendance are above those found in primary schools nationally and are a further indication of the pupils' interest and enthusiasm for school.
15. Across the school, the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory although there are a small number of pupils who find it hard to maintain good levels of self-control and concentration. This sometimes results in isolated incidents when their behaviour is unsatisfactory. The previous report commented on weaknesses in this area, but there has evidently been some improvement, based on an increased emphasis within the school on consistently high standards of behaviour management.
16. Relationships throughout the school are good and the pupils are developing a respect and sensitivity towards each other's feelings and needs. The older pupils assume increased responsibilities, both for routine tasks and in the care of the younger ones, well. Many instances were seen where polite and thoughtful conduct enhanced the day-to-day running of the school. Also evident is the emphasis placed on the pupils listening to each other's ideas and views with respect. When working in pairs and small groups or, for example, during a class debate, the pupils were seen to be co-operative, willing to develop and share ideas, and appreciative of each other's contributions.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

17. At the last inspection, the overall quality of the teaching was satisfactory, with some good teaching evident in Key Stage 2 and in the work with children aged under five. However, unsatisfactory teaching was also seen in a minority of lessons. During the course of the current inspection the teaching was either very good or excellent in twenty-one per cent of lessons. It was good in forty three per cent of lessons and satisfactory in thirty one per cent. About five per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and this figure reflected the teachers' lack of knowledge and expertise in mathematics lessons. The overwhelming majority of lessons are well organised to meet the needs of pupils of all ability levels, including those who are under five years of age, higher achieving pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
18. The overall teaching of literacy is good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the staff have spent a great deal of time to ensure its success. As a result, this is helping to raise the standards in English. The training of the staff and the monitoring of lessons by the co-ordinator and the headteacher have been rigorous, in order to improve the quality of the children's learning. The staff is very secure in their knowledge and understanding of how to teach the literacy strategies, and their lesson planning is well structured. In the majority of sessions, the teaching is sharply focused and of a good standard. The lessons are evaluated and areas of weakness are identified for further reinforcement to support individual pupils. At the time of the previous inspection, the teachers recorded assessments were highlighted as a weakness but are now a significant strength and provide very good information for support of the individual pupil's learning. The teaching of the numeracy strategy is satisfactory overall, often good and sometimes very good. Most teachers have a good approach to the teaching of numeracy, and their lessons are well planned and sharply focussed. However, two lessons seen at Key Stage 2 were unsatisfactory and as a result, the pupils found difficulty in acquiring an understanding of new mathematical concepts.

19. The quality of the teaching for children aged five and under is good. All lessons were satisfactory, and eighty three per cent were either good or very good. The reception class plays a crucial role in helping the children to develop their personal and social skills very well, and lays the foundation for their future learning. The children are enthusiastic about their learning, and this is because they find the lessons exciting and stimulating. These lessons are planned imaginatively by the teacher to promote the children's interest through practical tasks. For example, the pupils sang their initial alphabet sounds confidently and competently. In another lesson, they were able to give quick and accurate responses using mathematical language such as, 'heavy or light' and 'more or less than' through the use of play.
20. A strong feature within both key stages is the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge because of the rigorous training that they have received. Their planning is good, they have suitable expectations of their pupils, and as a result challenge them to even greater levels of enquiry. The lessons start with a clear introduction and the children know what is expected of them. Where the teaching is good or very good, the teacher's mental mathematics sessions, for example, are well focused and have a quiet rigour and pace. In these cases, the teaching of the basic literacy and numeracy skills is good. The teachers use good questioning techniques to promote the pupils' ability to think and reflect. The whole-class sessions are sharply focussed and the pace is good. The work achieved is used well to inform the teachers of what children have understood, know and can do. As a result, the teachers have a good awareness of how to support the pupils, for example those with special educational needs, and they pay good attention to explaining concepts clearly. The pupils with lower ability are also supported in this way. This is very good practice and carried out very effectively by staff including, the classroom assistants. The teachers use well the attainment levels in the National Curriculum and an analysis of test results to plan future work. This has helped them to identify where there are gaps in provision and has been successful in improving the pupils' individual performance, attainment and progress in these areas. For example, pupils of all abilities are challenged to greater levels within small group 'booster' sessions to extend their knowledge and understanding, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The teachers' plans are often annotated with comments about what works well and how their lessons might be improved. A great deal of useful assessment information is also noted and stored within teachers' assessment folders. It is clear that planning is being modified in the light of the progress made in the lessons.
21. However, there are weaknesses at Key Stage 2 in the teaching of numeracy. On one occasion the teacher's knowledge was insecure in the introductory explanation of the mathematical task, and in another lesson the ineffective use of worksheets impeded the pupils' progress in their understanding of ordering and finding equivalent fractions. This led to a slower pace of working and most pupils' interest and concentration faltered. There is a need to ensure that the teachers share their practice with each other across the year groups so that the overall standard matches that of the very best. **This is a key issue for action.**
22. The overall quality of the teaching for pupils with special educational needs, including the higher attaining pupils is good. The teachers are fully involved in the drawing up of the pupil's independent educational plans, which are sharply focussed on literacy targets. The school has begun to address appropriately the provision for mathematical learning in the same way. The support staff is well deployed to work with lower attaining groups and pupils with specific difficulties. The headteacher is also engaged in supporting groups of children in 'booster' classes. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 2 approximately half of the lower attaining pupils are on course to reach the required national levels (Level 4) in English and mathematics and a significant proportion of pupils is expected to reach the upper end of the higher level 5.
23. The teaching of the other subjects of the curriculum has many more strengths than weaknesses. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and overall the quality of teaching was good. In science, for example, there has been a marked increase in investigative work to help bring the pupils' learning 'alive'. The teachers have good subject knowledge, prepare their lessons well and use resources, particularly the outdoor learning environment, effectively. Their use of subject-specific vocabulary is good and they

manage these sessions very well. The children, including those with special educational needs know how to behave when working practically because they have helped to establish the class rules and they enjoy positive relationships with their teacher. As a result, the children in Key Stage 2 especially are beginning to think like scientists and develop a far better understanding of how to conduct a fair test. A further improvement in the teaching is the way that information technology is being taught competently by all staff. The pupils are encouraged to word process, to collect and collate data and present their findings on the computer and then print out their results. In history, geography and religious education, the teachers ensure that pupils' literacy skills are further developed by skimming and scanning information on the web sites, and by taking notes to support their work. The teaching of art and design technology is good, and this is another improvement since the time of the last inspection report. The effect of all this good teaching is clearly evident in the responses of the pupils. Even on those occasions when the teaching is less effective, most pupils try hard to gain something worthwhile from the lesson. The school recognises that the teaching of class music is still an area for development, and initial steps have been taken to train and support teachers in improving their knowledge and understanding of how to teach the basic skills in music. The teaching of instrumental music tuition is a further strong feature of the school.

24. Throughout the school, the teachers provide regular and helpful feedback to the pupils about their work. Comments are sensitively and carefully written in order for the pupil to realise what they need to do next. Targets are set to help the pupils improve their work and these are shared with their parents. However, the teachers do not give the pupils a regular time where they can correct errors, amend or complete a piece of in order to improve it. Most pupils do, however, take note of the comments like 'underline with a ruler', or 'your handwriting could be better'. **This is an area for further improvement.** The pupils have homework to do in a variety of subjects. There are strong links between home and school, which foster a good work ethos for homework. However, at present, there is no systematic approach to either the amount of work or the type of work given to pupils across the whole school. **This is also an area for further improvement.**
25. Amongst the staff there is a real sense of teamwork and a strong commitment to raising standards. During the school day, visitors and parent volunteers also make a very worthwhile contribution to the life and work of the school.

