

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HASLINGDEN HELMSHORE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Helmshore

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119195

Headteacher: Mrs C Myers

Reporting inspector: Mr P H Cole  
2616

Dates of inspection: 3 April to 7 April 2000

Inspection number: 189779

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gregory Fold Helmshore Rossendale Lancashire
Postcode:	BB4 4JW
Telephone number:	01706 213756
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Atkinson
Date of previous inspection:	30 September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr P H Cole	Registered inspector	Information technology History Equal opportunities	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs M Jacobs	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents.
Mrs R Grant	Team inspector	English Art Children under five	
Mr A J Edwards	Team inspector	Music Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mr N Hardy	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Special educational needs.	
Mr S Reynolds	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography	How good are the curricular and other learning opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

With 364 pupils on roll, Helmshore is larger than many primary schools. It admits pupils into the reception classes in the September of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection 15 pupils in reception were four years old. Nearly all the children in the school are white and all speak English well. 6% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is much lower than usual and reflects social backgrounds that are mostly advantaged. Many pupils enter school with higher than average attainment. Fewer than normal pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. However, 7 pupils have statements, which is more than is usually found in primary schools of this size. Many of the pupils who have special educational needs are identified as having dyslexia.

The school is currently involved in a government sponsored initiative to raise the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The deputy headteacher has recently been appointed headteacher and the vacancy created has not yet been filled.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils that enables them to achieve appropriate standards in most subjects, including English and mathematics. Teaching is good overall and very good in Key Stage 1 classes. Governors are not sufficiently involved in setting the direction of the school or in evaluating its effectiveness. The new headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has started to address these effectively. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve appropriately high standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave.
- Many pupils achieve high standards in music as a result of additional teaching and the opportunities they have to perform.
- Teaching is good overall and particularly strong in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils behave very well, are eager to learn and their attendance is very good.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a good understanding of what is right and wrong and their social skills are good.
- Pupils are well looked after in school.
- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and a good understanding of what needs to be done to make improvements.

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

- Standards in science, information technology and religious education are not high enough by Year 6.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils under five to learn through play and exploration.
- The governors have not been sufficiently involved in making decisions about the school and have not been encouraged to develop their roles as "critical friends" to the school.
- Teachers' roles in leading and managing subjects have not developed sufficiently.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of some reception children and in one area Key Stage 2 that lead to unsatisfactory lessons.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has not made sufficient improvement since its last inspection in September 1996. The school was encouraged to continue the impetus of improvement that had been identified. This has not been the case until recently and many aspects of its life show little or no improvement. Following considerable development of the curriculum before the last inspection little has been done since, with the exception of the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. The time available for teaching at Key Stage 2 remains tight. However, pupils' learning is now assessed much more thoroughly and purposefully than it was. Governors have not been encouraged to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. Nor have co-ordinators been encouraged to become involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision made within their subjects, which was identified as a key issue for action in the last report. The key issue to review the deputy headteacher's role is no longer relevant. Standards in English and mathematics have shown improvement and are now above those usually expected by eleven years of age. Pupils' achievements in other subjects have mostly remained similar to those found in the majority of schools but in science and religious education and aspects of geography and history, at the end of Key Stage 2, they are not high enough for the pupils in this school. Pupils' skills in information technology are well below those usually found by the end of the juniors. The new headteacher is well aware of the shortcomings in leadership and management of the school and of the need to raise standards in some subjects. She has already started to address many of these and her enthusiasm and commitment ensure that the school is well placed to make the improvements that are required.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	C	A	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	B	C	B	C	
science	A	B	C	D	

The results in English and mathematics in 1999 were better than those that were achieved nationally and were appropriate for the pupils in the school. This was not the case in science, where results were in line with the national average but were not high enough when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds to those at Helmshore (based on levels of free school meals). Results in science have also deteriorated over the past three years. The inspection found standards in English and mathematics to be above those usually expected by the time pupils leave primary school but in science brighter pupils are not being challenged to achieve the higher levels and this is resulting in standards that are in line with national expectations but are not high enough. At the end of Key Stage 1 results in the most recent tests and standards found in the inspection are above average in English, mathematics and science. Many pupils have poorly developed skills in information technology and by the end of Key Stage 2, standards in religious education are below expectations. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in



other subjects and many achieve well in music as a result of additional teaching, extra curricular activities and the opportunities they have to perform.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive, pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons, in the dining room and when playing outside. Provides a strong foundation for learning. There have been no exclusions from school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility and to show initiative.
Attendance	Very good.

Pupils show real interest in their work, waste very little time and concentrate well. They take a real interest in each other's achievements for example by applauding good work in lessons and get on well with each other at playtimes and when working on group tasks. Pupils take responsibility for answering the telephone at break times and older ones happily look after younger children during wet lunchtimes.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection 93% of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better with nearly two thirds of all lessons being good or better and 23% being very good. 7% had weaknesses that made them unsatisfactory. Teaching was never less than satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and most lessons at this key stage were either well or very well taught. Good and very good teaching were seen in the other key stages but there were weaknesses that led to around 10% of lessons for children under five and in Key Stage 2 being unsatisfactory. The main weakness in the lessons for children under five was the unsatisfactory match between the content and the organisation of the lessons and the learning needs of children of this age. Pupils were often required to sit listening to the teacher for too long and were provided with tasks that were too difficult and complex. The main weaknesses seen at Key Stage 2 were found mainly in one class. They included not ensuring that lessons built effectively on pupils' existing learning and not providing sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able in science. Children with special educational needs are taught well, both in class and when withdrawn for extra help. The teaching of both literacy and numeracy is good and is characterised by planning that clearly identifies what pupils will learn and how their different needs will be met. Most lessons are taught at a lively pace with effective use being made of resources and classroom helpers. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think more deeply.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good provision is made for literacy and numeracy but there are weaknesses in curriculum for children under five, information technology and some other subjects, including religious education and aspects of history and geography.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall satisfactory with strengths in the provision made for moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for.

