

INSPECTION REPORT

St Michael's C of E Primary School

Bothel, Wigton

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112332

Headteacher: David Salmon

Reporting inspector: Jean Morley

Dates of inspection: January 29th – 31st 2001

Inspection number: 189769

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bothel Wigton Cumbria
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Dickins
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jean Morley	25470	<i>Registered Inspector</i>	English.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards: results and achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What could the school do to improve further?
Colin Herbert	9652	<i>Lay Inspector</i>		How high are standards: pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jeremy Collins	27736	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information technology; Art; Design and technology; Special educational needs; Equal opportunity.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Geoff Watson	20038	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Science; History, Geography; Music; Physical education; Provision in the Foundation Stage.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With 87 pupils on roll, St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small school. It serves the village of Bothel and the surrounding rural area. It takes pupils aged from four - eleven, all of whom attend full-time. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language and all pupils are of white, UK origin. At 13 per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. At 20 per cent, the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is close to the national average. Socio-economic circumstances are average, as is children's attainment on entry to the reception class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound quality of education overall. The personal development of pupils, their behaviour and relationships are particularly positive features. The standards pupils attain at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with expectations in mathematics and science, and in the reading, speaking and listening elements of English. The writing element of English is a significant weakness and impinges on the standards that pupils reach in other areas of the curriculum. This is largely the result of some inadequate *systems* adopted by the school. The quality of teaching is good in Year 4 and below. In upper Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory. The headteacher successfully employs a collegiate style of leadership. He manages the school with dedication despite what is often an unrealistically heavy workload, including a 90 per cent teaching commitment. This overload has a negative impact on the quality of his teaching to pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Eighty-two per cent of the teaching observed was good or better;
- Pupils behave very well;
- Excellent relationships exist between all pupils and adults;
- Provision for moral development is excellent, for social development it is very good and for spiritual development, good.
- Parents hold the school in high esteem.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards of writing throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching in Upper Key Stage 2.
- Governors' support to the headteacher in terms of his workload.
- The impact of the work of curriculum co-ordinators.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has properly dealt with the issues identified in the previous inspection of October 1996: they related to the production of a curriculum plan and schemes of work and to gathering assessment information. Since this time, standards as judged by national test results have been variable. This is not unexpected because small cohorts associated with schools of this size, can – and do – generate a significant variation in standards from year to year. Broadly however, standards in mathematics and science have dropped from being good at the time of the last inspection to being satisfactory now. Some elements of English have improved but writing has deteriorated. Standards in music are now above expectations at the end of both key stages and have improved. There has been a significant improvement in provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	A	E	E
Mathematics	C	B	A	A
Science	C	A	D	E

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Standards in English in the 2000 national tests were well below national standards. Writing was then – and remains - the fundamental weakness. Standards in reading are good until Year 5 and sound thereafter. Current English standards remain below average and the weak writing element has a negative impact on standards in other subjects. Standards in mathematics were well above those nationally: currently they are in line with national standards. Standards in science were below national expectations. Now, they are satisfactory. This apparent wide range in results should be read with caution as cohort numbers are small. Overall however, achievement is sound. School targets are challenging but achievable. Standards vary greatly from year to year, but an adjustment to current teaching arrangements in Years 5 and 6 could have a positive impact on them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well, both in and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in school are excellent, and personal development, very good.
Attendance	Very good.

Relationships between all adults and pupils in the school are exemplary. Pupils are polite, sociable and self-assured. They are interested in their work at school and work hard even when not under direct teacher supervision.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Of the teaching observed, 11 per cent was excellent, 25 per cent was very good, 46 per cent was good, 14 per cent, sound and 4 per cent unsatisfactory. All lessons, including those in literacy and numeracy, are taught well in all classes to Year 4, and satisfactorily in Years 5 and 6. Numeracy skills are developed in a sound way through other subjects of the curriculum. Reading skills are taught well and support from home makes a valuable contribution. Basic writing skills are taught well in most classes. However, looking at the 'big picture', there are fundamental weaknesses in the way in which writing is managed in the school as a whole. This results in poor writing standards at the end of Key Stage 2.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The academic curriculum is sound. The interpretation of the planned curriculum by individual teachers is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 4, good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Years 5 and 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are well provided for and make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral development is excellent; that for social development is very good, and that for spiritual development is good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very high level of care: teachers oversee pupils' personal development particularly well.

The school has productive links with St. Martin's College, Ambleside. Partnership with parents is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher employs a collegiate style of leadership that works well in this school in terms of relationships, the personal development of pupils and the level of care they receive. However, too heavy a workload over a long period of time has caused the quality of his teaching to suffer.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	While the governing body provides sound support for the school, it has been remiss in not looking objectively at the workload of the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses, but it is not always alert to the best ways to address them. Writing standards are a prime example.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well for the benefit of classes. Funding for additional literacy support is a particularly good example.

The school gets value for money from most expenditure: the work of the four part-time teachers is a prime example. However, given the known weakness in writing, *this* money could have been better used in targeting this fundamental problem. There are adequate staff and resources. Accommodation is cramped because there are three classrooms (with two 'overflow areas') for four classes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Almost all parents felt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child likes school and makes good progress there. • Homework is about right. • Children behave well. • The school works well with parents and keeps them well informed. • Children are expected to work hard. • They learn to become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents commented that, especially for the older pupils in school, maths homework far exceeded that set in English. • Parents observed that there is not an exciting range of extra curricular activities.

The team agrees with most of the positive views of parents but adds that the high quality of teaching just extends to Year 4. Homework in mathematics does exceed that in English in Years 5 and 6 and by a significant margin. This imbalance needs to be rectified. The number of extra-curricular activities is small but is perfectly reasonable given the small number of staff who work in the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The 2000 test results for 11 year olds indicate that standards in English are well below the national average when compared both with all schools and with similar schools. Standards in mathematics are well above those expected. Standards in science are below those expected and well below those of schools in similar contexts. As the numbers of pupils involved are very small, these results should be interpreted with caution. However, some conclusions can be drawn:

- * Several pupils who achieved the expected standard in mathematics failed to do so in English;
- * A breakdown of the data available indicates clearly that the weakness in English is in writing and not in reading;
- * Progress through Key Stage 2 in mathematics has been well above that of similar schools while progress in English and science has been below. Weak writing standards have been a major contributory factor here.

2. Comparing test results *over time* with those of similar schools - schools in which a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals - suggests that progress made by pupils in this school is weak. However, because numbers are small, it is important to look at progress on an individual basis rather than at that of a cohort. Doing so presents a more positive picture, indicating that progress is, in fact, satisfactory. From a cohort of eight pupils, six made satisfactory progress in English through Key Stage 2. For the remainder it was good. In mathematics, two pupils made sound progress, while for six, it was good. Pupils are working below capacity in the writing element of English.

3. The 2000 results in Key Stage 1, which should again be interpreted with some caution, indicate that, in reading, writing and mathematics, the standards achieved are all below those achieved nationally. In the case of reading and writing, standards are also below those of similar schools. In reading, a larger than average proportion of pupils achieved the higher level, level 3. In mathematics, standards are well below those of schools in a similar context. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work in science indicates that standards are very close to those expected nationally.