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

26. The school provides all of its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that not only meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, but also offers a good range of other interesting and worthwhile experiences. The school has significantly improved its provision for design and technology and music and the requirements of the National Curriculum in these subjects are now fully met. The school has adopted the national guidelines for all subjects and these are well used to support the teachers in their planning and provision for the pupils' learning. Significant improvements have been made in the teachers' planning and as a result the continuity and progression in the pupils' learning across the whole school have benefited since the last inspection. Most teachers now have sound understanding and knowledge of most of the subjects they teach. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
27. Over the past two years, the school has successfully introduced the national strategies for teaching of both literacy and numeracy. The teachers plan these lessons conscientiously and set out clearly what they expect the pupils to learn. As a result, the pupils' confidence and competence in these fundamental skills is increasing steadily throughout the school. The school's provision for extracurricular activities is satisfactory. A wide range of clubs is organised after school by many of the staff and parents. The clubs, such as those for computer, art, chess and sports are well supported and considerably enrich the school's curriculum.
28. The curriculum for the pupils who are not yet five is carefully planned to ensure full coverage of the areas of learning within the foundation stage both in the indoor and outdoor learning environment.

The children's learning is heightened within each area of learning through the good use of structured play activities.

29. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is firmly established. It includes appropriate opportunities to provide sex education and to raise the pupils' awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs, within clearly identified values and a strong family framework. Contributions by representatives from outside agencies, such as the school nurse, also enable the pupils to gain a thorough understanding of these issues.
30. The school has very strong links with the community. They visit the local church and have a good understanding of its role in the community. The teachers make very good use of the local environment. For example, the pupils in the reception class are currently visiting different gardens in the village in their scientific explorations of minibeasts and plant growth. The school's arrangements for preparing pupils for the next stage of education are sound. Besides the usual pattern of visits and preparatory meetings for pupils and their parents, the primary and secondary teachers linked with this school often work together closely on a range of curriculum initiatives.
31. All aspects of special educational needs provision are managed very efficiently by the special educational needs co-ordinator. She receives strong support from the learning support assistant and other staff. As a result the school succeeds in ensuring that all the pupils on the special educational needs register are fully involved in the life of the school and make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.
32. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The arrangements for encouraging the pupils' spiritual development are also strong. The act of worship provides a good focus for the staff and pupils to come together and establish a sense of belonging to the school 'family.'
33. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to think deeply and reflect upon a range of moral, social and religious themes in response to the well-considered material offered by the teachers and other adults. Good opportunities are provided where pupils' spiritual development is a clear focus in lessons. For example, in literacy, the pupils in Years 4/5 wrote about their 'Perfect Day' after studying the famous speech 'I Have a Dream' by Dr Martin Luther King. One lower attaining pupil wrote 'I have a dream that there will not be a war but peace, and let all countries not fight over parts of the land, because lots of people get killed'.
34. The pupils' moral and social development is strongly nurtured through the positive example and high expectations of the school staff. The school's aims and aspirations are set out clearly within the prospectus and the home school agreement made with each family. All the adults work hard to ensure that they live up to these expectations in their work with the pupils. There is a useful code of conduct that rewards good behaviour and sets out clearly what is considered to be unacceptable. As a result, the school is well disciplined and orderly. The pupils are frequently encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on the lives of others. This is often achieved through the effective use of stories during literacy hour. For instance, the Year 6 pupils through their study of Rumer Godden's book 'The Diddakoi' explored the difficulties experienced by a young girl who was 'different'. The pupils are given good opportunities to take increasing responsibility, as they grow older. The residential visit to Marchant Hill gives the pupils an excellent opportunity to become independent and challenge themselves in activities that are new to them.
35. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is sound. They have a secure grasp of their own Christian culture, the key festivals and other secular events. The classrooms and corridors reveal a range of interesting artwork reflecting recent study of Western European artists such as Turner and Monet. One class in their study of India, benefited from the visit of a support teacher of Indian origin who enriched the curriculum by bringing in clothing, such as saris, and sharing with the children Indian dance and instruments. The school's policy for multicultural education shows the leadership is

alert to the importance of broadening the pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of Britain in the twenty-first century. Hence, the regular educational trips to locations beyond the immediate village. The pupils visit the Dome, go to the theatre and spend time in museums. There are also regular opportunities for them to make music by learning instruments, such as the clarinet, flute, violin, viola and cello, and a successful art club encourages those who wish to express themselves through art.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

36. This is a very good aspect of the school's work and provides very good support and guidance for all pupils, including the children under the age of five and the pupils with special educational needs. The school works hard to ensure the health, welfare and safety of its pupils. Issues of concern identified in the previous report, largely related to ease of access for pupils on to the adjacent main road, have been resolved. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and the school liaises with outside agencies as necessary.
37. Since the previous report, which identified weaknesses in the way staff assessed and recorded the progress that the pupils were making, the school has successfully reviewed this work and it is now a strength of the school. The systems are now very good and provide a clear picture of the progress each child is making in skills, knowledge and understanding. Thus staff are able to draw on this information in order to plan work that provides a good level of challenge for each pupil and to set appropriate individual targets. The gains that have been made in this area of school management and class teaching, not only help the pupils to make good progress, but also play a part in the improved management of their behaviour.
38. Effective links with outside agencies provide additional professional and personal support for the pupils with special educational needs, as well as additional adult role models. The emphasis the school places on mutual respect and consideration and its systems for recording any inappropriate or hostile behaviour ensure that any such incidents are promptly checked.
39. The teachers know the children and their families well and good personal relationships are established from the start. In the reception class, all information is used consistently to develop the areas of learning for individuals. The pupils are encouraged to develop their social skills and become integrated into the school community. All class teachers informally monitor the personal and social development of their pupils well. The school has good behaviour strategies in place for example, the pupils who behave well are awarded stickers and certificates and recognition is given in class and school assemblies.
40. The school has very effective systems for assessing and recording the pupils' academic progress. This is a major improvement since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school. The records are consistent, well maintained and cover all areas of pupil's development. They are regularly monitored by the head teacher as assessment coordinator and used to identify where resources and teaching should be directed in order to support and improve the quality of learning for all pupils. Assessments are regularly updated and used when developing future teaching plans. They are very good tools and are used well to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils.
41. There is continuous monitoring of individual targets for pupils, the results of which are shared with other staff, parents and the pupils themselves so that progress can be measured at various times during the year. National tests and teacher assessments are also used to measure progress against the pupils' targets. The school has two 'Assessment Weeks', in November and May, when pupils' targets are re-assessed and new targets agreed. Effective use is made of non-statutory tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 to detect under-achievement. All these assessments are supported by the teacher's own ongoing everyday assessments in class. Folios of work in English, mathematics and science have been started and work is matched against the levels of the National Curriculum. This is used effectively to support the teachers' assessments and the school plans to extend this to other areas of the curriculum.



## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The relationships between the majority of parents and the school are good. Parents and carers think highly of the school and are appreciative of the provision being made for their children. In particular, they are pleased with the level of information they receive, and feel that the school is well led and managed and that the teaching is good. They also appreciate that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. The school is quick to alert parents about pupils with special educational needs and share their concerns. The parents are appropriately involved in annual reviews and are pleased to give support to the school's work.
43. The one area of school life that many parents agree is less than satisfactory is the use that is made of homework. Whilst many pupils undertake work at home following interests stimulated in the classroom, the work that is set does not consistently follow a predetermined pattern and amounts vary from week to week. **This is an area for further improvement.**
44. The school maintains good links with parents and is prompt to contact them if necessary. Despite the fact that a small number of parents feel that staff are hard to approach, it is evident that the teachers are available to meet informally with them at the end of the school day and that they are keen to involve them in their children's education. A regular newsletter from class teachers provides a good measure of information on the day-to-day life of the school and the curriculum being covered, and the interim and annual reports show the progress being made by each pupil.
45. Most parents are able to provide support for work at home, particularly in the area of information technology and individual music tuition, and this has a positive impact on the standards being achieved. The parents' concern at the inconsistent use of homework is indicative of the interest being taken in this area and it is essential that the school should retain this invaluable support. A number of parents help during the school day, either in the classroom or with other practical activities. They are also involved with some of the after-school clubs and help to transport pupils to sports fixtures. There is an active Parent Teacher Association, which organises social events and raises valuable funds for the school.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The increasing effectiveness of this school is a direct result of the very good leadership of its headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by all staff and the governing body. The governing body is enthusiastic in its support of the school and takes a very active and effective role in its running and organisation. Since the last inspection, the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance by the staff demonstrates that their commitment to improve and to achieve higher standards is very good. Its aims are brief, to the point and clearly reflected in a school that is welcoming, orderly and very conscientious in its pursuit of good quality education for all pupils.
47. The headteacher provides very clear direction and management for the work of the school, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, who has been in post two years. Both the headteacher and the deputy head lead the teaching through their own very good, and often excellent, practice. Their enthusiasm and drive encourage all the staff in their quest for curriculum improvement and higher standards of attainment. Above all, the headteacher recognises the crucial importance of a united and effective team. Each member of staff, including the classroom assistants, has a clear and specific job description that outlines their duties and responsibilities well. The headteacher, the subject coordinators and the deputy headteacher undertake regular monitoring of the staff's work. Discussions are held with individual members in order to support and improve on the quality of their work. This includes the classroom assistants whose contributions to the work and relationships with pupils are a real strength of the school. In literacy and numeracy, the coordinators have assumed a greater responsibility by working alongside the headteacher in checking standards, monitoring plans and observing lessons. The teachers know that their work in literacy for example, is successful by the evident improvement of standards at the end of each key stage. Work is now in progress to support