The relatively large amount of time spent teaching English reduces the allocation for developing children's learning in history, geography and religious education and this is depressing the standards that pupils achieve in these subjects. The problem in religious education is compounded at Key Stage 2 by trying to cover too many different religions, which results in superficial learning of them. There are not enough opportunities for the younger children in the reception classes to develop their learning through exploration and imaginative play. At present the school is not meeting the statutory requirements for information technology. Monitoring using computers is not being taught and others aspects of information technology, such as data handling, are not covered sufficiently. Clear targets for learning and careful planning enables pupils with special educational to make good progress. The school successfully encourages pupils to develop a good understanding of what is right and wrong and enables them to develop their social skills well. It is less successful in helping them appreciate cultural diversity in modern Britain. Pupils are well cared for in a safe and secure environment, although there are problems at the start and the end of the day with the road outside the school. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory and previous problems with keeping parents informed of developments and encouraging them to work positively with the school are being addressed.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership from new headteacher and increasingly effective contributions are beginning to be made by senior staff and coordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Poor. Governors have not been given sufficient information to enable them to be appropriately involved in the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory.

The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Good use of staff but weaknesses in financial planning.
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Overall the leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. However, the new headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is enthusiastically addressing them. She is well supported by teachers and other staff, who work well together as a team. There is a legacy of significant underdevelopment in the roles of governors and teachers in their contributions to the leadership and management the school. There has been little monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and too little involvement of governors and staff in determining the direction and priorities of the school. Best value principles do not yet inform school development and management. Overall, staffing, accommodation and resources for teachers to use in classrooms are adequate, but there is scope to improve the facilities for children under five (outdoor play and imaginative play) and the resources for information technology and science.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress and achieve well.</li> <li>• Pupils are well behaved, develop positive attitudes and appropriate values and they work hard.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have not been kept sufficiently informed of developments in school, such as the literacy hour.</li> <li>• Relationships between parents and school have not been as good as they could have been.</li> <li>• They have not been encouraged to become involved in their children's education.</li> <li>• There is a limited range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sports and for younger children.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with many of the strengths and weaknesses raised by parents. There is clear evidence, also identified by parents, that more information is being provided to parents and that they are now being made welcome when they approach the school with concerns. The inspectors' view is that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities provided, especially for music, but also for French and German and different sports. The provision is better than in many schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1 Children start school as four year olds, at the beginning of the school year during which they turn five. Their attainment on entry is higher than usual. Most are articulate for their age and are well adjusted socially. By the time they reach compulsory school age, almost all exceed the national targets for their age group in all areas of learning. Some children are already beginning to work at the early levels of the National Curriculum programmes in English and mathematics. Overall, children's personal and social development is good, but it varies. In some lessons, work is too hard for the youngest children and this affects their concentration and impedes their learning.

2 The results achieved by the school in the national tests for eleven year olds in the last reporting year (1999) were well above the national average for all schools in English, above them in mathematics and in line with them in science. When compared to similar schools (based on entitlement to free school meals) results were appropriate in English and mathematics but were below the average in science. Over the last three years results in English and mathematics have varied but have been usually been above the national average whereas in science they have shown a steady decline. The findings from the inspection show the same pattern of achievement as last year's tests with standards in the current Year 6 being comfortably above national expectations in English and mathematics and in line with them in science. Given the backgrounds of the pupils, standards are appropriate in both English and mathematics but not high enough in science where fewer than expected pupils are achieving above the national expectations, particularly in their ability to carry out investigations. Pupils have good skills across all aspects of English, although the lack of opportunities to use a library and information technology resources limits their ability to undertake independent study. In mathematics, pupils have good computational skills, secure understanding of mathematical vocabulary and confidently undertake investigations and practical work. Test results and evidence from pupils' work shows that there is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the school is likely to achieve the targets in the tests that have been set for the current year.

3 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are tested in reading, writing and mathematics. In 1999 the results the school achieved were well above the national average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics. These results were in line with those in similar schools for English but were slightly below the average for similar schools in mathematics, because fewer pupils achieved the higher level. Over the last three years results in Key Stage 1 tests have shown mostly steady improvement. The standards found during the inspection were above national expectations in English, mathematics and science and in all these subjects pupils are achieving appropriately given their backgrounds and prior attainment. This reflects the consistently good teaching found in Key Stage 1 classes.

4 Standards in information technology are poor because pupils have too few opportunities to practice particular skills and the recently introduced changes to the school's curriculum are not being consistently implemented. In religious education standards at Key Stage 2 are below expectations because the thin coverage of the World's major faiths results in pupils having superficial knowledge and understanding. Limited opportunities to engage in practical work in history and geography results in skills in these subjects being less well developed than they could be, although pupils' knowledge and understanding is often good and standards are overall are in line with national expectations. Standards in other subjects are satisfactory. The many pupils who benefit from additional tuition in music through instrumental lessons and involvement in extra curricular activities, such as the recorder groups and the choir, achieve high standards.

5 Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress when measured against their prior attainment. This is especially so in English where pupils receive significant support and help in developing spelling and writing skills. Most pupils' problems are identified early in their school career and appropriate measures are taken to meet their specific needs.

6 Since the last inspection standards in English and mathematics have improved, but in science, information technology and religious education they are not as high as they were.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

7 The school's mission statement creates an ethos of high expectation. Pupils of all ages understand this statement and can quote it. Pupils' attitudes to their work are really positive. They behave very well and relationships throughout the school are very good. Attendance is very good.

8 The under-fives mainly have positive attitudes to their learning. In the best lessons, they take a full part in lessons along with the older children. They are keen to answer questions and show a good level of independence in their group work. Many work well with a partner, knowing that they need to take turns. They help to tidy up and understand the classroom routines well. In a few lessons, however, when the work is too hard and the time spent in whole class discussion is too long, some lose interest and begin to fidget. When children have the opportunity to make choices, explore and work imaginatively, they do so well, but this is not a strong feature of provision.

9 In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils show a lively interest in their work. They work hard at all times, whether in whole class sessions, in small groups or independently. They enjoy school and participate actively in extra curricular activities as well as their lessons. Their parents are happy that they like coming to school. They concentrate well when being taught as a class on the carpet and settle diligently to work individually or in groups. Pupils are keen and eager to answer questions, show their knowledge and express opinions and are confident they will not be ridiculed if they make a mistake. They mostly take pride in the presentation of their work.

10 Pupils behave very well and parents are very pleased with standards of behaviour. There is an expectation of good behaviour as the norm without need for reward. Staff recognises how well disciplined pupils are. Only very rarely, where teaching is not matched fully to all pupils' needs, is there any inappropriate behaviour and this is only low level. Pupils mix well; girls and boys work and play together and older pupils help younger children at lunchtime, particularly if they cannot be outside. There is mutual respect between pupils and staff. Staff respect pupils' views and opinions in discussion and pupils listen very well to their teachers and to each other. There are no exclusions.