4. Inspection findings show that, at the end of Key Stage 2, standards in mathematics, science and the reading and speaking elements of English are satisfactory. Listening skills are good. There is, however, a significant weakness in writing. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are now good in listening and reading, sound in the speaking element of English and in science, but weak in writing. Weak writing standards are not the result of the school's response to the literacy hour: these lessons are taught well right up to the end of Year 4, and usually satisfactorily thereafter. It is the strategies the school adopts to develop writing skills across the curriculum that are the downfall. There is a sound strategy for promoting numeracy skills.

5. Attainment on entry to the school is average. Children who are currently in the reception class will exceed expectations by the time they enter Year 1 but these above average standards are recent: they do not apply to pupils beyond Year 1.
6. The school takes account of likely individual performance when setting targets and translates these into percentages. Given the current rate of progress, these could just be met.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they receive additional support and satisfactory progress overall. Small group withdrawal sessions, including Additional Literacy sessions for some pupils in Years 3 and 4 are challenging and enjoyable. Progress made by the most able pupils is satisfactory. There are no obvious differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
8. By the end of the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above those expected in music. Pupils' knowledge base in history is also good. Their written work in history is of a better standard than in other subjects, often reaching a satisfactory standard. In art, design and technology, geography, information technology and physical education, standards are sound. In Key Stage 1, standards in music are good. In all other subjects, they are sound.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' behaviour both in and around school, and their attitudes to school and to learning, are all very good. The personal development of pupils is good and relationships throughout the school community are excellent. This aspect of school life has been maintained since the last inspection and all these factors have a significantly positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents also have positive views, both about behaviour in school and about the attitudes that the school promotes. They are particularly proud that the school receives so many compliments on pupils' behaviour after visits into the community. This view was clearly reflected in comments that they made at their meeting and through their responses to the questionnaire. Such high standards apply equally to children in the Foundation Stage and to older pupils.
10. In the classroom, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils were good or better in 84 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 43 per cent. Similar standards of behaviour were observed in the playground, in the dining hall and around school. There was no indication of any unsociable behaviour whatsoever during the inspection. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong and show respect for their school. There was no evidence of litter, graffiti or vandalism. All pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to discuss their views in class. For example, in a Year 3 / 4 history lesson on the Victorians, they talked enthusiastically about the possible uses of warming pans and carpet beaters. Additionally, a discussion with a group of Year 5 / 6 pupils reflected the confidence that they have developed in school. They were able to express, fluently, their views on a variety of subjects concerning school life, such as the residential visit to Edinburgh, homework, and their move to the secondary school. There are no exclusions from school.

11. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and all adults, are excellent. They collaborate very well in all aspects of school life and enjoy working together. For example, in a Year 5 / 6 literacy lesson, pupils were observed working very well in their groups as they enthusiastically discussed various instruction pamphlets that they had brought into school. Additionally, all pupils are consistently polite and well mannered towards their teachers and visitors. They were keen to talk to visitors in and around school. The quality of these relationships has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

12. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are good. These have a positive impact on their personal development. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have the opportunity to attend residential visits based in hotels in either Edinburgh or Scarborough. Year 5 and 6 pupils enjoy reading with younger children, running the tuck-shop or using the photocopier in the school office. Additionally, they get great fun from the responsibility of hiding Herbert the hedgehog on the orienteering course, for younger pupils to find. They make generous donations to a number of charities such as Blue Peter and Jeans for Genes. The opportunities for personal research and investigation in the classroom are more limited but satisfactory overall.

13. Attendance rates have improved since the last inspection. They are now very good and well above national average. All pupils arrive at school on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. When the school was last inspected in 1996, the quality of teaching was variable but at least satisfactory overall in each of the three key stages. It was best in Key Stage 2, where it was mainly good, and somewhat weaker for children aged under five, where it was satisfactory. Standards of teaching are now good in all areas, with the exception of upper Key Stage 2. Here they are satisfactory but with some weaknesses. Of the teaching seen, 11 per cent was excellent, 25 per cent was very good, 46 per cent was good, 14 per cent was satisfactory and 4 per cent, unsatisfactory. The teaching that was satisfactory or less was almost entirely in upper Key Stage 2. The teachers in the Foundation Stage, in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 consistently produced teaching of good quality, or better. Some was excellent.

15. Several factors contribute to the weaker standards in the final two years. By far the most significant of these is the fact that the class is being taught by the headteacher whose onerous workload prevents him from teaching as effectively as he should for the four and a half days each week that he is in the classroom. This manifests itself in a number of ways: in science for example, while pupils have the knowledge and understanding that they should, far too little of their work is recorded. With the exception of history, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and, as a result, the quality of their written work is not as good as it should or could be. Mathematics homework is a regular feature in Years 5 and 6, although it is not matched in regularity by homework in writing. This is creating an imbalance and partly explains why, at the end of the key stage, standards in mathematics are higher than those in English. The quality of marking is poor. When teaching is unsatisfactory it is because expectations of pupils are too low. The issue of teaching in Years 5 and 6 requires action: the unsatisfactory quality and limited quantity of some of the work in pupils' books is evidence that standards are beginning to suffer.

16. Where teaching is excellent, it is because outstanding relationships exist between teacher and pupils and because work is exciting and challenging. Most of the excellent teaching seen was in art where pupils were thoroughly engrossed in the task and benefiting from the presence of a visiting artist. Teaching of very good quality was typified by a brisk pace, exciting activities, delightful working relationships and a good level of challenge. Some positive features relate to all teaching: all teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and these are reciprocated. Pupils are managed very well. Work, for the most part, matches the ability of the pupils who tackle it. Homework is used well by the school to help pupils develop as readers: reading books go home on a daily basis. When appropriate to their age and ability, this is supplemented by spellings and tables to learn.

17. Numeracy skills are well taught throughout most years but with slower progress being made beyond Year 4. Literacy skills are developed in a more variable fashion. While almost all pupils are skilled enough at every stage to read what they need to in all their lessons, writing is a much less positive feature. It is weak, and although the school is trying to address these low standards, it is not tackling the fundamental flaw in its provision: too little opportunity for pupils to write in order to improve their writing skills. A reduction in the quality of teaching in the final two years is also a contributory factor. Hence, there is still some way to go. At the end of Key Stage 2 last year, for example, only 20 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level in writing. Nationally, the proportion was close to three times that percentage.

18. Additional support to pupils with special educational needs is good. Small group support, help in the classroom, and the additional help with literacy provided for some pupils in Years 3 and 4, are all positive features of the school's provision. All these sessions are both lively and challenging.

19. Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They can be relied upon to be just as diligent when working away from the very direct supervision of their teacher. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, looked around the school building and grounds for examples of instructions: they were just as sensible as in the classroom. These mature and sensible attitudes do help pupils throughout the school to gain as much as possible from their lessons. Hence, where teaching is good or better, pupils make good progress. Where teaching is satisfactory overall, as is the case in Years 5 and 6, the progress that pupils make slows to being sound overall.