the teaching of numeracy to the same standard. The co-ordinators for other subjects are being given time to review the curriculum in the light of the new National Curriculum guidelines but as yet have not systematically monitored either the work in classrooms or the teachers' plans in similar depth. All members of staff are aware of the fact that they need to review and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills in order to meet the new National Curriculum requirements. The monitoring of the curriculum and the quality of the teaching that was a major concern at the last inspection has been effectively addressed.

48. There are no newly qualified teachers working currently at the school. However, there are procedures in place should the need arise.
49. A significant strength lies in the way that the school is beginning to judge its performance by applying the principles of best value. For example, the headteacher and governors made a decision to put a major amount of the school's funding this year into additional learning support. The outcome is that individual pupils at Key Stage 2 receive extra time within all ability groups for 'booster' sessions where concepts are reinforced. This is contributing directly to the better results that pupils are now achieving, particularly in writing. They have also increased the accommodation facilities to enable the children aged under-five to have a larger environment that will allow for the school to meet the new curriculum orders for the under-fives. The older pupils moving into the new accommodation will also receive the maximum support to raise standards. This has been a very successful strategy and gives a good insight into their policy decision making for the benefit of all children in their care. The governing body has also established an equal opportunities policy, as recommended at the last inspection, and is strongly committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils and staff.
50. The leadership makes very good use of the data provided by external agencies. It is monitoring the standards achieved within the school against those achieved by similar schools and setting realistic targets for improvement on firm data.
51. The additional funding provided for the pupils with special educational needs is used to good effect. For example, all pupils are assessed and their needs quickly identified so that the required support is available both in group-work and in class-based lessons. The school has a good special educational needs policy. A nominated governor helps to monitor provision for the Governing Body on an informal basis.
52. As a result of the governors' strategic financial planning, the school benefits from good levels of educational resources. There has been a significant improvement in the provision of computers and software and an increase in the range of books for teaching literacy and numeracy. The school has very good financial controls. The headteacher and administrative staff manage the day-to-day spending very efficiently and ensure that the administration functions very well. All recommendations in the latest authority audit have been acted upon. The governing body is kept very well informed.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

53. The governing body, headteacher and staff should continue to build on the procedures already established to improve the quality of education by:
- extending to all classes through out the school the good quality teaching in mathematics found at the end of both key stages **(paragraphs: 21, 80)**

### **Other issues which the school should consider:**

- a. The need for a more systematic approach to homework across the whole school. **(paragraphs: 24,42)**
- b. The need for the pupils to have time to correct errors, amend or extend a piece of written work once it has been marked. **(paragraphs: 24, 68)**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	18%	43%	33%	5%	0%	0%

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	148
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	34

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.41
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.02
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	5	14	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	2	2	3
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	15	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (67)	84 (92)	84 (83)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	2	4	4
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	15	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (75)	89 (83)	95 (83)
	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	6	11	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	5	6
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	17	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (83)	94 (51)	100 (67)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (72)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	17	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (83)	100 (63)	100 (100)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21:1
Average class size	24.7

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	284043
Total expenditure	277469
Expenditure per pupil	1797
Balance brought forward from previous year	12383
Balance carried forward to next year	18957

***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	148
Number of questionnaires returned	60

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	19	2	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	32	22	2	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	26	3	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	20	11	1	2
The teaching is good.	35	21	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	22	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	33	16	7	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	22	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	30	23	5	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	34	17	4	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	28	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	16	16	5	4

## **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**

54. Overall, the provision for and the teaching of the children aged five ranges from satisfactory to very good. There are 14 children in the reception class. When they start school they attend mornings only, and it is not until the term after their fifth birthday that they enter the reception class full-time. Most of the children have had some playgroup or nursery experience. On entry to compulsory schooling, the attainment of the current cohort was broadly in line with that expected of children of similar ages. The results of the assessment tasks show that their overall attainment was average personal and social development, spoken English, listening and early reading skills. Mathematics and writing skills were below average for most pupils. There are no children within this small group with either special educational needs or English is an additional language.
55. From this satisfactory point, they settle quickly into school and make good progress in all areas of learning, because of the consistently good level of teaching, by the time they enter Year 1. As a result, the children are on course to achieve the expected levels recommended by the national foundation guidelines and a significant proportion is exceeding these levels in their personal and social development, knowledge and understanding and the physical areas of learning.

#### ***Personal and social development***

56. The children's attainment in personal and social development is above that expected of children of this age. They have a very good start to their school life in the reception class. This is because the teacher's major focus has been to foster the children's skills in this area. Through the well-planned curriculum and daily routines, the teacher demonstrates a strong commitment to developing children's ability to accept responsibility. As a result, the children have developed an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs and feelings of others and have learnt to establish relationships with adults outside their family. Most children listen well to each other and value each other's contributions. They share equipment well, for example, by waiting patiently for a turn on the bicycle. Their behaviour is very good and they show respect for those about them. The sharing time at the end of sessions reinforces socially acceptable behaviour. The routines established in the reception class provide a structure within which the children begin to learn about the world, to co-operate and play well together and find some personal independence. When work is finished both boys and girls tidy away before going on to the next task. There are no significant differences in the responses of boys and girls due to the good support provided by the teacher. There are opportunities for children to plan their own work within the structured activities provided to extend their learning. The children are confident when coming to school. They enjoy their learning and work well either as a part of a group or independently. The teacher shows a very caring and sensitive approach to the children and maintains very good relationships with their parents.

#### ***Language and literacy***

57. A significant majority of pupils starts in the reception class with satisfactory levels of spoken language skill. A major part of the work of the school focuses on supporting spoken English and listening skills, and the teaching is good. Discussions with the teacher, individually and at group times, are stimulating and enrich the children's spoken language. Most children speak clearly and confidently to each other and to adults. The teacher's skilful and sensitive questioning of the children during various activities, such as reading time, work in science and mental mathematics sessions, is fostering and encouraging them to provide extended responses.
58. During the course of the literacy sessions and through a variety of play experiences, most children are making good progress in the development of their linguistic and literacy skills and are achieving the targets set by the national guidelines by the time they enter Year 1. All pupils enjoy books and reading.



Stories are a source of pleasure and children have a growing understanding of the written word. Most have already begun to read some words or sentences, and can recall the story competently. They know the author of a book and that a story has a beginning, middle and end. They can identify the main characters and recall what happens, for example, to the 'Hungry Caterpillar'. When reciting the alphabet, the children spontaneously burst into song and sang the letters. In doing so, the sequence of letters came 'alive' and it became more meaningful to them.