11 Relationships in the school are usually very good amongst the pupils themselves and between pupils and all adults. Parents and pupils feel that at times welfare assistants at lunchtime are too firm, although they are very well meaning. There is an over emphasis on lining pupils up. Pupils work collaboratively very well. They share, take turns and help each other. For example, in Year 3 science, pupils decided who would do what in an experiment to ensure a fair test was fair. Opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and show initiative are improving. The majority of parents feel the school is helping their children to become mature. Year 6 pupils produced a stunning woven collage, based on the work of Gauguin, at their own suggestion. Older pupils help with younger children on wet lunch breaks and Year 6 pupils answer the telephone at break and lunchtime. The residential weekend for Year 6 pupils makes a good contribution to their personal development. The pupils enjoyed sharing dormitories and working and playing together. The headteacher is planning to introduce more formal roles for pupils, such as a school council, so that they can be consulted about ideas and changes in school.

12 Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes towards their learning, both in classrooms and when receiving additional support. Behaviour amongst these pupils is good and they feel that they are valued within the school community.

13 Attendance is very good and above the national average. Pupils come willingly and happily to school and most arrive on time. The headteacher is aware that a small number of pupils are late each day and is planning appropriate measures to address this. Parents understand their responsibility to inform school of reasons for absence and usually do so promptly. There is very little unauthorised absence. The statutory requirements for the recording and reporting of absence are met.

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

14 Overall, teaching in the school is good but varies between the key stages. Children in reception are taught satisfactorily, with teaching in one class being of a high standard. At Key Stage 1, teaching is consistently good, often very good and overall is very good. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good but lessons in one class are too often unsatisfactory.

15 Teaching of the under-fives varies from very good to unsatisfactory. When it is very good, planning is meticulous and meets the needs of the youngest, as well as the older, children in the class. Teachers' expectations are high, but children are managed sensitively and learning is fun. In these lessons, there is sufficient support from other adults. When it is less than satisfactory, lesson content is inappropriate and expectations are too high. This was the case in a geography lesson when pupils were expected to identify Italy from clues given by the teacher. At other times, pupils are expected to sit and listen to the teacher for very long periods of time. As a result, some children lose interest and do not learn very much. The teacher becomes anxious about managing children's behaviour and the climate in the classroom becomes less positive.

16 In Key Stage 1 teachers planning clearly identifies what pupils will learn and how the needs of the different age and ability groups in the mixed year classes will be met. Teachers implement these plans well and target children carefully with their questioning, explain new learning clearly and provide work that is well matched to the needs of each group. As a result all pupils in each class are able to make appropriately good progress in their learning. In the very best lessons these qualities were enhanced by the teacher's high expectations and enthusiastic and lively style that ensured very high levels of pupils' involvement, concentration and productive work.

17 Similar quality in the planning of lessons and the matching of work to pupils needs was seen in many lessons at Key Stage 2, particularly in literacy and numeracy, which enabled pupils to make clear progress. However, weaknesses in lessons seen in one Year 4 class resulted from the superficial nature of the planning that did not take sufficient account of earlier learning, identify clearly the main focus of the lesson or describe what this meant for the different groups in the class. As a result in a science lesson the higher attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged. The teacher took all the pupils step by step through an investigation when there were good opportunities to allow the more able to make use of their existing knowledge and understanding. This lesson also lacked rigour and pace, as did a geography lesson in the same class, and too little was achieved by most pupils. In contrast, a Year 6 science revision lesson was well structured to enable the higher attaining pupils to apply what they had learnt in their own explanations and their learning was much more effective.

18 In many lessons teachers are able to deliver new learning confidently and skilfully because they are well prepared and have a good command of what they are teaching. This was a feature of much of the teaching of literacy and numeracy and ensured that basic elements, such as, phonics are taught well.

Good subject knowledge also leads to effective teaching in other subjects. For example, in a music lesson in Year 5 it enabled the teacher to lead a well structured discussion, progress the lesson at a lively pace and to make effective use of resources, which ensured that pupils gained a good understanding of pitch and dynamics. However, a weakness in a number of science lessons in Key Stage 2 was the teachers' insecure understanding of the subject matter, which led to pupils not being stretched as much as they could have been.

19 Common strengths in teaching are teachers' skilful management of pupils and clear expectations regarding their behaviour and involvement in lessons. Teachers are making effective use of assessments of pupils' learning to group pupils in class and to inform the planning of literacy and numeracy lessons but do not yet use assessment enough to guide their teaching of science and foundation subjects. In science, for example pupils marked work includes few comments that would help pupils to improve. Homework has begun to be set more regularly but is not yet a well established feature of teaching that extends pupils' learning.

20 The teaching of children with special educational needs is effective. In class lessons work is usually well matched to the specific needs of the pupils, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers support special educational needs pupils well and ensure that they play a full part in the lessons through skilful questioning and patient support. Where pupils are withdrawn from lessons for specific help they receive good quality provision to ensure that they learn the necessary skills. Support assistants are experienced in the work they carry out and are well briefed.

21 Since the last inspection the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has remained similar but there is now more good and very good quality teaching. Weaknesses in the match of work to pupils' needs and slow pace and lack of challenge have mainly been successfully addressed.

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

22 The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and relevant, including all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The foundation curriculum for children under five covers the required areas of learning, although there are weaknesses in the provision made for creative and physical development that hinder the progress made by some children.

23 The high time allocation for English, in addition to the literacy hour, in most classes affects the time available for other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education. This is a concern raised by some parents and confirmed by the findings of the inspection. Teaching time in Key Stage 2 has been increased since the previous report, but still remains slightly below the recommended level. Statutory curriculum requirements are met except for information technology where some strands are not fully covered. The school has made a sound start in examining the implications of the revised curriculum to be implemented from September 2000.

24 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and fully meets the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Individual education plans identify relevant targets that teachers and support staff use effectively in planning, so that these pupils make good progress through both key stages. The withdrawal of some pupils is planned flexibly, but there are times when access to parts of the curriculum is compromised and pupils with special needs may miss small but important parts of their work. The same is true when pupils miss parts of lessons for the well-regarded provision of instrumental music lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 1 receive most of their support in classrooms and this enables them to receive the benefits of a full and balanced curriculum.