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

20. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Interesting, stimulating and demanding programmes for pupils effectively promote their intellectual, cultural, physical and personal development. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is planned with care and is well structured. It helps the young children to make a smooth transition to the National Curriculum. The school has improved the opportunities offered to pupils by providing schemes of work for all subjects. In the main, these reflect the guidance of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

21. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies to good effect. However, in both key stages, failure to plan for the development of writing skills across the full curriculum is a significant weakness. Failure to redress this is reflected in the outcomes of the yearly national tests. Apart from this, teachers plan lessons to ensure that pupils make continuous progress. The school has managed to maintain in-depth coverage in all other subjects of the curriculum. The planning for Years 3 and 4 is most commendable, especially in the context of cross-curricular links and cultural development. Planning for the new Foundation Stage curriculum is particularly good, and the children enjoying its fruits now will also take its benefits with them as they progress through the school.
22. A rolling programme of topics ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not cover the same work in subsequent years. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have sound access to the National Curriculum, as it is the school's policy to teach all children within the classroom, as far as possible. To achieve this, arrangements are made for withdrawal from class in a staggered pattern so that the pupils never miss a particular lesson on a regular basis. The provision of literacy and numeracy strategies has added value to the learning experiences of pupils with special needs. In lessons, teachers usually plan suitable tasks that are well matched to the requirements of the pupils' individual education programmes. Pupils' progress matches that of pupils elsewhere in the school: it is satisfactory.
23. There is good provision for activities that take place outside school: at present there are popular French and orienteering clubs. There are many visits, related to topics being taught in school. These are planned well and include, among others, trips to view the lifeboat at Silloth and the cathedral and castle in Carlisle. Pupils spend a great deal of time in Low Moor Wood on science expeditions and there are regular walks along the River Derwent. The pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 enjoy residential trips to Edinburgh and Scarborough. The Edinburgh trips have a separate focus on each occasion. Parents provide valuable support for the cycling proficiency programme, open to older pupils.
24. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (including sex and drug related education) is good, and is dispersed throughout the curriculum. The health authority has also addressed the parents concerning drug abuse. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has maintained the high values reported at the time of the previous inspection.
25. The local community contributes a great deal to the pupils' learning. There are numerous visits from artists and artisans. There is a parent helper scheme and one parent arrives daily to teach computer skills. A local forestry company is most supportive of the school both in kind and in finance. Other businesses support in fund raising and presenting prizes for raffles. The local church gives moral support and many of the congregation support the school events. Twice a year, senior citizens are invited to a coffee morning and the older pupils act as hosts. There is a firm partnership with five other primary schools. Expertise and resources are shared. The schools participate together in sporting events. Some secondary schools are very keen to share their facilities. There is also the element of equal opportunities where boys and girls can share in all games.

26. Provision for spiritual development is good. One effective assembly, led by the headteacher and based on the Holocaust, demonstrated the terrifying outcomes that lack of respect for others can lead to. It challenged pupils to consider their actions carefully and to value people as they are. In this particular assembly, pupils understood the feelings of those who have to suffer from lack of respect and ignorance. Collective worship which includes reflection as deep as this is markedly spiritual.

27. Provision for moral development is excellent. The staff purposely link moral education to the spirituality found in the school so there is little need for specific moral teaching. Rather, it is built on the fine role model of the teachers themselves. When pupils make mistakes, other pupils make no attempt to ridicule: rather, the individual is encouraged by gentle correction. Teachers make paramount the building of pupils' self esteem and self-identity. When there is misbehaviour, reproof is immediate and effective but still reflects the goodness of intention. This approach causes the offenders to reflect more on their own actions.

28. Respect is the one concept that sums up the feelings of trust and friendship that permeate the school. This is no accident; it comes from carefully planned, reflective whole-school assemblies, good role models, and teaching styles that promote imagination and a sense of awe and wonder. Teaching constantly reinforces ideals of respect and friendship in a gentle, caring way. No teacher was heard to raise his or her voice throughout the inspection. Such teaching, where respect for the pupils is almost tangible, not only brings pupils to know right from wrong but also builds within the pupils a similar respect for their peers. As a result, pupils themselves help to create a happy and positive atmosphere in which they can flourish.

29. Both spiritual awareness and moral awareness have a great impact on social provision, which is very good. Pupils reflect the underlying feeling of care for others, found in their social attitudes. Teachers develop the pupils' skills successfully, encouraging them to work co-operatively on projects and in general activities in class. Teachers encourage pupils to work independently of them: this fosters their sense of responsibility and respect for each other.

30. Provision for cultural development is sound. The pupils' own cultural heritage is clearly expressed through their involvement in the magnificent carved wood relief of their village and local area. Different areas of the curriculum lead pupils to learn of famed artists and musicians. There are theatre visits and visits to schools from theatre companies. There is a particular emphasis in the school on extra-mural visits, both day and residential, which offer a wide variety of experiences, historical, religious, sociological and many more. Thus pupils become well acquainted with many ways of life and living to compare with their own. The cultural and ethnic diversity found in Britain today is, however, not yet a strong feature of the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school continues to care very well for its pupils, including those who have special educational needs. This level of care is enhanced by the good knowledge that staff have of their pupils and the exceptionally high quality of relationships which exist within the school community. This view was shared by parents: they said that they were very happy to leave their children in the care of school.

32. A number of effective and comprehensive procedures are in place for both child protection and health and safety. These result in a safe and secure environment in which children can learn. Effective arrangements also exist for first aid and the recording of the very few accidents that occur. However, although inspections and evacuations are carried out, the governing body needs to ensure that they are more formally recorded. Good records are held for pupils with medical conditions and for emergency contact, should it be required. The supervision of pupils at lunch and in the playground is very effective and welfare assistants are seen as an integral part of the school family.

33. The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are very good. The school has high expectations of the behaviour of its pupils, which is based on mutual respect and consideration for all members of the school community. This has a very positive impact in that pupils have a very good idea of right and wrong. The procedures to monitor and improve attendance are satisfactory. Weekly analysis of registers is carried out but the school should ensure that statistics are based on attendance of pupils of statutory school age only. This would allow easier comparison with other published statistics.

34. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The school knows its pupils very well and is able to provide individual support as required.

35. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The school follows the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's system. For English and mathematics, it uses non-statutory tests and builds up profiles on the pupils. These are matched against national attainment targets at the end of each key stage. Overall, sound use is made of the outcomes of assessment to help teachers with their planning. It is because the school has been unable to 'spot' ways of remedying the identified weakness in writing, however, that its use of data is not better than sound. Despite this, there are a number of good features: in mathematics for example, progress is closely monitored in Key Stage 2 and pupils' attainment is checked half- termly.

36. A good system of moderation is employed by the group of local schools each year for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The schools publish the results and these are instantly available for reference.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The school continues to work well with its parents. It is clear from the comments at the parent's meeting, and from their responses to the questionnaire, that parents hold the school in high esteem. They find the school approachable, have good relationships with the staff and are pleased with the information that they receive.

38. These good working relationships with parents begin in the Foundation Stage. In the summer term, the teacher visits the children in the pre-school group and later, teaches them in school. This eases the transition from the pre-school group. The parents have a meeting with the teacher a short time after their children start in Reception class. This gives the parents a good insight into the methods and work of the Foundation Stage. This teacher – as are all staff in the school - is always available for parents to raise concerns or other issues at the start and end of the day. A half-termly plan of work to be undertaken in all the areas of the children's learning is sent to parents so that they are informed and can give appropriate support at home.

39. In the school as a whole, a small number of parents help out in the classroom on a regular basis and more assist on class visits into the community. For example, a parent who is a dentist visits school when pupils are learning about the care of their teeth. Another parent provides information technology support. When this occurs, it has a positive impact on the learning of the children. The events that are run by the Parent Teacher Association are well supported and raise approximately £3000 each year for school funds.

40. The information produced by the school for its parents is good. The regular newsletters are informative and give parents details of school events and activities. Another good example is the information - to parents of children in the Foundation Stage - about topics that will be covered. The quality of annual reports on progress is good and they contain comments on how pupils can improve their knowledge and understanding of their subjects by reference to specific targets. Pupils also have the opportunity to comment on their own progress.