59. On entry to school, the children had writing skills that were below the level expected of pupils of similar ages, but over the course of time they have made consistent progress. Early attempts at writing are good and many pupils are beginning to understand that various marks, words and letters convey meaning. The teacher has paid good attention to handwriting and the formation of letters. The children write simple words using upper and lower case letters formed correctly, leaving the appropriate spaces between words. All children can write their names and can copy accurately. They make use good of initial sounds in attempting to write unfamiliar words. The teacher encourages the children to share their work with each other at the end of the sessions. She provides a very good role model for the development of language and literacy skills and her work is very carefully prepared to meet the needs of all children. The introductions to new activities during the course of the literacy sessions, for example, are clear and precise: learning points are highlighted very well, enabling all children to share in the teachers' explanation and extend their knowledge.

### ***Mathematics***

60. The children's achievements were below those expected on entry to school. However, by the time they enter Year 1 the most have reached the levels expected of pupils of similar ages. The activities provided enable the children to make good progress in their understanding of number. The oral sessions are well paced and involve all the children in counting numbers up to twenty and beyond. They have become familiar with number rhymes and counting games. Early data handling has also been well understood by the children. For example, they can talk confidently about how they made their tally charts about their favourite pets and the traffic survey they did. Many mathematical activities are linked to other areas of learning, and mathematical concepts are developed well through the use of sand, water play and outdoor activities. In group activities they are beginning to understand the terms 'add on' and 'greater than' They use the mathematical language appropriately. For instance, they understand the meaning "before", "after" and "in between" through their work on number sequences. In other instances, they are able to use and apply the terms 'more' or 'less' during sand play using non-standard measures. Most children tackle mathematical tasks confidently, competently and with sustained concentration. The mathematics curriculum is well planned and organised to ensure that it meets the needs of all the children, and there is an appropriate balance between directed and self- chosen activities. All the children's work is valued highly and is discussed and assessed very well to ensure that it leads to the next stages of children's learning.

### ***Knowledge and understanding***

61. Most children's achievements in this area of learning are above the levels expected of pupils of similar ages. Very good foundations are being developed in all children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The activities to develop their scientific understanding are good. This is because the teacher uses very good questioning skills to assess and extend the children's appreciation of scientific terminology and fosters effective use of the vocabulary in an appropriate context. For example, the children had good opportunities to look at the similarities and differences among the creatures they found. Their observations were accurate and they confidently distinguished the differences between the spider and the woodlouse. They increased their knowledge of where to find caterpillars by looking on the underside of a leaf. The teacher had prepared and organised efficient ways of recording the children's observations and this helped to keep their attention well focussed on the tasks and their enthusiasm for learning high. The children confidently named the flowers such as the rose, lupin and daisy. They also talked very confidently about the life cycle of a butterfly by using and applying not only what they had learned from their science lesson, but also information gained from listening to the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'.

As a result, the children are developing their skills in handling materials and equipment well. They have a good awareness of the school environment, their families and the people who live locally. The children's information technology skills are also being suitably developed. All have access to the computers; they help each other in using information technology to support learning, follow the computer instructions and carry out the tasks well. They understand, for example, the function of the keyboard and the 'mouse', and know how to use them to access programs. They can change size of letters, and a significant proportion of the children know something about the computer fonts.

### ***Creative development***

62. The children's creative development is in line with expected standards for their age and their progress overall is satisfactory. This is because the teacher is able to use the very small classroom space effectively and imaginatively to allow the children to have the opportunity to experience a range of creative activities. The teachers' planned learning experiences are suitably developing the early skills that are necessary to extend the children's ability to express their thoughts, ideas and emotions. Most children like to draw and have the opportunity for free painting. The children's close observational drawing of forget-me-nots, geraniums and white petunias demonstrates a good eye for detail. They use tools and materials confidently and safely. For instance, they are competent in sticking and making models, but still find difficulty in using scissors to cut material. They are able to use malleable materials, such as clay, when making small creatures. There are good opportunities to use role-play as a medium for learning in the outdoor environment. The children readily initiate the play or respond to situations created by the teacher. They can use small and large construction equipment purposefully, and they talk confidently about what they have constructed. No musical activities were observed during the inspection but the teacher's planning shows that there are opportunities for music making on a weekly basis. The children enjoy singing during assembly and many were seen trying to follow the words in the hymnbook.

### ***Physical development***

63. The children's physical skills are being appropriately developed and their achievements exceed those described in the Foundation Curriculum. The children are making good progress in their control of both large and fine movements. They are using a good range of apparatus and other equipment with increasing skill. They handle tools, manage construction equipment and have been taught, for example, to hold a pencil correctly. They use malleable materials safely and with good control. The planning for the outdoor play activities ensures that the children have good opportunities to be creative and imaginative in this outdoor space. The teacher uses the available space and resources well to increase children's levels of enquiry, exploration and discovery. Most children enjoy setting themselves challenges and show pleasure in their achievements, for example, when climbing on the apparatus, balancing on bars and steering a bicycle. The children show a high level of concentration and decision-making during these activities. For instance, when building with bricks they thoughtfully and logically explored ways of ensuring that they were well balanced. When one brick too many was positioned, other children rushed to try to ensure that the structure did not tumble down, and when it did they all helped to build it up again.
64. The school has a strong commitment to providing an appropriate curriculum for young children and is currently reviewing their work to meet the new national guidelines for the foundation stage. The assessment of the children's personal and social development and their academic achievements is very good. Targets are set and are made clear to parents in order that they can support their children's learning at home. Although there are no pupils with special educational needs in the current cohort, procedures are in place should the need arise and children would be quickly identified and given support to meet their targets. Parents, grandparents and visitors are welcomed and are given good opportunities to become involved with school.

## **ENGLISH**

65. Standards in English have improved steadily since the school was last inspected and most of this is due to the introduction of the literacy hour and the good quality of the teaching. The school has put in

place a rigorous programme to raise attainment. It has resulted in improved planning, the challenging targets, and careful analysis of the teachers' assessments to show what the children need to do to attain higher results. The well-focused additional support is having very positive effects on the progress of pupils of all abilities across both key stages.

66. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, the pupils' results in reading were above the national average but below those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Although the writing results were close to the national average they are well below average in comparison to similar schools.
67. The results achieved by eleven-year-olds in 1999 national tests were very high in comparison with all schools nationally and in line with those achieved by pupils attending similar schools. However, the number of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was below the national average. Analysis of the results for the past four years shows that the standards of literacy achieved by those leaving the school at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently above average in comparison with the results achieved nationally. The levels of attainment have generally exceeded the national average, and the rate of improvement has kept pace with the national trend. In interpreting these results, it must be borne in mind that within each year group there is a significant increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs, who have either learning or behavioural difficulties. The achievements of both boys and girls have varied somewhat over the last three years, but overall there is no significant difference in their performance. From year-to-year, the school's population is subject to marked fluctuations in the numbers of boys or girls within the cohorts. The inspection findings show no evidence of gender bias within the teaching; both boys and girls work productively in the majority of lessons because the teachers ensure a good pace and rigour and targets are identified for the individual pupil.
68. The inspection findings confirm that the pupils' achievements at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved on last year's results. Good standards in reading have been maintained, and the pupil's achievements in writing have been raised to a higher level. At the end of Key Stage 2, most of the Year 6 pupils are achieving level 4 despite the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs within the cohort. A significantly higher proportion of these pupils is working well within the level 5 programmes of study in the National Curriculum. This is due to good analysis of the individual pupil's reading and writing to identify weaknesses that require attention, and the measures taken by the school to provide good quality support and well focused teaching.
69. The school has effectively and consistently applied approaches for improving literacy. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy two years ago has involved the whole school and the key stage teams in careful planning that has ensured that the teaching of literacy skills build steadily and successfully on the pupils' prior learning. This has allowed the school to address appropriately the key issue at the time of the last inspection. It related to the need for a consistent approach to planning children's learning across the school for all subjects, including English. Time has been made for additional teaching of extended writing and this has been successful in enhancing the pupils' imaginative and factual writing experiences, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. As a result of these developments, the teachers have increased their awareness of the importance of incorporating aspects of literacy in the teaching of other subjects. Grammar, punctuation and the skills of handwriting are well applied by most pupils, for example, in history, geography, science and religious education projects. The children take great pride in the presentation of work, and the marking by the staff is good. The areas for improvement are shown clearly and precisely against the particular passages, and targets are set for individual pupils. The marking is methodical and has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was a cause for concern. However, the teachers do not give the pupils regular opportunities to act upon the comments made so that they can correct errors, amend, complete or extend the work as requested before starting on a new piece. **This is an area for further improvement not only in English, but also in other subjects.**
70. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are above the levels expected nationally. Those with special educational needs contribute equally well to discussions. This is because most pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and show an interest and an