25 Provision for the under-fives in the mixed age reception and Year 1 classes has shortcomings. Literacy and numeracy lessons are planned well, but the time spent on whole class teaching is too long for the youngest children in one class. Work tends to be pitched towards the higher attaining or older children and is not always suitable for those who are only four. This is particularly so in lessons, including geography, music and physical education, that are planned predominantly to the National Curriculum programmes. Work on Italy, for example, was too difficult for some of the younger children, and this affected their involvement in the lesson. There is a lack of balance between formal learning and exploratory and imaginative play. Insufficient chances are provided for children to choose from a range of activities and to engage in imaginative role-play. There are no facilities for children to develop their physical co-ordination and control at an appropriate level through regular, outdoor play planned as part of lessons.

26 Schemes of work are in place for all subjects, but are not always used effectively for example for religious education, information technology and art. Key Stage co-ordinators monitor planning weekly. This useful practice now needs to be extended to subject co-ordinators so that they can provide support, whilst checking continuity and progression, particularly where schemes have been introduced recently. Some valuable cross-curricular links are made, for example in a Key Stage 1 “Transport” topic that draws on elements of the science, history and design and technology curriculum. Occasionally the links are tenuous and ineffective, as when young pupils studying the life of Florence Nightingale, were expected to trace her route to Turkey with too little understanding of European maps.

27 Planning is systematic and good collaboration between teachers of parallel classes ensures consistency and equal access within age groups. The literacy and numeracy strategies are used very well to identify clear and progressive learning objectives, which are often effectively shared with the pupils. The quality of planning for the foundation subjects is more variable and sometimes insufficiently informed by assessment of pupils’ existing learning. In most classes, however, good provision is made for different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, for example in well-designed group tasks in the literacy and numeracy hours.

28 The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been effectively introduced in all classes, including the reception age group. Some good cross-curricular links have been forged, for example in the way that writing and mathematical skills are applied when pupils record their science investigations. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use other subjects such as history to extend the range of writing.

29 Staff provide a good range of voluntary extra-curricular activities over the year, including a residential weekend involving almost all Year 6 pupils. Music is a major strength, with opportunities for pupils to perform to a high standard. Most activities, such as the recently offered French and German clubs, are extremely popular, currently appealing more to girls than boys. The school’s policy of providing a number of “taster” activities in different sports encourages all pupils to try a range, rather than focusing on one or two sports as in some schools. Some parents expressed concern about this, but the inspection finds provision to be satisfactory, comparing well with that found elsewhere. A homework policy is being developed, but there is currently too much variability and the school needs to examine ways of further supporting pupils’ independent study skills. For example, the lack of a library in Key Stage 2 is reducing pupils’ opportunities to learn to study away from the classroom.

30 The school’s curriculum is based firmly on principles of equal opportunities and social inclusion. Activities, including clubs, are open to boys and girls and sensitive arrangements are made, for example with the residential visit, where finance may be difficult. Apart from the withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs described above, pupils with physical or learning difficulties are given good support in class by staff, and frequently by other pupils, to enable them to play a full part in lessons. The school maintains very close contact with parents who have exercised their right of



withdrawal from collective worship and religious education to ensure that alternative arrangements are working well.

31 A small amount of time is allocated to personal, social and health education (PSHE) in addition to the very good provision in the science and topic curriculum. This results in an unusually broad programme of health education in both key stages. Suitable provision is made for sex and drugs' education. The PSHE lessons are generally well-planned to consider moral and social issues, such as "What is a friend?" Staff do not currently have the benefit of an agreed programme setting out expectations for each year group and the school has not yet had time to consider the new national guidance about PSHE.

32 Some links have been developed with the community and partner institutions, such as a business enterprise scheme and there are good arrangements with the main receiving secondary school. Generally, these links are at an early stage and there is potential for greater curriculum enrichment and collaboration. This is recognised by the new head teacher who has clear plans, for example, to improve collaboration across the local primary schools.

33 Provision for spiritual and cultural development is sound and good for moral and social development. Assemblies make a valuable contribution to the spiritual life of the school and requirements are met for a daily act of collective worship. The programme includes whole-school, key stage and class assemblies that are sensitively organised and lead to a sense of special occasion, exemplified by pupils' enthusiastic participation in the singing. Other curriculum areas, including religious education, provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to consider the deeper meanings of life. For example, poetry is used imaginatively in both key stages, and with the under-fives, to develop insights into the feelings and beliefs of others.

34 Pupils have a strong understanding of the differences between right and wrong. Behaviour in and around the school is consistently good with very little need for rewards and sanctions because the pupils understand the principles and will sometimes remind each other of what is expected. Some aspects of the curriculum, for example when examining environmental issues in science or geography coupled with PSHE lessons and assemblies, present pupils with a range of moral issues to consider. The examples set by staff clearly demonstrate the school's expectations regarding behaviour and thoughtfulness for others.

35 Social development is good because pupils are given frequent opportunities to work and play together. In many lessons, they are expected to collaborate in pairs and small groups and experiences, such as music and physical education bring with them team-working skills. Pupils are notably mature in their social skills. Some have opportunities to take responsibility within the school community, although these could be extended, and the school is actively involved with charitable collections. The head teacher and staff set a good example in the quality of their relationships. For example, several teachers joined the pupils after school to show support for their singing and dancing from "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" and the head teacher is frequently seen around school talking with parents, pupils and staff.

36 Sound provision is made for cultural development. Pupils have studied and imitated the paintings of a number of artists. The music played in assemblies and physical education lessons represents a range of traditions. Some opportunities are offered to visit local museums or art galleries, but this is not currently a strong element in the curriculum. Some teachers recognise opportunities to raise awareness about the multicultural nature of society, for instance when Year 3 pupils study types of bread from different cultures and Year 4 pupils find out about an Indian village in geography. However, this is not a consistent strand and the religious education syllabus tends to examine a large

number of faiths at a superficial level rather than deepening pupils' understanding of different cultures. This is a weakness from the previous inspection that has not been satisfactorily addressed.

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

37 Pupils are valued and cared for as individuals. Close attention is given to their health, safety and well being and to creating a safe, secure environment in which pupils can learn and develop as confident, able young people.