41. The support provided for reading by many parents and carers at home, particularly up to Year 4, makes a significant contribution to their children's learning.

42. In relation to pupils who have special educational needs, there is close contact between school and parents. They are kept up-to-date with regard to their children's achievements. They participate fully in the formal meetings where targets are set and are supportive of all the efforts made on behalf of their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The headteacher operates a collegiate style of leadership and this suits the school well. There is a clear commitment to the development in pupils of qualities such as care, respect and tolerance of the views of others. Relationships are excellent. In these respects, the headteacher leads a successful school. Other aspects of his work have not been so successful. This is because the overload of work facing the headteacher - a 90 per cent teaching commitment and administrative duties of unreasonable proportions - has not been addressed. In addition, growth in pupil numbers has been steady over several years: from 60 to its current size of 87 pupils. This growth has necessitated significant extensions to what is a relatively new building. Overseeing these developments has also taken a great deal of time. There are now signs that academic standards in Years 5 and 6 – the headteacher's class – are beginning to suffer. Overall, the headteacher's leadership and management are satisfactory.

44. The school has made a good response to the key issues identified in the last report, which were:

- * produce a brief yet clear whole school curriculum plan;
- * compile schemes of work for all subjects so that it is clear what is to be covered by each year group;
- * ensure a consistent approach to the gathering of assessment information.

All these issues have been addressed and they now contribute to the sound documentation that provides a clear and workable structure for the curriculum and for the way in which pupils' progress is assessed.

45. Academic standards have been variable since the time of the last report but this has simply been a reflection of the variation between one small cohort and another. In broad terms, although with a particular weakness in writing, they have been maintained at a satisfactory level. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

46. The governing body provides sound support to the school. It is fully aware of the strengths of the school and supportive of the headteacher in planned developments. Financial decisions are prudent, with careful attention paid to both current and future needs. Governors have not been sufficiently aware of the impact of the headteacher's workload on the quality of his teaching and this needs addressing with urgency. Action taken also needs to address the excessive time that the headteacher spends on administrative tasks.

47. In addition to the headteacher, there is an adequate number of teaching staff, all of whom are effectively deployed. They provide teaching of a high quality. The additional teaching purchased from the school's budget has been money well spent in that it has had a positive impact on standards. It includes teaching music throughout the school, teaching history and elements of mathematics to pupils in Years 5 and 6, and providing some pupils with additional literacy support. Support staff are skilled and effective.

48. Until very recently, all curricular decisions were made collaboratively. Hence, the concept of curriculum co-ordinators is very new in this school. It is not surprising therefore, that the associated skills are limited and need developing. The most urgent task is that facing the two literacy co-ordinators: addressing the standards of writing across the school, but with particular emphasis on Years 5 and 6. There is a move afoot to change to just one co-ordinator for this subject. This will be sensible. Furthermore, there then needs to be a kick-start to action, aimed at raising these weak standards as quickly as possible.

49. Accommodation is cramped but best use is made of the space available. The most difficult working conditions are to be found in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where two teachers and two classes share one room and two 'overflow areas'. This necessitates a lot of movement for pupils and it is to the credit of the teachers concerned that it works as well as it does. However, the school does need an additional classroom.

50. Resources in almost every area of the curriculum are satisfactory. In music they are good, but art would benefit from the provision of a greater range of media with which pupils could work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. The headteacher, staff and governors should work together to:

- Improve standards of writing throughout the school. This should incorporate:
 - * a rigorous, sustained whole-school focus;
 - * opportunities to look both at the work of schools where writing standards are high and at the strategies they adopt to make them that way;
 - * implementation of a range of strategies likely to raise standards, particularly with regard to:
 - the extent to which worksheets are used;
 - writing opportunities across the curriculum;
 - expectations of quality and quantity;
 - the presentation of pupils' work.
- Provide the headteacher with any training necessary to enable him to teach the National Curriculum well. Implement supportive monitoring of his teaching.
- Review the teaching and administrative workload of the headteacher and reduce it to manageable proportions.
- Take advice on developing the role of the curriculum co-ordinator in school and act upon the advice given.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	25	46	14	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	87
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	96.1
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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
	2000	7	3	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	7	6	8
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	70(80)	60(80)	80(80)
	National	84(82)	85(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	6	7	9
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	60(80)	70(80)	90(80)
	National	84(82)	88(86)	88(87)

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
	2000	6	5	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	6	9	8
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	55(80)	82(90)	73(90)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	7	8	9
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	64	73	82
	National	70(68)	72(69)	80(75)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. * Figures not reported as there were fewer than 10 pupils*

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	87
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	21.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	182 725.00
Total expenditure	182 508.00
Expenditure per pupil	2 282.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	242.00
Balance carried forward to next year	459.00

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	87
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67.4	28.3	4.3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56.5	39.1	2.2	0	2.2
Behaviour in the school is good.	63.0	30.4	0	2.2	4.3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36.9	56.5	6.5	0	0
The teaching is good.	67.4	30.4	2.2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52.2	41.3	6.5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80.4	17.4	2.2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69.0	31.1	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50.0	41.3	8.7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	58.7	36.9	4.3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63.0	34.8	2.2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40.9	31.8	13.6	0	13.6

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

52. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher creates a warm, friendly and secure environment in which the children are valued. Prior to starting in the reception class, most children have attended a part-time pre-school group that meets in the school hall, although it is not formally part of the school's provision. The most recent statutory baseline assessment of children within seven weeks of entry shows that attainment is slightly higher than average. A more accurate picture is obtained from considering *a number* of cohorts of entrants: doing so indicates that attainment on entry to the school is average. Children make good progress towards all the early learning goals. On entry into Year 1, the great majority of the children are likely to have exceeded the expected level of attainment in all areas of learning. It is important to recognise, however, that this has not been the case for long enough for these standards to have moved into Key Stage 1 and to have been the starting point for older pupils in the school.

53. Planning in the Foundation Stage is good. Children's activities are planned to extend their learning in literacy, in numeracy or in one of the other foundation curriculum areas. The medium term plan frequently follows a theme: perhaps the 'big book' that all the children are reading.

54. The teaching and support staff of the Foundation Stage and those of Key Stage 1 frequently team-teach. At these times, all the children and pupils meet for the beginning of sessions before they get down to their activities. This is another positive aspect of the provision for those aged under five. It gives breadth to their experiences and makes the transition into Key Stage 1 straightforward.

55. The quality of teaching is never less than good, and is sometimes very good or excellent and has a positive effect on children's enthusiasm to work at their task or activity. The teacher manages groups of children very effectively and almost always has 'something up his sleeve' that engages and delights the children and makes them respond very well to his teaching. For example, when the 'Cheeky Fairy' had visited overnight, she had covered up some key words in the 'big book'. Children were excited to see the trail of little stars that signified that she had been there. This strategy really raised the children's alertness to watch out for those words!

Communication, language and literacy

56. Children are introduced to stories through reading and exploring them in 'big books'. They show enthusiasm and a good level of understanding. When they worked on the story, 'Farmer Duck', they identified parts of the cover, such as the title and the author. They looked at the pictures and described the scene. As the teacher read the story, they listened carefully and recognised repeated words and phrases. Using the sound of the first letter and other clues, such as pictures, they read simple words. During the reading of the book, many of the children were able to recognise rhyming words.