enthusiasm for discussions during lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils expressed their personal feelings about capital punishment in a clear, concise and logical argument. Very perceptive comments were made both 'for' and 'against' capital punishment. The pupils are articulate speakers. They listen well and respect the views of both their peers and adults. Younger pupils start school with an average vocabulary, which is further developed when they discuss books and other aspects of language such as a 'riddle' or a 'tongue twister' during the literacy hour. The pupils are encouraged to volunteer information about the chosen texts, and they frequently respond enthusiastically and confidently to the teachers' very good questioning. The pupils do not hesitate to ask questions, or seek clarification of the instruction for their tasks. All pupils' responses are highly valued by staff and great care is taken to ensure that both boys and girls in the class contribute equally to the class discussions. Where the teaching was either very good or excellent, the sessions were well focussed and the pace was brisk.

71. The pupils' achievements in reading are above that expected nationally at both key stages. This is due, in part, to the emphasis placed on the enjoyment of reading by both parents and staff. A good amount of time is devoted to reading each day, and the homework programme also helps to ensure that pupils have a quiet time for reading and reflection. An additional strength of the teaching of reading is brought about by the teachers throughout the school encouraging the pupils to make good use of the library and the computer to seek information to support learning, particularly in history and geography. By the age of seven, most children are reading accurately and fluently because they have been taught a good range of reading skills, such as letter sounds, which helps them to tackle unknown words and recognise common words. Those reading at higher levels also use the context of the sentence to tackle unknown words within the text. The pupils love to read the same story over and over again because they already know what is going to happen and they have their favourite pages within the story.
72. At Key Stage 2, the teachers' analysis of the school's reading material has demonstrated the need to buy many new books to meet the interest of both boys and girls. These include adventure stories and humorous and classical texts, which have stimulated a greater interest in reading particularly at the upper end of the school. For example, an average attaining pupil in Year 5 said that his favourite author is Charles Dickens and justified this by saying that it has helped him when doing his own story writing. He said, 'Dickens always sets the scene and helps you to imagine the place or the time things happen'. In the literacy hour the use of both fiction and non-fiction texts ensures that the pupils have good opportunities to develop the skills of inference and deduction. This enables them to explain the various situations and the central characters of a story such as 'Romeo and Juliet'. Most pupils have also acquired good skills in skimming and scanning text and can competently record in note form the information they extract.
73. The pupils with special education needs are making good progress in all aspects of literacy. This is because the additional teaching and classroom support is very effectively deployed around the school. The targets are very clear and most pupils understand very well what they need to do to improve. They respond positively to their lessons because the staff are well organised and match the content of the sessions to the needs of the individual pupil. The issues relating to the withdrawal of pupils for additional support at the time of the previous inspection has been fully addressed. The pupil's work relates at all times to their individual targets and is based on the same work as in the class lesson plan. Parents are very supportive and follow the planned learning at home because of the good dialogue, both verbal and written, between the teacher and parent. This helps the children to feel that people care about them and want them to become successful readers and writers.
74. In Year 6, most pupils' achievements in writing are above average. In Year 2, the pupils are in line with the national average with a significant proportion reaching the higher Level 3. This is a marked improvement on last year's results in the national tests. It results from the very high calibre of teaching during the literacy hour. In the majority of lessons observed across the whole school, the teachers' subject knowledge and expertise in the teaching of writing for a purpose were either good or very good. For example, the pupils wrote a letter to a gardening expert, seeking advice on how to

spend the monies that they had won in a competition. Due emphasis was placed on format and punctuation, and the task was clear and well understood by the pupils. As a result, the letters were well written in a logical sequence, and might sufficiently captivate the imagination of the reader to make him want to visit and help them. The teachers' plans clearly specify what they want the children to have achieved by the end of the lesson. The objectives of each lesson are made clear to the children and are reinforced successfully during the whole-class discussion at the close of the lesson. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection report when planning for progression in learning across the whole school was a major area of concern. From an early age, the pupils are encouraged to experiment with their writing and spelling skills. Spelling has improved as a result of the direct work on the development of phonic skills within the introductory session of the literacy hour. The pupils could be seen applying these skills very well when trying to write unfamiliar words. They are given good opportunities to write for a range of purposes, including simple imaginative stories, recipes, letters and appointment lists. The pupils take pride in their achievements and sustain concentration when working on the task in hand. They enjoy working collaboratively in pairs and love to share their work at the end of a session. By the age of seven, most pupils' handwriting is neat; the letters are joined legibly, consistent in shape and size and well formed. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are more consistently and correctly used, and the pupils make appropriate use of word banks to record unfamiliar words.

75. Older pupils can edit their work written work, ensuring that the subjects and verbs agree and that the tenses are correct. The pupils' good speaking and listening skills, and their concentration and sustained interest in their work helps them to make either good or very good progress. The arrangement for the pupils to work on extended writing at Key Stage 2 also contributes significantly to their progress. It enables specific support to be directed towards individual needs. For example, the higher level achieving pupils are challenged with creative writing experiences. These pupils have a mature approach to their work and show initiative for personal study when given the opportunity. The teachers' approach is quiet, but rigorous and the pace of work is always brisk. All teachers assess the pupils' progress in English is very well. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection report when it was a major concern. It is now a strength within the school, allowing each individual pupil's learning to move forward.
76. The subject is well managed. The role of the co-ordinator has been strengthened and she goes about her work efficiently and effectively. There is a very clear plan of action in relation to the analysis of tests, and the monitoring of the pupils' work in order to maintain and improve on their current attainment, including that of the higher attaining pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

77. In the mathematics tests held in 1999, the results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were close to the national average but well below those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was below the national average. The inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are now above average. The results achieved by eleven-year-olds in last year's national tests were well above those nationally and broadly in line with similar schools. Their performance exceeded the national average by the equivalent of almost two terms.
78. Almost all pupils at both key stages achieved at least the expected standard. Since 1996, there were considerable fluctuations in results but overall the improvements match the national trend. Further analysis of the data suggests that, on average, by the time they leave school, the boys are performing about one term in advance of the girls. However, the inspection evidence found no gender bias within the teaching. In the current Year 6, standards remain good.
79. The good standards in mathematics at the end of both key stages are due to the impact of the introduction of the numeracy hour and, more significantly, to the high quality of teaching at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school expects that a high proportion of pupils will again achieve the expected levels at both key stages in this year's national tests. The pupils' standards have

improved dramatically since the previous inspection when they were described as broadly average at the end of both key stages.