38 Due attention is given to ensuring pupils' health and safety and regular checks are carried out. The headteacher is aware that the health and safety policy needs updating to reflect new legislation and current practice in the school. First aid is administered with care and adequate records are kept. Letters are sent home if a child receives a bump to the head. The first aid certification of some staff members has lapsed. There is very good awareness of pupils with specific medical needs and they are given really sensitive support and help. Child protection procedures are secure; staff are vigilant and aware and any child giving cause for concern is closely watched. Pupils are confident that they can take any problems to a member of staff and that they will be listened to. The safety of pupils coming to and from school is a concern. The road outside the school is narrow and there are a lot of parked cars, partly due to the fact that there is no car park in the school for staff cars. Visibility is restricted and some vehicles are driven too fast for the road conditions. Parents who stop their cars within the zigzag yellow lines immediately outside the school gates exacerbate the danger.

39 The staff is in the process of updating the behaviour and discipline policy to reflect the mission statement and to set up a consistent scheme of rewards and sanctions that can be adopted by all adults working in school, including lunchtime welfare assistants. The school has yet to produce the required policy on the restraint of pupils. The headteacher is currently revising the school's approach to punctuality because a few pupils are often late which disturbs the beginning of the school day. There is an expectation that pupils will behave well and attend regularly and pupils respond to this without the need to be rewarded. Parents are very happy with behaviour.

40 Teachers and support staff know pupils well. They make time to talk to pupils, often informally before school and at break and lunchtimes. They offer support and guidance to pupils and are always prepared to listen.

41 There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment showing an improvement since the last inspection. Records of progress are now being kept for each pupil, which include a curriculum summary sheet for English, mathematics and science that indicates levels achieved each year. New records that reflect assessments made of pupil's learning are starting to be introduced, initially in mathematics. These are going to replace the individual National Curriculum records that have been maintained for each child. Although very useful these new records are a little cumbersome and do not give easy over view of the progress being made across each class. There are plans to introduce records of assessment in the foundation subjects. Pupils' achievements are valued and annotated work indicates targets for improvement but there is no indication that the targets set for pupils are consistently supported to ensure improvement. Teachers evaluate and assess the impact of their teaching but at present this does not consistently inform future lessons. Standardised tests are used to inform the groupings of pupils in classes and this is effective. The school has recently updated school portfolios and this should help to moderate levels of attainment and ensure a better match of teacher assessments with test results at the end of key stages.

42 At present the school does not make enough use of analysis of information from National Curriculum tests to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning across each cohort. A start has been

made in this but the process needs to be formalised and details shared with staff so that modification can be made to what is taught in order to address any weaknesses in readiness for the next years tests.

43 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored and the quality of the pupils' individual education programmes is good with detailed targets for improvement. These are regularly updated and reviewed to ensure that the needs of the pupils are appropriately met.

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

44 The new headteacher and her staff are working hard to improve relationships with parents and to review the quality and quantity of information which parents receive.

45 The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting are mainly supportive of the school. However, about a third of parents did not feel they were well informed about how their children were getting on or that the school works closely with parents. These views reflect the style of the previous headteacher and parents acknowledge that communication is now improving. A regular newsletter has been introduced, which tells parents what is happening in school and celebrates achievements of pupils. The prospectus includes all the necessary information for parents but the governors' annual report does not include all the statutory elements it is supposed to tell parents about. The quality of reports on pupils progress is very variable. The best are models of good practice, clearly telling parents what their children know understand and can do and setting specific targets. However, in many classes, comments are not specific to subjects and targets are either generalised or non-existent. Home school diaries are not yet being used as a consistently effective means of communication. Frequently they are unsigned by teacher or parents and in many cases, where parents have written a comment the teacher has not responded. This has resulted in a noticeable decline in their use by parents.

46 Some parents are actively involved in supporting the work of the school. The Parent, Teachers and Friends Association raises significant sums of money which are used to purchase additional resources, such as a sound system and overhead projectors. Their effort is truly valued by the school. The headteacher is trying to broaden the membership amongst parents and staff as the current group has shrunk to a small core. A number of parents are coming in each week to make resources for the numeracy hour. They are producing high quality resources, which would otherwise take teachers' time away from other aspects of their work. As well as helping in classrooms in the traditional roles of hearing reading and working with groups of pupils, parents are being asked to offer help in their areas of expertise, for example information technology. Parents are very supportive of school productions.

47 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend review meetings on a regular basis and are kept fully informed about the progress being made.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

48 Overall, the leadership and the management of the school are unsatisfactory, but there are real strengths as well as significant weaknesses. The recently appointed headteacher has a good understanding of the school's situation and has already begun to address many of the weaknesses. She strongly believes that standards can be better and has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to bring about improvements in pupils' achievements and in the quality and effectiveness of the school's work.

49 One of the major weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school has been the limited information that has been made available to staff and governors over recent years concerning the standards being achieved, plans for school development and the use of the school's budget. This has made it difficult for governors and staff to be involved in decision making processes and there has been very little monitoring of the school's performance and effectiveness. As a result governors do not have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and have not been able, or encouraged, to play an active part in identifying priorities, deciding how the budget should be used or to be "critical friends" of the school. Similarly, until very recently teachers' roles as coordinators for subjects have not been focussed on curriculum development or on monitoring and evaluating standards and the effectiveness of teaching. The new headteacher is actively encouraging staff and governors to become fully involved in determining the school's direction and priorities and in the management of changes to its curriculum and routines. A good start has been made, for example with the wide spread of consultation, involving teachers, governors, pupils and parents, that was undertaken to determine the school's new mission statement. Teamwork is developing well and coordinators are more confident in making plans for how they can make improvements within their areas of responsibility. Governors are invited to attend the weekly curriculum meetings and are being provided with briefings, from invited local education authority officers, to broaden their understanding. Much still needs to be done however, to ensure that coordinators and governors are effective, particularly in relation to their monitoring and evaluating roles.

50 The problems identified above led to planning of school developments that was not owned by governors nor shared with staff. As a result planning has not been an effective guide for moving the school forward nor a helpful tool for managing curriculum development, resources or the use of funds available to the school. Since the last inspection little had been done to take the school forward, with only required responses being made to national initiatives, such as the literacy and numeracy strategies.

51 Early years' staff have done their best to keep abreast of developments in early years' education, but have had too few opportunities to visit other schools or take part in in-service training. Teaching support for the youngest children is of good quality, but insufficient, only being available for half of the teaching time. Lack of sufficient support makes it hard for teachers to meet the needs of the full age range taught in the mixed reception and Year 1 class, and results in inappropriate provision and teaching for some children. Resources for imaginative play are limited, and there are no facilities or resources for outdoor play.