57. When the teacher asks questions they are very keen to give their opinions and suggestions. They interact with each other and adults and the great majority take turns to speak. Frequently the activities that are planned include role-play. This gives them more opportunities to negotiate and use their language skills creatively. The good progress that children make is the result of teaching that is at least good on a consistent basis.

Mathematical development

58. As early as November after entering the reception class, children identify the missing number(s) in a sequence up to 5. They colour the number of pennies to match a cost on a price tag, up to 10 pence. As a class, they work with the teacher using a number counting stick and recognise missing numbers from an extended sequence.

59. Children are consistently well taught. This was typified in one lesson on 'heavier' and 'lighter', where the children were intrigued that a big box was actually lighter than a very small one. The teacher pretended that he could hardly lift the box and then he asked a child to pick it up - it was easy because of its lightness. This humour on the part of the teacher challenged the children's concept that large is always heavy and small is always light. The children went on to compare the weight of different objects, making predictions before they weighed them.

60. When the teacher is working with the whole class or a group, he uses labels and captions of mathematical words. These support children's learning in language and literacy. Counting skills are practised at the beginning of sessions when the register is marked. The children have to consider 'one less' when someone is absent. They regularly sing counting songs such as 'Five Little Ducks'.

Personal, emotional and social development

61. This is a particularly strong feature of the children's learning and experiences: the result of the excellent work of the teacher. Children's development is sustained from the time when the teacher visits them in the pre-school group and takes them into the reception class. They demonstrate a keenness and enthusiasm for their learning and activities. When they work together with only light-touch supervision, they talk about what they are doing. They listen to each other and generally take turns in the conversation. They show feelings and express them when stories involve any emotions.

62. Their understanding of right and wrong is constantly being developed. The teacher frequently draws their attention to the effects on others of what they do and say. The great majority of the children are confident in trying new activities and speaking in their familiar group. Many of them demonstrated this confidence when they spoke with the inspector.

63. There are times in the day when the teacher indicates with which group he is going to work. Children in other groups know that they should only interrupt if they really need him. Whilst this system is only operated when the task for the unsupervised groups is within their ability, it does give them a sense of independence at an early stage. They get ready for physical education and dress afterwards with a minimum of adult help.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children are taught well and learn well. They have investigated plants with the classroom assistant. They have looked at sunflowers and at photographs - of her family in fields of sunflowers - brought into school by the classroom assistant. This was very useful because it gave the children an understanding of the fully-grown height of the plants compared with the height of someone they knew. It is an example of the effectiveness of the contributions that the classroom assistants make to the teaching.

65. Children explore and learn about the school's environment. They are beginning to use simple plans of the school's grounds to recognise particular features when they go out on a treasure hunt. They are learning how to draw things on simple plans by looking at them from above. They understand that, of all the equipment and machines in and around our homes, there are some that are safe to touch and others that are not. They identified the 'safe' and 'unsafe' groups on a sheet of illustrations.

66. When the teacher sets out the activities, he frequently leaves some other resources accessible to the children, so that they can choose from them according to what they have decided to do.

Physical development

67. Most children hold a pencil correctly and are beginning to use it with increasing accuracy. They have a writing book and they frequently write short phrases that show a good level of letter formation. When they colour shapes, the great majority of them are able to confine their strokes to within the outline. In musical activities, they can hold instruments appropriately and produce quality sounds from them. In class activities they regularly use malleable materials in their modelling, such as dough and papier-mâché. They use a range of construction kits imaginatively to build structures. In physical education lessons, they show a good understanding of space and move about the hall confidently. They work in teams, putting out apparatus such as floor mats, safely. When working in groups at the mats, they took it in turn to practise travelling by rolling. They used their arms and legs in different ways to produce tight and loose rolls and showed good control when they managed to avoid rolling off. After exercise, they recognise its effects on their bodies - tiredness, heartbeat etc.

Creative development

68. The teacher ensures that there are very good opportunities for children to work creatively. They used papier-mâché with moulds in order to create 'The Hungry Caterpillar' from their story: they handled it carefully and ensured that it was well patted down. Other children built the house using bricks and drew the caterpillar. They have regular opportunities to develop their imagination when they choose role-play as their activity. In music, they sing from memory with a good sense of melody and regard for tempo. They use a variety of percussion instruments and play them to a steady pulse, controlling their instruments in order to play loudly and softly. They used their imagination when they re-enacted their story with soft-toy animals and other 'props', and used dough imaginatively to re-create characters from the story of 'Farmer Duck'.

ENGLISH

69. In the national end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2000, standards were well below those achieved either by all schools nationally, or by schools in a similar context. Furthermore, when the results are compared with those schools where pupils achieved similar results at the end of Key Stage 1, then the progress made is also well below that expected. Inspection findings are similar: standards are unsatisfactory overall at the end of Key Stage 2. However, it is the very significant weakness in writing that is the sole negative contributor to these very low standards. Reading and speaking standards are satisfactory at the end of this key stage and listening skills are good. Of course, in a school of this size, cohort numbers are small and so test results should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, poor standards were evident in the written work of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6.

70. The 2000 test results in Key Stage 1 were also below national standards and below those attained in similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that standards achieved now are very close to those achieved nationally but that writing is still a weak element. Reading is a stronger one. Listening skills are good and speaking skills, sound.

71. Pupils listen attentively in almost all lessons. This skill is developed well in the Foundation Stage and establishes habits that serve pupils well throughout the school. Speaking skills are satisfactory, although best use is not always made of opportunities to develop them. While, for example, pupils often have opportunities to speak to their class in the final session of a lesson, this is seldom viewed by the teacher as an important part of the lesson; one that could have a clear, focused objective, based on speaking skills. To this extent, these plenary sessions could be better used.

72. Pupils read well and with expression. They understand what they read. This is in large part due to the sterling work of teachers, particularly those in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. That is not to detract, of course, from the contribution made many by many parents: it is thanks to their diligence in reading with their child at home that standards are as good as they are. The school is working hard with pupils to ensure that they understand what they read, and to teach and encourage them to read beyond the literal. The latter is best done in Years 3 and 4 and is the result of skilful questioning.

73. Writing is an area of considerable concern but attempts to address the problem are inadequate. Standards of writing are weak throughout the school and this weakness is a greater problem at the end of Key Stage 2 than at the end of Key Stage 1. In the 2000 national tests in Key Stage 2, just 20 per cent of pupils achieved the national standard in writing. This is very low: about one-third of the national average. There are some crucial areas for the school to explore and some changes that will need to be pursued with vigilance if standards are to rise. The five main areas are as follows:

- * Improving the standards of writing cannot be solely the remit of literacy lessons. The school has not, at the early stages of planning, taken a whole-school perspective and planned many and varied writing opportunities into the full curriculum. This is a significant omission.
- * It would be a useful exercise for teachers to take a complete half-year's work from a small group of pupils and to count the number of pieces of writing of a good length – at least a page, for example, from Year 2, and two pages from Year 6. Currently, these opportunities are very few.

- * Worksheets are used too often by far, and in too many subjects. These restrict pupils to single word or short phrase responses. The school fails to ask the question, 'Is this the best possible way for pupils to learn what I want them to?' An extensive and far-reaching cull throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 2, could make a very significant difference if replaced by good quality writing opportunities.
- * Standards of presentation are not good enough. They are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1, and at their best at the end of Year 4 where sometimes they are good, but satisfactory at best beyond that point. In Years 5 and 6, far too little is expected of pupils in terms of quality and quantity and mediocre standards are accepted without comment.
- * The quantity of work produced by the oldest pupils in school is insufficient both in individual lessons and over time. Work is often unfinished and no action is taken to ensure that it does not remain that way.