80. The pupils build steadily on the good start they make in the reception class. In their mental calculations in Year 1, they understand the relationship between simple numbers, knowing which are more than, less than or equal to ten. In Year 2, they make good progress and by the age of seven, almost all the pupils are working at the expected level with a high proportion achieving above it. They have a good understanding of number work. The pupils can mentally recall addition and subtraction facts to twenty and most understand the place value of digits up to one hundred. Most pupils also know the names and properties of many two-dimensional shapes. They enjoy investigative mathematics; this was seen, for example, when pupils in Year 2 explored division and its relationship with fractions. The pupils work together constructively. They are encouraged to support and challenge each other, and to develop their learning through good use of language mathematical learning. The quality of the teaching is sound in the early part of the key stage and very good in the latter part. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils and use focused questions to further develop their learning. The work appropriately matches the pupils' stages of mathematical development. In the very good lessons, the pace of work is lively. The teachers time the activities appropriately and this maintains the pupils' motivation and advances their learning. The teachers state clearly the learning intentions of the lesson, and this not only ensures that the pupils understand the purpose behind the teaching, but also ensures a very good work ethos. The pupils are developing skills in evaluating their work and this has a very good influence on their behaviour, which is commendable. The teachers' good subject knowledge and careful planning provide a strong base for good quality learning.
81. The pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make steady progress. However, in Year 6 the progress of all pupils accelerates and is good. This is the result of good quality teaching and clearly defined support, which boosts the provision for and learning of both the higher and lower attaining pupils. The lessons begin with challenging mental arithmetic sessions. Care is taken to ensure that sufficient support is given to pupils whose knowledge and skills are less secure. All pupils' responses are valued.
82. Nearly two thirds of the pupils in Year 3 achieve levels above those expected for the age group. About three-quarters of the pupils can add and subtract two and three digit numbers, and are able to convert centimetres into metres and order simple fractions accurately. The Year 4 and 5 pupils develop understanding of prime numbers through activities that are matched to their needs and abilities. They can add and subtract using numbers to one thousand. Most pupils know their multiplication tables and can apply this knowledge well in mental and written calculations.
83. However, a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the lower part of Key Stage 2. In one case the teacher's subject knowledge was insecure and as a result, this inhibited progress during the lesson. There was ineffective use of worksheets that did not meet the needs of the pupils; this inhibited progress in their understanding of the ordering and equivalence fractions. In another lesson, the images from an overhead projection were too small to be seen, and the teacher's explanation was not sufficiently effective to enable pupils to make the progress needed in their understanding of timetables. The teacher does not always select and use resources as effectively as she should. In order to secure progress in the pupils' learning, there is a need to ensure that the quality of all teaching in mathematics is raised to match the best in both key stages. **This is a key issue for action.**
84. The pupils in Year 6 enjoy the mathematical rigour in their lessons and respond positively to the well-focused questions of their teacher. The teachers' good subject knowledge enables the pupils to achieve high standards in their understanding of this subject. In mental mathematics, the pupils calculate to as many as three functions in 'quick fire' tasks. They identify patterns in numbers and confidently recognise sequences of squared numbers. They are able to convert fractions to decimals and then to percentages. They also carry out multiplication and division of numbers involving decimals. Almost all can measure and draw angles accurately, and calculate the perimeters and areas

of simple compound shapes. They read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants. The most able have a good understanding of invoices and discounts. The pupils respond well to the brisk pace of lessons. They want to increase their knowledge and with the teacher's high expectations of their abilities, their progress in learning develops in a structured way. The work is targeted to meet the needs of all the pupils. The higher achieving pupils and those with special educational needs are fully challenged.

85. The subject is well managed and led. The co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, has recently observed the teaching in other classes, focussing on mental and oral work. She monitors the planning and the pupils' work on a regular basis. Careful analyses of the assessment results, the high quality of teaching at the end of the key stages and the monitoring the teaching of mathematics help to support the levels of learning.

## SCIENCE

86. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the results were very high in regard to the expected level and well above average for the higher levels of attainment. When compared with similar schools, the standards were again well above average. The work seen during the period of the current inspection shows that attainment is very securely in line with the national average. The attainment of seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was above the national average and in line for the higher levels, according to the teacher assessments. The work seen during the inspection at the end of Key Stage 1 is judged to be in line with national averages. Although standards are not presently as high as last year, they have improved since the time of the last inspection, despite the increasing number of pupils with special educational needs now coming through the school. The inspection evidence also shows that there are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls.
87. During the period of the inspection, only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1, but from this evidence and a scrutiny of the pupils' previous work, it is clear that the pupils have an appropriate experience of science investigations. By the end of the Key Stage, their attainment in most areas of science is in line with the national average. In a Year 1 lesson, for instance, the pupils were able to record their findings about the sounds made by a variety of musical instruments. Their previous work has included 'Healthy Eating', and was linked to work in cooking. The pupils in Year 2 can recognise and name correctly the main parts of the human body and a plant, and have investigated the best conditions for plant growth. All pupils can sort materials into various groups according to simple properties and the higher attaining pupils can distinguish between man-made and natural materials. The pupils have investigated the use of electricity in the home and successfully applied their literacy skills when producing a class book on safety aspects. In most classes throughout the school, the pupils make good use of information technology to research and record their findings.
88. All the teaching in science at Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. The teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of science, which they use particularly well in questioning the pupils, encouraging them to explain and expand their replies and opinions. The teachers' on-going assessment of learning during lessons is often good and helps the pupils to stay focused on their tasks and motivates them to work hard. This was seen to good effect in a Year 3/4 investigation on how liquids and solids behave in similar ways. By the end of the key stage, the pupils have investigated a variety of topics. For example, the younger pupils have tested various papers for mopping up spills and have investigated the properties of solids and liquids. Older pupils in their work on sound have tested how well they could hear 'Charlie's Watch' through a variety of different materials.
89. By the age of eleven, most pupils recognise the need for fair testing and are able to draw reasonable conclusions from their investigations. This aspect of their science work is well developed. Moreover, they make steady progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the physical processes in such areas as sound, electricity, light and forces as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are able to explain how shadows are formed and understand about balanced and

unbalanced forces. Similar progress is made in the study of life processes through work in Year 4/5 on the life cycles of plants and animals, and on food chains. Year 6 pupils can use identification keys in work on minibeasts and know that particular species are fitted for their environment. Good use is made of review sessions at the end of lessons, which helps the teachers to assess how well the pupils have learnt and enables them to plan for the next stage of learning. This was particularly evident in a lesson on separating solids where the concluding whole-class session was used to good effect to establish the next tasks to be undertaken. These aspects of the teaching of science help to motivate the pupils well and most of them particularly enjoy the practical activities. Many are eager to answer questions and offer their opinions, and most pupils listen politely to other's points of view. However, the pupils need more time to follow up the comments made by the teachers in their exercise books in order to extend their learning. Older pupils enjoy the research aspects of their topics and make good use of computers to support their work. However, sometimes this inhibits the opportunities they have for devising their own ways of recording their ideas and findings. Their literacy and numeracy skills are applied well across the subject.

90. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic coordinator who has only been in post for two years. The teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection and there is better progression in the pupils' learning. This is because the work is monitored and targets for development are set out for individuals and groups of pupils. A folio of work has been started, but not yet fully moderated. When complete, this will further support the teaching and learning in the subject. The resources for science are good. They are used well and have a positive effect on the pupils' levels of attainment.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

91. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupil's attainment is securely in line with the national average and by the end of Key Stage 2 it is above the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Much of this improvement is due to the clear focus for the development of the subject by the school. It has formed a major part of the school's development plan and there are future proposals to consolidate and take the subject forward. The new computer suite has had a positive effect on the use of information technology across other aspects of the curriculum and has helped to raise the profile of the subject across the school.
92. The pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress in their information technology skills. They have access to CD-ROM to support their literacy work. Both classes have used the computer suite to make labels and titles for their classroom displays in literacy, numeracy and science. For example, Year 2 pupils have used it to produce a very good display of their work on electricity with topic books on 'Being Safe' and 'Taking Care'. They have used LOGO control programs to move a turtle around the screen and have followed up their class work with homework on the everyday use of computers in the home. The teaching observed was satisfactory because the staff are confident and competent with the range of software they use and skilled in the teaching of basic skills of information technology. For example, in a lesson on the sequencing of instructions and actions, the class teacher was very effective in her questioning of pupils to get them to see when sequencing is important and when it is not. Similarly, in another lesson pupils were set the task of deciding whether it was better to use the computer or a book to find information.
93. The pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make good progress, particularly in information communication skills. This is because the teaching is good. Year 3/4 pupils can combine text and graphics very effectively and imaginatively by using different types and sizes of fonts. Older pupils have produced very effective plans of their classrooms, and pupils in Year 6 are currently designing a web page for the school's Internet site. All classes make effective use of research skills using CD-ROM's and the Internet to support their work in other areas of the curriculum. For instance, Year 6 pupils have researched the ancient civilizations of the Indus Valley in their history topic whilst Year 4/5 pupils employed a database in their numeracy work. The wide range of opportunities that the pupils have to extend their skills raises the level of their work above the national average. The teachers plan a good range of activities that enable all groups of pupils to develop their skills, and present them with



opportunities to use them effectively in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed planning and putting together ideas for the school web site. In this lesson the class teacher showed good judgment in allowing pupils the chance to work things out for themselves and intervening only to give support and guidance to keep pupil's learning moving forward. Both boys and girls responded positively and worked with concentration and perseverance to complete their tasks. This is the overwhelming response of the majority of pupils across the school, including those with special educational needs. They enjoy using computers and many extend their schoolwork by continuing a topic work at home. The computer club, which is well supported by a parent on two lunchtimes, is very popular and has a waiting list of pupils eager to attend.