52 There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers with a good balance between experience and more recently qualified teachers. Subject co-ordinators bring interest and enthusiasm to the subjects that they are responsible for. In the past, teachers have had their co-ordinator roles switched quite frequently, which has not helped them to develop the management and monitoring aspects of the job. In the forth-coming financial year, co-ordinators will manage their own subject budget allocations. This is a positive step in increasing their involvement and levels of responsibility.

53 The co-ordinator for special needs teaches part-time. However, special needs are her sole responsibility and she does not have a class-teaching role. She is well assisted by a team of classroom and special needs assistants who work well with class teachers to support individual pupils and groups who need additional help.

54 Lunchtime welfare assistants mostly relate well to pupils and look after them with a kindly but sometimes over firm manner at lunchtime. They have not received training and the headteacher intends that they should.

55 Teachers and all staff attend courses relevant to their responsibilities, but in the past have not had the opportunity to disseminate information to other members of staff. There is currently no teacher

appraisal programme. Support staff have been trained in literacy and numeracy but have received little training in other subjects. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by their mentors and other staff. They have an appropriate programme of support, with good target setting for their own progress and development. These targets and their teaching are closely monitored.

56 Overall, the building is adequate for the delivery of the national curriculum and numbers of pupils. The all-purpose hall is just big enough to hold the whole school for assembly. Rooms are of quite a good size and large windows create a feeling of space. Walls in classrooms and around school are well used for displays of pupils' work and to celebrate achievement. Mezzanine floors are a clever use of space to create additional storage and a room in which to work with individual or small groups of pupils. Storage is limited but well organised. The Key Stage 1 area is spacious and benefits in particular from the shared resource area. However, there is currently no space allocated for a Key Stage 2 library. Outside, the school is fortunate to have a large, but under-utilised field. The hard core play area may be deemed adequate in strict terms for the numbers of pupils, but in practice its size limits play when all pupils are outside and the field cannot be used. There is no safe, easily accessible space outside for children under five to develop their physical skills through playing with large apparatus, such as trikes and climbing equipment. To one side of the school there is an attractive garden area with a memorial tree, which was built with the support of the Groundwork Trust. However, pupils are only allowed in it with a member of staff. There is very little provision for social seating. The caretaker keeps the school clean, tidy and well maintained.

57 Most subjects have adequate resources, although currently there is insufficient equipment for information technology. This is in the process of being rectified. The resources to support practical work in science often have to be supplemented by teachers themselves. The lack of a Key Stage 2 library limits pupils' access to books for research and hinders their opportunities for independent study. Good use is made of loan services to supplement book stocks and for example to increase the availability of history artefacts. There is no small equipment, such as skipping ropes, hoops and beanbags to encourage play at lunchtime.

58 Day to day administration is effective and the school clerk efficiently manages the school's routines. Teachers are freed as far as possible from jobs such as photocopying, much of which is done by the non-teaching assistant. The clerk and new headteacher are making good use of new systems to update their financial planning and record keeping. Day to day financial control was found to be satisfactory at the last audit and recommendations have been acted upon. Specific grants, for example for special educational needs and to a lesser extent the single regeneration budget are used appropriately to provide help and support for identified pupils. However, the previous head teacher undertook financial planning and monitoring himself and did not keep adequate records or appropriately involve other members of staff and the governing body. The finance and premises committee of the Governing Body believes it has understood spending plans and monitored expenditure. In reality it has been ill informed as to the true state of the budget and has not fulfilled its role in ensuring that the budget was set and reviewed regularly, according to the needs and educational priorities of the school. The new headteacher is now seeking advice from the local education finance officer in order that the school's finances can be properly planned and monitored. There is an adequate contingency for the school to continue to plan to raise standards as per the vision of the headteacher and her staff.

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

59 In order to further raise standards and improve the quality of education governors, the headteacher and staff should:

A Improve standards in science by:

- i. raising expectations and providing more opportunities for brighter pupils to design their own investigations;
- ii. initiating a programme of classroom monitoring to share good practice and tackle weaknesses in teaching;
- iii. providing staff training in the new syllabus;
- iv. establishing a system for assessing pupils' progress through the scheme to help all teachers match the work to the needs of different groups.

B Improve standards in information technology by:

- i. Increasing teacher confidence in teaching the subject through identification of strengths and weaknesses in their skills;
- ii. Ensuring that the weekly lessons always focus on developing pupils knowledge, understanding and skills in the information technology;
- iii. Provide opportunities for individual pupils to practice new skills within relevant contexts across the curriculum.

C Improve standards in religious education at Key Stage 2 by providing a greater depth in the study of the major world faiths. This could involve covering fewer religions and should focus on developing pupils' understanding of key concepts such as the nature and forms of worship, celebrations and festivals, symbolism, places of worship and holy books.

D Provide children who are under five with more opportunities to learn through exploration and play. Greater use should be made of activities that allow these pupils to investigate and explore materials and to engage in role play activities. Provision should be made to enable them to develop their physical skills through regular play with large apparatus.

E Increase the role of governors by:

- i. Continuing the improvements in the provision of information to governors. It is important that they discuss thoroughly this information in order to gain a good understanding standards and of where there are strengths and weaknesses in the school;
  - ii. Encouraging them to extend their involvement in curriculum development through, for example, the opportunities they now have to attend staff meetings. Individual governors could also adopt a subject or a class, meet with coordinators, observe lessons and report on the progress being made to the governing body;
  - iii. Ensuring that governors are fully involved in deciding the priorities in the school development plan and in setting the school's budget so that these priorities can be achieved;
  - iv. Establish a structure for meetings of the committees and full governing body that encourages governors to monitor and evaluate the performance of the school so that they can become effective "critical friends".
- F Develop the roles of coordinators by agreeing what should be included in the role – this could include for example, leading curriculum development, supporting colleagues in making agreed changes, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning and devising plans for how these can be improved.
- G Address the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching by:
- i. Establishing a programme for monitoring teaching. This could include monitoring the planning of lessons to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils and is firmly based on the agreed curriculum programmes and observing and feeding back on the quality of teaching;
  - ii. Setting targets for improvement;
  - iii. Providing support to enable these targets to be met.