74. The quality of teachers' marking is generally weak, particularly so in Years 5 and 6. Analysis, for example, of the last five pieces of English from each of six pupils in this class showed that 80 per cent was either unmarked or given a cursory tick. Seven per cent had a 'good' or similar comment, despite the fact that the standard was often *not* good for the age and ability of the pupil, and just 13 per cent had a comment likely to help the pupil to improve. As a means of being a learning tool for pupils, marking is underdeveloped in this school.

75. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good overall: good in three and sound in one. The weaker lesson was in Years 5 and 6. Other evidence gathered shows that the same is true throughout the year. Nevertheless, to a significant degree it is the *systems* in place in school that fail to support the development of writing skills and not the quality of lesson by lesson teaching. Teachers have, in fact, taken on board the format of the literacy strategy, and most use it well. Planning for *individual lessons* is usually good. Marking needs some attention but, overall, the capacity of most teachers in this school to teach English well is not in doubt. The really urgent need is for a look at the 'big picture': to stand back from day to day provision and turn a professional eye to the much broader challenge of developing pupils' literacy skills. The failure to do this has, to some extent, resulted from the lack of a subject co-ordinator with the remit of raising standards. It needs urgent attention.

MATHEMATICS

76. At the time of the last inspection, standards were good. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 or above was well above the national average. It was also well above the average for similar schools. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 was below the national average and below the level for similar schools. Currently, standards are satisfactory in both key stages. The wide range in results is due largely to differences between one small cohort and another.

77. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure grasp of number and they add and subtract with numbers up to 100. Pupils correctly put numbers in order and complete patterns by filling in the missing ones. They use standard written notation well for addition and subtraction - including the use of carrying. Pupils show good mental recall of the 2, 3 and 5 times tables. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special needs are supported well and make good progress.

78. Most Key Stage 1 pupils apply their knowledge of number satisfactorily in simple shopping activities. They work out different combinations of coins very well in order to make a particular total. They talk confidently about their work in everyday language. Pupils clearly recognise three-dimensional shapes such as cones, cubes, cylinders, pyramids and cuboids. They show satisfactory understanding of the ideas of weight and measure, such as lighter than, shorter than. The pupils match activities well to specific times of the day and are beginning to make accurate estimations in length using metres and centimetres.

79. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have secure skills in arithmetic, using whole numbers up to 1000. Some Year 5 pupils were observed working to numbers of 10,000. Pupils practise mental arithmetic based on multiplication tables and successfully answer a wide range of questions on multiplication and division. Year 5 pupils understand place value and use their knowledge well to multiply and divide by 10 and 100. They relate to fractions and decimals well. In Year 6, pupils work particularly well on converting currencies and calculating to four decimal places. They enjoy discussing their work and understand why people have to convert money into different currencies: international business and holiday travel, for example. Most pupils successfully reduce fractions to their simplest form by cancelling out common factors. They use them well to express parts of quantities or numbers. They recognise mathematical shapes and their properties and have investigated symmetry in depth. The pupils calculate areas well and work out the perimeters. They investigate compound shapes carefully and can split them up to produce rectangles.

80. In Years 3 and 4, pupils reinforce their learning on the consistency of number. Even though there are many different ways of calculating addition and subtraction, the answers will always be the same. Some pupils in these years were working well with numbers up to 1000.

81. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. While some of the teaching to the oldest pupils in school is good, it is predominantly satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is very good, and characterised by pacy questioning which enlivens pupils' expectations and encourages their eagerness to respond. They all make good progress as the teaching pays close attention to providing the most suitable level of work for each individual pupil. The analysis of pupils' work shows that all pupils are challenged well and rise to meet the demands. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching shares the good qualities seen at Key Stage 1, particularly in devising work to suit the pupils' needs. Pace is generally lacking in Years 5 and 6, although pupils respond well to the timed challenge in mental mathematics.

82. Teachers' planning is clear, concise and logical, enabling pupils to understand and complete their tasks accurately. This good planning supports the important role of the classroom assistants, who contribute greatly to the progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers know their pupils well. This gives their charges confidence, which in turn leads to success and self-esteem in the learning of mathematics. The good relationships between pupils and teachers result in very good behaviour and a positive and healthy attitude in the learning of mathematics. Teachers are familiar and secure

with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. The three-part lesson structure is well established. Objectives in lessons are clearly identified to the pupils. Oral and mental sessions are generally lively and pupils learn quickly and show good mental agility. Pupils work with commitment and speed in their main activities. In some areas, over reliance on work sheets detracts from pupils' presentation. Most of their work is loosely collected in files, which prevents pupils taking pride in their work.

83. Teachers use informal and regular tests to assess pupils' attainment. As they know their pupils well, teachers are quick to note when any pupil is having difficulties. Teachers ensure that these are dealt with either immediately or in later planning. Assessment is used satisfactorily to set sufficiently challenging targets for all pupils. The school uses non-statutory test materials and the results are used to track pupils' progress from year to year.

84. During the inspection, information and communication technology was not noted to be supportive in mathematics lessons in Key Stage 2. The mathematics curriculum has been reviewed and the school uses and recognises the particular strengths of a commercial scheme. This gives good opportunities for extending pupils' work. The school's ethos in teaching mathematics is summed up in the words of the co-ordinator: "You can do it – even if it may take time."

SCIENCE

85. In terms of pupils' knowledge and understanding, standards in science are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 2 however, this is only evident when *talking* with pupils: the quality and the quantity of their recorded work suggests that standards are unsatisfactory and close to being poor. The lack of planned writing opportunity hits this subject hard, particularly in Years 5 and 6: in the most recent national tests, standards were below the national average.

86. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are generally effectively developed throughout both key stages. Their investigative skills of making decisions, predicting the outcome and recording results using information communications technology need to be further developed.

87. Pupils in Year 6 study the effects of microorganisms in the decaying process. They understand that microorganisms have a useful function: yeast's action in bread making, and fermentation in the production of alcohol, for example. They look at a range of food items that have been left to decompose for several weeks and write down the name of the decomposing item. The work was linked to an earlier visit to a local wood to examine the woodland floor for aspects of decomposition. Whilst such visits are valuable, this was in the too distant past for there to be continuity in their learning. The written record of the woodland visit took the form of a journal rather than a scientific record. The quality and extent of the writing varied greatly but was generally poor. Hence, while pupils' knowledge and understanding is sound, through lack of practice, they have few recording skills at their disposal.

88. After talking with Year 6 pupils, it is clear that they frequently discuss how they want to plan an investigation and what they think might happen. Also, they understand the importance of a fair test to ensure that results are reliable. From the scrutiny of their work, it is clear that these vital aspects of scientific enquiry are rarely included in their written record. Without them, a record of an investigation resembles a procedure rather than a true enquiry.

89. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study the effects of a switch, when incorporated into a circuit. They know that a circuit must be complete for a bulb to light: they built one into their circuit. They represent their work in diagrams. As pupils work in groups, they discuss their task using appropriate technical vocabulary and share ideas on the way forward. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 have undertaken a wide range of studies including the forces of magnetism, friction and springs and the need for a healthy diet.

90. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know that living things need certain conditions to enable them to grow. They compare two contrasting environments and observe the differing amount of plant coverage. They conclude that the dry conditions and lack of soil in one location prevent plant growth. Pupils identify four ways to take exercise and study its effect on our heart and our breathing. They use their knowledge of properties to sort seeds into groups according to their size, colour, shininess and texture. Their knowledge and understanding of the properties of a range of materials were further developed when they carried out tests for opacity, translucence and transparency. A valuable aspect of this work was that they recorded their results in a table where they were required to predict the outcome before carrying out the test.

91. The quality of teaching varies. Although there is little direct evidence from Key Stage 1, the range of topics, the planning and the pupils' work all show that teaching is at least satisfactory. In lower Key Stage 2, teaching is good. Lessons have clear objectives and structure. Pupils work as a whole class and in groups, and come together to share the progress that they have made and what they have found out. There is a good balance between active group support and allowing pupils to progress with their work, solving problems themselves and becoming independent in their learning. Lessons are clearly set in the context of their previous learning. This helps them understand why they are carrying out specific activities.

92. In upper Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory. Whilst there are very good relations with pupils, there is a lack of continuity in their learning over time. From a study of their work, it is clear there have been periods of several weeks when they have not undertaken science work that resulted in a written record. This lack of a consistent approach to the teaching of science in Years 5 and 6, together with too few regular and planned opportunities for pupils to record their work in a scientific way, are the two features which prevent standards being higher at the end of the key stage.

ART

93. Provision for art is good overall and the attainment of pupils is satisfactory. The school maintains the same level of commitment found in the previous inspection. The support from artists in residence remains a strong feature in enriching pupils' work and extending teachers' expertise.

94. In lessons seen, pupils in Years 1 and 2 concentrated fully on the input of a professional artist: drawing a self-portrait and also making a self-portrait in clay. These were particularly challenging tasks for such young pupils but the clay work showed clearly how good their learning was. The excellent concentration of the pupils when drawing their self-portraits was rewarded by the fact that all had captured at least one feature successfully. This was the result of excellent teaching: the highest quality instruction combined with the outstanding organisation of the whole afternoon.

95. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had painted landscapes based on works by Turner and Constable. The techniques of painting, however, were limited and lacked more adventurous mixing of colours. In Years 5 and 6, pupils had produced some still life charcoal sketches of a beaker. These were well considered pieces of work in which some pupils showed skill in shading to give the impression of light and form. Their work in clay and painting was, however, weak: Pupils, for example, painted directly from the paint blocks and did not have any palettes on which to mix their colours. This gave a flat, uninteresting result. Their clay containers lacked shape and form. The lesson was unsatisfactory because the teacher lacked the expertise to help pupils develop the required skills.

96. Co-ordination of the subject is effective. The new guidance for the art and design curriculum has been adapted and a varied, challenging curriculum has been designed to extend pupils' knowledge, appreciation and understanding of the world around them.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. Provision for design and technology is good. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection as the school now has a good scheme of work, which promotes and ensures the development of pupils' skills. It also addresses all features required in the designing and making elements of the subject and includes food technology. Attainment for pupils in the school is satisfactory overall.

98. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 prepared a prototype for a pop-up greetings card using paper engineering. They fully understood the function of sliders, levers and pivots to obtain their desired effect. The teaching and learning here were very good. It was the intention for pupils to learn the basic mechanical skills before commencing their own individual cards. While the designs for these were complex and may need some adjustment before completion, this rethinking is an important part of the design process. Pupils happily demonstrated their prototypes and, using the correct terminology, described how they worked. They were accurate when drawing and cutting out the various pieces of card. Many pupils were able to use staplers for fixing. The task in itself was challenging and the results very much enhanced pupils' self-esteem. Pupils also supported each other well, making helpful suggestions or demonstrating how something should be tackled. The good planning for this lesson also included a final evaluation and opportunities to suggest improvements.

99. Previous to this activity, Year 1 pupils designed a sandwich in food technology. There were good links here, both with science and with health education, as pupils discussed healthy eating. The curriculum was further extended to include textiles. Year 2 pupils had worked on textiles when designing, sewing and stitching Christmas cards. Pupils enjoy their activities greatly and this has a very positive impact on standards.

100. Although no teaching was observed in Key Stage 2, there was extensive medium term planning for the whole academic year. Many of the areas involved good cross-curricular links with science, particularly in the use of electrical components and switches in Years 5 and 6. These two years are shortly embarking on a well-planned project involving moving toys and also using the cam principle to demonstrate different types of motion.

101. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had a full programme: working on packaging, and developing good links in history by making Viking ships. There is also very detailed planning for producing a night- light or a study light. Pupils' work has included research on a CD-ROM. Pupils of all abilities make good progress.

102. The subject provides pupils with good opportunities for personal development as it increases self-esteem. Pupils also learn to value other people's work. They work harmoniously together and help each other. When the subject is linked to history, it adds depth to pupils' cultural development.

GEOGRAPHY

103. During the period of inspection, there were few opportunities to observe geography lessons. Discussions with pupils and the study of their past work added to the evidence available. At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is in-line with expectations. Despite sound standards in terms of geographical knowledge and understanding, the quality of recorded work – particularly in Years 5 and 6 – is weak. Geography is not used well enough as a vehicle for pupils to develop their writing skills. Pupils' writing skills are not used well enough to support work in geography.

104. When pupils in Year 6 discussed their region, they were able to talk about ways in which people can both improve and damage the environment. They highlighted the natural beauty of the Lakeland area and its attraction to tourists. Whilst they appreciated that tourists had a beneficial effect on level of sales in local shops and through suppliers, they could also identify a range of drawbacks for the environment and the people living in it. When they talked about their work on water and the environment, they showed a good level of understanding of the need to treat waste water before its return to the rivers. They could describe the devastating effects of recent floods, particularly in southern England. On balance though, they felt those floods would have been less life-threatening than the droughts in other areas of the world. They listed a range of sources of geographical information such as books, maps, the Internet and a children's daily news television programme. In Years 3 and 4, pupils compared aspects of their lives with two girls from Kenya, one from a city and the other from a Kenyan village. After watching a video for information on the Kenyan girls, pupils completed a diary of daily routines for themselves and the girls featured in the video. They identified how their respective environments affected their lives.

105. Pupils in Year 2 develop their geographical skills through studies of the school's grounds and the wider community. They use plans and aerial photographs to locate features. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils produced their own plans of a 'Secret Garden' that had been modelled by the teacher. They understand that moveable features such as people and vehicles should not be included in a plan. Pupils in Year 1 develop their geographical skills when they produce simple maps of their route from home to school. They begin to use a geographical vocabulary such as 'near' and 'far'.

106. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching throughout each key stage. However, in the one lesson in upper Key Stage 1 and that in Years 3 & 4, the teaching was good. Teachers prepared their lessons well and gave pupils opportunities to work with a minimum of supervision. This encourages independence in their learning. The pupils responded well to this style of teaching and learning. They talked about their work and shared opinions, without losing concentration on their task.

107. Visits to a wide range of contrasting environments give pupils of both key stages a good level of insight into the diversity of different places. In Key Stage 2 for example, pupils follow a local river from very near to its source to its mouth. This reinforces the classroom teaching as they can see for themselves the changing features of a river along its course. Pupils from Key Stage 1 visited a coastal community as part of their work, comparing their environment with one that has contrasting physical features.

HISTORY

108. During the period of inspection, there were few opportunities to observe history lessons in Key Stage 1. However, discussions with pupils and the study of their past work added to the evidence available. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above expectations, while at the end of Key Stage 1, it is in-line.