94. The subject is well led by the coordinator who has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject across the school. She has been helped by the recent school development of information technology and the new computer suite, already well used by all classes, is planned for extension in the near future. The new scheme of work will help to address all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the assessment of the pupils' attainment on a more systematic basis is already planned. A folio of pupil's work has been started which will help further to support the teaching and learning of the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN TECHNOLOGY**

95. Standards in art and design and technology are in line with the expected levels at the end of both key stages. Since the last inspection, standards in art have been maintained, and there has been significant improvement in the provision for design and technology. The pupils now have experience of designing, making and evaluating, and they make sound progress in all areas of the curriculum. No teaching was observed during the course of the inspection at Key Stage 1 and very limited teaching was seen in Key Stage 2. The following comments are therefore based on the evidence of work seen around the classrooms, the teachers' planning files and portfolios of the children's previously completed work.
96. In both art and design and technology, pupils throughout the school make steady gains in their learning. In art, a range of appropriate experiences is being successfully offered using a variety of materials, tools and equipment. In Key Stage 1, the pupils paint pictures to illustrate the moods that music can create. They study the patterns found in fruit and vegetables and through their observational drawings and paintings develop an appropriate use of colour and sense of proportion. They explore double imagery with their pencil sketches of the local church. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' work demonstrates a breadth of experience that is further developed by opportunities to visit art galleries and attendance at an after school art club. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils study faces and develop their skills in use of pastels to create portraits. They use a range of media such as pencils and crayons and paint to extend their drawing of the human body. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils use clay to sculpt hands and by the end of the key stage, they have produced landscapes in the style of Turner. They use a wide range of media, such as inks, pastels, paints, to recreate posters, study eyes and draw full-length portraits. The pupils are enthusiastic about art and enjoy illustrating their work in other subjects such as history where they have designed Egyptian jewellery.
97. In design and technology, the work in Key Stage 1 shows that the pupils are acquiring appropriate skills in designing and making. In Year 2, in developing their technical knowledge, the pupils study winding mechanisms. They are then able to use their knowledge and understanding in designing and making their models of 'Incy Wincy', a climbing spider. They design and make puppets in their study of textiles and are beginning to understand how the parts in vehicles contribute to their mobility, for instance, axles and wheels. The pupils' work demonstrates good standards of joining, fixing and combining different materials. The quality of work with construction kits is imaginative and the pupils use basic wheels and axle mechanisms to construct a range of interesting models. The teachers' marking of work clearly has a good influence upon the pupils' attitudes and the finished items are of a good standard. It is an indication of good teaching. The work in Key Stage 2 shows that the skills being developed build effectively and securely upon the work previously completed in Key Stage 1.

For example, the alarm systems incorporating electrical circuits on display in Years 4 and 5 are well designed and made to serve a specific purpose. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the uses of stiff and flexible materials is appropriate at this stage. In their study of slippers, the Year 6 pupils evaluate commercially produced products. They then use the knowledge gained to support them in their design and make project where their skills, understanding and knowledge are broadly in line with what is expected of them.

98. The teachers plan well for both subjects ensuring that the teaching of skills is identified throughout the school. Both subjects are managed well. The co-ordinator for art is newly appointed and is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. The art and environment club provides good experiences for the pupils who attend and is enhancing the quality of provision. The co-ordinator for design and technology is knowledgeable and understands how to manage change in this subject. This and the introduction of the national guidelines to support planning and provision of this subject are significant factors in the improvement seen both in provision and in the steady progress made by all pupils in their learning throughout the school. The tasks provide an appropriate challenge to all pupils, and these are readily accepted. It is evident from the finished articles that the pupils take a pride in their work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

99. It was only possible to see one lesson during the inspection. Nevertheless, from the scrutiny of pupil's previous work, current displays, discussions with the coordinator and other staff, and a study of teachers' planning, it is possible to make the following judgements. Since the previous inspection, standards in geography at both key stages have been maintained.
100. The school has recently adopted a nationally approved scheme of work that enables it to address all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The pupils have good opportunities to build on their knowledge of their neighbourhood and other localities around the world and to develop their atlas and mapping skills. For example, in Year 1 pupils are introduced to the wider world by recording their holidays and the places of origin of particular products on 'My First World Map', a display which encourages their understanding of the wider world. The pupils in Year 3/4 have located Nepal on a world map and a globe and used their information technology skills to send e-mails to another teacher. The use of aerial views of Quainton used in Year 4/5 to draw maps of the village is further extended in Year 6 work on aerial views of Britain, comparing vertical and oblique viewpoints. All classes make good use of information technology to research topics from CD-ROM's and the Internet.
101. In the lesson observed at key Stage 1, the pupils were consolidating prior knowledge of mapping skills. They found the map of Great Britain quickly in an atlas and were capable of finding the significant features required on a list of tasks given efficiently by the teacher. They used the key symbols at the corner of the map to help them without any prompting from the teacher. They then had to find five things that would attract you to visit Bournemouth by searching through a variety of brochures. The pupils were successful because the teaching in this lesson was very good and the pace was sharp. All the key mapping skills had been previously well taught and pupils were confident in applying the geographical skills as well as their literacy skills to the work in hand.
102. The curriculum provision for pupils is enhanced by a number of visits to support their topic work. For example, the pupils visit Milton Keynes for town studies in comparison to their local area. Groups of pupils visit Whipsnade Zoo and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and visitors to school have included a weather forecaster. To support their work on an Indian village as compared with their own, the pupils took part in Indian music and dance sessions. Good use is made of computers to support geographical studies in a number of classes, ranging from the use of spreadsheets by older pupils to simple research of topics using the Internet and CD-ROM's. The subject is well-led and managed by the co-ordinator.

## HISTORY

103. In Key Stage 2 history and geography are blocked termly, but at Key Stage 1 teachers block science, geography and history into topic groups. The following judgements are based on three lessons, discussion with the coordinator and other staff, and a scrutiny of the pupils' previous work.
104. The previous satisfactory standards noted in the last report have been maintained. The recent use of a nationally approved scheme of work for the subject has allowed a well-planned curriculum to be put in place. It is being reviewed this next term to determine its success. From looking at the teachers' planning, by talking to pupils, and from a scrutiny of previous work it is clear that the standards of the pupils' work is broadly in line with that expected at both key stages. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress through the topics and themes taught. These are well supported by a range of visits to such places as Claydon House and Sulgrave Manor, where the pupils studying the Tudor dress in period costume for the day. Older pupils in Year 3, 4 and 5 have visited Hampton Court Palace and good use is also made of Quainton village itself for topic work. Particularly valuable resources are parents and the school caretaker, the former by providing costumes when the school celebrated its centenary recently, and the latter by supplying valuable artifacts for pupils studying the Victorian period.
105. In the lessons seen, the overall quality of teaching was good. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are able to correctly sequence a series of photographs of holidays and thus develop a sense of chronology. They followed up this class work at home by talking to parents and grandparents to find out about how their holidays as children were different from their own. Most pupils show good understanding of the use of secondary sources such as photographs and pictures in books. This was particularly well demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson where the class teacher gave clear instructions as to how the pupils would be using photographs in their activities. Similar skills were developed in a Year 3/4 lesson on Ancient Egypt where photographs of the landscape were well used to help the pupils ask and answer questions about another time and place. Good use was also made of computers in this lesson to support pupils' learning. Both lessons were good examples of how pupils can be enthused by the level of challenge that teachers set. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils show good skills in interpreting the past; this was evident, for example, in a Year 6 lesson on the ancient civilizations of the Indus Valley. The lesson was well planned and resourced which enabled all groups of pupils to settle quickly to their tasks. Pupils demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of how evidence can be used to interpret the past. Many are also beginning to evaluate and make their own judgements about historical evidence. This lesson particularly was good evidence of how the teacher's good subject knowledge and well-planned activities can motivate and encourage pupils of all levels of ability to work creatively and independently.
106. The response of the pupils in lessons is good. They are interested and well motivated by the questioning of the teachers, which encourages them to participate and work productively. The lessons have a satisfactory pace that enables all pupils to be involved and make satisfactory progress in their learning. Good use is made of research skills on computers and in the school library to support work in history. The pupils' literacy skills, including neat handwriting in project books, are transferred well. They take a pride in their achievements. Evidence of how much interest the subject can generate was shown by the excellent topic on 'Ancient Egypt' completed at home by two Year 4/5 pupils and following on from their school work. This and other work on display around the school showed how well the skills in information technology are used to support learning in this area of the curriculum. However, such use sometimes limits the opportunities the pupils have to record their own observations and opinions. When such written work is done, it is well marked by teachers and gives good advice and guidance to pupils as to their future learning. More opportunities should be given so that the pupils can follow up these comments and further improve their written contributions to the subject and their own learning. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator.