Other issues that the school should also address:

- i. The safety of children at the start and end of the day;
- ii. The links with the community and partner institutions to enhance the school's curriculum;
- iii. The pupils understanding of cultural diversity;
- iv. The use of assessment information to refine curriculum planning;
- v. Pupils' skills in history and geography.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	42	28	7	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	364
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	62

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### 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
	1999	25	27	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	25
	Girls	24	25	25
	Total	46	48	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	92 (96)	96 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	25	25
	Girls	23	26	26
	Total	45	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (91)	98 (97)	98 (98)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	32	29	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	25	26
	Girls	25	21	28
	Total	29	46	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (74)	75 (60)	89 (78)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	19	24
	Girls	21	17	22
	Total	42	36	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (68)	59 (70)	75 (76)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	310
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	28

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	508,668
Total expenditure	523,639
Expenditure per pupil	1,420
Balance brought forward from previous year	65,782
Balance carried forward to next year	50,811

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	364
Number of questionnaires returned	133

**Percentage of responses in each category**

My child likes school.  
 My child is making good progress in school.  
 Behaviour in the school is good.  
 My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.  
 The teaching is good.  
 I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.  
 I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.  
 The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.  
 The school works closely with parents.  
 The school is well led and managed.  
 The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.  
 The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
56	39	5	1	0
44	52	2	1	1
40	55	0	0	5
28	55	14	1	2
44	50	1	0	5
26	39	30	4	1
52	39	9	0	0
56	39	1	0	4
20	47	32	1	1
38	46	3	0	14
41	50	6	0	3
29	36	24	3	8

## **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**

60 Children start at the school as four year olds, at the beginning of the school year during which they turn five. They are in classes alongside older children, mainly those who are already five but also a few children from Year 1. This arrangement is less than ideal, and makes considerable demands upon the teachers to provide appropriately for the three age groups. At the time of the inspection, 15 children were still under-five and were being taught in the two mixed-age reception and Year 1 classes. Children's attainments on entry are above average. They are articulate and socially well adjusted for their age. Teachers work hard to meet the needs of these younger children, alongside those of compulsory school age, and are successful when planning is very precise, and lessons are well resourced and staffed. There are times, however, when the content and organisation of lessons are more suitable for the older children, and the needs of the youngest are not well met. Aspects of provision, for example the absence of an outdoor play area and limited opportunities for imaginative and exploratory play, are unsatisfactory. Teachers make up for this to some extent by their caring attitudes, and to the good start they give children in their formal learning in early reading, writing and number.

#### *Language and literacy*

61 By the time they reach five, children's achievements in early reading and writing are good, and above those expected of children of this age. Most children listen well to the stories read as part of the literacy hour and try to answer questions. They are lively and interested during their discussions with adults. When given the opportunity, they play intently in the role play corner, entering into the play situations provided with high levels of commitment. Compared with the opportunities provided in other settings for the under-fives, however, these opportunities are limited and resourcing is sparse. Pupils begin to read simple words and phrases, with a few able children beginning to read fluently. Almost all are well beyond the stage of making marks on paper to represent writing. Most write recognisable words, and a few bright children write full sentences.

62 Teaching of language and literacy is variable, but satisfactory, overall, for this age group. Some teaching is lively and interesting, holding the attention of the younger children well. In other lessons, the time spent in whole class teaching at the start of the lesson is too long for all but the brightest of these young children. Less mature or able children begin to switch off and lose interest. Group work is better matched to their needs, but is a relatively short part of the whole lesson. Sensitively planned work includes the use of puppets and opportunities for role play. Teachers and teaching assistants usually have very good relationships with the children and create a good atmosphere for learning, though there are occasions when a teacher assumes that the children's lack of concentration is because of naughtiness, rather than the inappropriateness of the provision.

#### *Mathematical learning*

63 Most children exceed the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five. Some are operating at the early levels of the National Curriculum. They count to 10 and beyond confidently. Most have a good understanding of the meaning of more and less than. They know how many objects are left if one or more is taken away. Most begin to record their answers, writing numbers correctly, though a few still invert or begin them at the wrong place.

64 Planning for lessons is good, though its implementation is variable. Where the teaching is very good, the needs of the youngest children are well met. Learning is fun and the demands made upon them are appropriate. Where it is implemented less well, the children are not quite as responsive, and a few find it hard to sustain their interest through the whole of the time spent on the carpet with the rest

of the class. In a few lessons, rather more negative than positive strategies are used to manage children's behaviour. Group work is consistently successful with children trying very hard and showing a lively interest in their learning. The well planned plenary is very successful when sufficient time is given to it.

#### *Personal and social learning*

65 Children's personal and social development are above expected levels. All understand and usually follow the routines set up in the classrooms well. They take part in a full range of activities with the older children, often showing great maturity for their age. When work is well matched to their needs, they are quickly absorbed, for example during the opportunity for role-play. There are times, however, when teaching is less appropriate and children lose interest and fidget. Where teaching is sensitive to their needs, they show confidence and pleasure in their achievements.

66 Assemblies for the age group are very well planned and led. They promote the children's personal and social development well. The child celebrating his birthday was made to feel very special; a particularly nice touch was the card he received that had been made by another child and signed on behalf of the staff and children.

#### *Other areas of learning*

67 Most children start school with more advanced skills than usual in these areas. By the age of five, most exceed the desirable learning outcomes in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. The quality of provision and teaching is variable, however, and is not always suitable. Overall, with some exceptions, it helps them to make satisfactory progress in their learning.

68 In a well planned and organised lesson, children painted circles inspired by Kandinsky's painting, showing good control. Others constructed large models of carts from construction materials; fixing wheels and adding handles well. Their achievements were supported by the additional help they received from a parent and teaching assistant. The large area between the two classrooms was well used for this work. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world was also extended appropriately in a lesson where they worked practically to see how well different vehicles moved on a range of surfaces.

69 In other lessons in geography, music and dance, the expectations were too high for some of the youngest children. This was particularly so in geography, where children were asked to identify a country from a variety of clues that were far too hard. The follow up work, which included drawing an Italian flag, was not meaningful to the children. Similarly, expectations in music where children were asked to use instruments to play rhythms and to follow simple notation cards were too high, and the work was beyond the capabilities of some. In these lessons, some of the children became restless and lacked concentration, which had an adverse effect on their learning.

70 Some aspects of provision recommended for four year olds, notably the provision of regular outdoor play, are not available. There is no specific play space or large equipment for this age group to enable them to develop their control and co-ordination skills at an appropriate level. Provision for imaginative role play is too limited. There are too few chances for children to choose and engage in the kind of exploratory work that is appropriate for this age group. Additional support from a teaching assistant is of good quality, but is insufficient, only being available for half of the teaching time. There have been very few opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge of early years' practice through in-service training. The co-ordinator, however, is a dedicated and often inspirational teacher, who given the right support, is capable of developing provision for the under-fives to a very high level. Although judgements in this area are not as positive as at the last inspection, this partly reflects changes in expectations for early years education. The capacity for improvement is good.