109. Pupils in Years 5 & 6 study life in Britain at the time of the Second World War. They understand the effects of the war on the availability of food and other major aspects of daily life. They also understand that the war affected town and city communities differently from those in the countryside. In one lesson, pupils looked at a ration book and an actual selection of the rations for a family for one week. They were encouraged to consider the changes in everyday ingredients by comparison with today's. For example, we use oil rather than fat and the convenience of tea bags rather than loose-leaf tea. In this lesson, pupils went on to consider other social and industrial aspects of the times, such as the life of a G.I. Bride compared to that of British wives and a discussion of the changes brought about when a government nationalises an industry like the railways. Their understanding of the last point was brought up to date by discussions over the recent de-nationalisation of railways and the possible changes to air traffic control. This topic alone demonstrates the depth of pupils' historical knowledge and understanding. Their interest is clear for all to see.

110. In Years 3 & 4, pupils were studying Victorian Britain. They were able to describe differences between everyday items of Victorian times and those in use today, such as flat-irons, oil lamps and metal mugs. Where they did not recognise the item they were able to

make sensible guesses as to its probable use, for instance a warming pan could be used to heat food over a coal fire. They handled artefacts appropriately and made good use of them as a source of information. Overall, Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate an understanding of history and how it can be divided up into different periods of time.

111. A discussion with pupils from Year 2 showed that they are able to talk about their own lives in order of events. They were particularly clear on this when they talked about their family history. They described their family trees from great grandparents, or grandparents to themselves. They identified changes over time and gave examples of changes in everyday life from their grandparents' childhood to their own. In a discussion on journeys to local towns, they reasoned how transport would have been very different - probably using horses and carts rather than cars. They discussed clothes in terms of 'plain shirts' and grey trousers. Pupils described a visit to a museum where they had seen a flour grinder. They had also seen a butter churn but they understood that people do not use this equipment now to produce their food. They know that we can find historical information from books and by visiting museums. Their work has included a study of the comparison of modern farming equipment with those in the past. They have studied a time-line to show the changes in the way in which bread has been baked over time.

112. It is in this subject that pupils in Years 5 and 6 produce their best writing: it is of a sound quality. Displays of work showed, for example, that they had imagined themselves to be in the situation of evacuees when writing a letter home. Other work included posters encouraging people to 'Dig for Victory' in terms of land use for food cultivation. The quality of pupils' work reflects high quality teaching: good use is made of the knowledge of - and enthusiasm for - history of the part-time teacher employed to teach the subject to the oldest pupils in school. Pupils in years 3 and 4 are also well taught. Skilled use of artefacts and other resources such as video footage brings the subject alive for pupils throughout the key stage. The quality of relationships with pupils also contributes to effective learning. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement on the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

113. Standards in information and curriculum technology are satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to practise their computer skills are limited, due to a shortage of machines. Despite this, through the efforts of the teachers, pupils of all ages are able to practise their skills sufficiently to become competent in information technology. Even the youngest pupils are given the chance to use the digital camera on their walks in the locality – both to record and to print.

114. Opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 are always present: many pupils use and practise their skills on the computer when they have finished other activities. The programs on the computer at any one time usually cover some aspect of the subject presently being taught. Older and younger pupils are skilled in accessing programs and control them well. Teachers have good knowledge and ensure that a varied selection of work is provided for the pupils. As well as showing some computing skills in mathematics, pupils are able to programme a moving toy and organise information at a level appropriate to their age and ability.

115. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with that expected for pupils' aged 11. They enjoy obtaining information from different web-sites. Year 6 pupils were very interested in what they learned about microorganisms during their science studies. In history they researched the Holocaust. During wet break-times, pupils make use of the computer games provided: they control them well and enjoy the challenge of doing so. There is a new encyclopaedia provided and their class demonstrates new programs when appropriate. A parent helps daily in teaching computer skills and at present is teaching pupils how to access, and send letters and information by email. Destinations are as close as Key Stage 1 and as distant as Australia! All pupils can access the Internet. They also use the word processor although little evidence was seen.

116. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages, although hampered by the number of computers available, is certainly most satisfactory. Pupils show a wide variety of skills. ICT is also taught regularly as a subject where pupils concentrate on specific skills. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

117. Co-ordination is good. The school has adopted the scheme of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and added to it so that there is more structure to work with. The co-ordinator uses the local authority's web-site for assessment sheets. All assessment records will be stored on the computers eventually. Each pupil has an attractive, individual, easy-to-use record book, which they complete fully each time they are taught about or use the computer. The school has maintained its performance since the previous inspection, because it has considerably improved the level of technology to keep pupils up-to-date with ever developing systems.

MUSIC

118. At the end of both key stages, attainment is above expectations. At the time of the last inspection it was in-line with expectations in Key Stage 2, while in Key Stage 1 there was too little evidence to support a judgement on standards.

119. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 sing in rounds: this was used effectively as a 'warm-up' exercise at the beginning of the lesson. Pupils showed a good level of accuracy as the round progressed. They achieved this by maintaining their own part whilst being aware of how it worked with the others. Later in the lesson, pupils rehearsed a piece that involved melodic and non-melodic parts. Some used metallophones and other tuned instruments to play a melodic accompaniment, while others used untuned instruments effectively to create atmosphere. A further group of pupils played the melody on electronic keyboards. Their work showed improvement throughout the lesson and the final effect was good. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use untuned instruments to produce rhythm patterns of increasing complexity. They were able to take a number of beats from the teacher, play these on their instruments, follow with the same number of rests and then start their pattern again. By giving different numbers of beats to different groups, the performance resulted in a well-structured piece with a strong sense of phrase and changing texture.

120. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 use a wide range of percussion instruments. They understand the capabilities of different types of instruments and use them well. In Year 1, they played their instruments to accompany their own singing. After a little practice, they were able to maintain a steady pulse so that the singing and playing were in time. In Year 2,

they used tuned instruments to play pieces involving changes in pitch and interpreted graphics as the basis of their task. They used lyrics about snowflakes falling, and were able to identify a gently falling series of notes to accompany their song. Singing is tuneful and demonstrates their abilities in controlling their voices.

121. The good quality of teaching and the high levels of expertise promote these standards. The school employs a specialist teacher who teaches throughout both key stages once a week. The teacher's planning for music ensures that pupils make effective progress, and that their tasks build on their existing skills and knowledge.

122. The range of instruments is good and this contributes to the standards that pupils achieve. It enables the teacher to provide variety in the work and allows pupils extra scope when making choices for their own compositions. A few of the tuned instruments need to be overhauled so that the quality of the pupils' work is not affected.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. During the period of inspection, there was only one opportunity to observe a physical education (PE) lesson: this was seen in the context of the physical development of the children in the Foundation Stage. Whilst there is insufficient evidence to support any judgements, it can be stated that the planning for the subject covers all the areas of learning of the National Curriculum. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment was in-line with expectations at the end of both key stages.

124. Key Stage 2 pupils benefit from swimming lessons as part of their PE activities, and by the end of the key stage, the great majority achieve their 25 metres swimming certificate. The school is developing orienteering within the grounds. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils of both key stages use plans of the school's grounds to plan their route. To add further interest to this activity, older pupils are responsible for 'hiding the hedgehog' and representing its position with a dot on the plans. Other pupils use their orienteering skills to retrieve it.