## **MUSIC**

107. During the inspection, one class lesson, musical performances by pupils, and individual instrumental teaching were observed. The major concerns that arose at the time of the last inspection have been suitably addressed. The teachers' plans now demonstrate that the pupils have the opportunity to experience music making through the full range of the curriculum in singing, composing, appraising and listening. To ensure that this happens, the teachers follow a published scheme.
108. By the end of both key stages, the pupils' overall achievements in music are in line with what is expected nationally. The standards in the children's individual instrumental achievements are well above that expected of this age group. The quality of the singing is good when the pupils were performing to an audience. They sang enthusiastically and with enjoyment. The teacher gave appropriate attention to the key skills of posture, breathing, diction, and basic rhythmic pattern. The melody contour had shape and the pitch was fairly accurate. In the class lesson observed, the pupils produced sounds on untuned musical instruments that were beginning to be musical in nature and showed some control over rhythm. The lesson was coherently structured and the satisfactory teaching ensured that the pupils had generally understood the planned learning experience. However, there were missed opportunities for them to practise, evaluate and then improve upon their performance. Through suitable questioning by the teacher, the higher attaining pupils with instrumental knowledge were able to support their peers and lead the group responses. A small minority of pupils is aware of how to use the 'Music Explorer' program on the computer, but as yet it is not being fully used across the whole school to support the composition element of the National Curriculum. A greater focus on the listening of music from other countries and the acquisition of some non-European musical instruments would also strengthen the music curriculum.
109. Individual lessons provide the pupils with a very good foundation in basic musical skills, notation, knowledge of musical terminology and the mastery of their instrument because the teaching is very good. The school's strength in music is its provision for individual tuition and the wealth of musical experience that the pupils bring into school from their private tuition in and out of school hours. During assemblies, they enjoy performing to other pupils who listen attentively and appreciatively and like to celebrate their achievements with them. A significant number of these pupils have reached very high standards in external examinations.
110. Music has a high priority profile on the school development plan for this year; it is currently being reviewed to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum. The strengths and weaknesses of the present provision have been identified by the co-ordinator and the forthcoming staff in-service training sessions are planned to improve the teachers' own musical skills and knowledge, and thereby raise the standards of the classroom music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

111. During the period of the inspection only two lessons of physical education were seen. However from these lessons, discussions with the coordinator and a study of teacher's planning, it is possible to make the following judgements.
112. The lessons seen were both outdoor games sessions, but the teachers' planning shows that all the strands of physical education are taught during the school year. Although no swimming was observed during the inspection, the majority of pupils are reported to leave the school having achieved the requirements for this aspect of the subject. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 are achieving satisfactory standards of performance in gymnastics. They are able to move about the hall safely and show a good range of travelling movements. By the end of the key stage, the pupils are refining their throwing techniques and practising them in order to show an improvement in their work. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 also doing the same activities show clearly the progression made by the majority in improving their performance. They have a good understanding of how the skills are linked to a

competitive game, but are not always fully occupied during the lesson. On the limited evidence seen, most pupils are making satisfactory progress as they move through the school and the good standards noted in the last report have been maintained. The overall teaching seen was satisfactory with appropriate demonstration and teaching of skills. The lesson on throwing and catching in Year 2 was particularly distinguished by its very clear learning objectives, which the pupils understood from the start. This, coupled with good demonstrations of the techniques to employ, meant that most of these pupils were able to make good progress over the period of the lesson in developing their throwing and catching skills. The majority of pupils show a positive attitude to physical education and most are eager to participate and demonstrate their achievement. They are responsible for setting out and putting away equipment and apparatus. Most pupils help and encourage each other, and some in a Year 4/5 lesson spontaneously applauded someone else's efforts.

113. The subject is well led and managed by the subject co-ordinator. The school has been following the Local Authority scheme of work and this year intends to adopt a nationally approved scheme of work that will enable it to address all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has satisfactory accommodation and resources for the teaching and learning of the subject. There is a hall for gymnastics, a large grassed area and hard surface for outdoor games. The pupils can attend extracurricular activities to develop their skills and opportunities are provided for competitive sports with other schools.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

114. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The standards have been maintained since the previous inspection at both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make steady gains in their knowledge and understanding through a combination of lessons and assemblies which encourage them to appreciate the need for caring and sharing, community values and respect for the beliefs of others.
115. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are becoming increasingly aware of what it means to be a Christian, a Muslim or a Jew, and can make simple comparisons of life styles and beliefs. They make visits to special places such as the local church to look at symbols of religious belief, and learn about festivals, including the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. At the end of the key stage, the pupils often make good progress in lessons that focus on their personal development. This is because of the very good teaching. The lesson plans have clear objectives that are made very plain to the pupils. For example, after listening to the story of Badger's Parting Gift, the pupils in Year 2 were told that they were to think about things that other children would remember them for when they leave the school. The teacher gave them very good opportunities to consider, reflect and contribute to the discussions. Her sensitivity in leading the discussion enabled the children to share their thoughts and respect the contributions of others. The lesson had good pace and quiet rigour. The behaviour, attitudes and high levels of participation of all pupils during the course of lessons were very good.
116. At Key Stage 2, the pupils continue to build steadily on the knowledge and understanding they already have. By the end of the key stage they are able to find similarities in areas of importance within different faiths; for example the significance of water and light as symbols in both the Christian and Jewish faiths. They develop an appropriate understanding of how belief affects people's lives and actions. In Years 3/4, the pupils explore the beauty of the earth, the 'WOW' factor, and they write prayers and poetry to express their feelings. Pupils throughout the key stage explore the local environment. They study the local church and its importance within the community. By the end of the key stage they show a mature understanding of their personal needs and explore what is important to them. They are developing respect for their friends and peers and are learning to accept what is important to them. The progress they make in their learning is often good because the teaching is good. The teachers' planning is very focused and various teaching approaches are used to stimulate the pupils' interest. The teacher targets questions well to ensure that all pupils are involved in discussions. They are well challenged and have good opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and values. For example, in the lesson that explored personal possessions and the part they played in their

lives, the pupils spoke of their feelings and why the artefacts they had were so important. They realised that a measure of their importance was not the commercial value that could be placed on the articles but something more meaningful for them.

117. The curriculum for religious education is very well managed. The pupils' written work, including that of pupils with special education needs, demonstrates a wide coverage of Bible stories, celebrations, events and other faiths. The work is well presented and shows that the pupils are learning to have respect for, and an understanding of, the values and beliefs of other world religions as well as Christianity. The school makes very good use of local resources including the voluntary support of local clergy to help with teaching and assemblies.