## ENGLISH

71 By the time pupils leave the school, results are high. In 1999, tests results were typical of similar schools and were well above the national average. Eighty eight per cent of pupils achieved the expected level 4 and a high proportion, about a third, achieved the higher level 5. Both girls and boys did well, but boys' performance was markedly higher than that of boys nationally.

72 Results were also good at the end of Key Stage 1. They were particularly high in writing, where they were well above the national average and also above those found in similar schools. These results are higher than those reported at the last inspection, when standards were found to be average. The inspection findings broadly confirm these high results.

73 By the end of Key Stage 1, the standard of work seen is above average. Most pupils have well developed skills in speaking and listening. In one of the mixed-age Year 1 and 2 classes, for example, one girl suggested 'adept' as a word ending with 'pt'. In a parallel class, pupils enjoyed playing with language as they made up mnemonics to help them remember spellings. Year 2 pupils got as far as 'evil villains eat raw ...' before running out of ideas for a mnemonic for 'every'. Pupils' advanced conversational skills assist their learning in all aspects of English and in other subjects.

74 Most seven year-olds read fluently for their age. They join in the reading of the 'big books' used in the literacy hour with good expression. They enjoy reading poems, and have favourites that they read for pleasure.

75 Teachers promote this interest well by teaching simple poems and rhymes that pupils join in. Pupils' skills in reading make work in all other subjects easier. In history, for example, they are able to look up facts about Victorian transport from simple texts and rewrite them in their own words. Pupils receive good encouragement to read at home. Although some parents are less happy with the range of books sent home since the introduction of the literacy hour, there is no evidence that this is impeding pupils' progress.

76 By the age of seven, pupils write simple sentences legibly and mainly accurately. Some brighter children write at length, re-telling stories or making up their own. Skills in spelling and punctuation develop well. By Year 2, many pupils know, for example, that the final 'e' on a word is dropped when 'ing' is added.

77 Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good, overall, and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned to take account of the two age groups within the classes. Appropriate texts are used for shared reading. Activities for group work are well planned and often quite demanding, stretching pupils so that they do their best. Within some groups, pupils are required to work together in pairs or larger groups. They do this well, taking turns and following the rules for games. Their good reading skills mean that they can play games that require them to match pairs of words, for example 'pleased' and 'displeased' or identify opposites such as 'whisper' and 'shout'. All teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage their behaviour effectively. Pupils want to do their best for their teachers, showing interest and enthusiasm. They persevere, even when work is occasionally a little beyond their capabilities. A group of Year 1 pupils, for example, were asked to find their favourite poems from a range, not all of which they could read easily. They showed remarkable perseverance, asking one another and adults

around them for words and enjoying their successes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is provided sensitively and helps most pupils to make good progress.

78 By Year 6, pupils have well developed skills in speaking and listening. They make very thoughtful contributions to class discussions, often asking as well as answering questions. They make relevant observations about the style of writing and about technical accuracy. One pupil, for example, suggests that a piece of writing can be improved by starting subsequent sentences differently and another that a longer break, indicated by the use of a semi-colon, would be the most appropriate form of punctuation to use. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are enhanced by their very good behaviour, which ensures that they pay attention and make every effort to take a full part in discussions.

79 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read well for their age. Almost all read sufficiently difficult texts with good expression and are able to comment on aspects of plot and characterisation. They enjoy reading a range of fiction and know how to use dictionaries and thesaurus. Most know how to find out information from books, but have too few opportunities to do so in their work in other subjects. There is no library for this age group and opportunities for information seeking via the Internet or CD ROM are not yet in regular use. This lack of provision limits the development of pupils' independent study skills.

80 By the age of 11, pupils' writing is of a good standard. Most pupils write at length, adopt different styles and write expressively. They understand how to improve their work through editing and drafting. The best writing is lively and interesting. Pupils are particularly good at writing authentic speech, which they read back confidently and with good expression. They have a good sense of style, as shown by the brochures written to entice tourists to Helmsore. Limited opportunities are provided, however, for pupils to write in other subjects. Too few chances are provided, for example, in religious education. The use of word processing and desk top publishing is also too limited. Standards of spelling and punctuation are good. Higher attaining pupils use a range of punctuation well. Many pupils' handwriting is neat and fluent.

81 Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils and plan and organise lessons well. Class discussions are well led, encouraging pupils to express their ideas and extend their vocabulary. Group work is well managed and pupils work well without direct support from the teacher. Work is usually appropriately matched to the different abilities within the classes. The good quality of the teaching ensures that pupils make sufficient intellectual and creative effort, for example in their story and poetry writing. Homework is not a significant factor in pupils' achievement.

82 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. A programme to improve pupils' spelling is very well taught by the special educational needs teacher, and results in good learning gains. There is a considerable amount of additional teaching available for pupils who are not achieving as well as their peers in Year 6. As well as special educational needs support, groups of pupils have 'booster' classes to try to raise their national test scores to average levels and additional support funded through the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). It is not possible to make judgements about the quality of the 'booster' classes. Teaching provided for pupils through SRB funding, though broadly satisfactory, is not closely matched to the individual needs of pupils and has only a marginal impact on their achievements. It also results in pupils missing work in other lessons.

83 There is a good range of information from tests and assessments to indicate pupils' levels of attainment. Some use is made of this, for example to identify pupils for the 'booster' classes, but more use could be made to set targets for individuals or other groups of pupils. Information about pupils'

level of achievement, as indicated by tests and assessments, is not always clearly conveyed to parents, a significant number of whom do not feel sufficiently well informed about their child's progress.

84 Resources are adequate, though more group reading books for the lower attaining Year 2 pupils are needed. Co-ordination is not yet fully effective, as the co-ordinator has no opportunity to gain an overview of work in the school by scrutinising planning or visiting classrooms. Very little monitoring of teaching has taken place. As a result, some of the techniques used in the most effective teaching are not being shared throughout the school. A great deal of time is given to teaching English, with additional lessons in writing, spelling, poetry and so on being taught in many classes. This leads to some lack of variety in individual timetables and has a knock on effect on the time available for other subjects, including history and geography. More emphasis on teaching literacy skills through other subjects, rather than discretely, would be beneficial.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85 The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 show that more than nine out of ten pupils reach the expected level 2 while almost one pupil in five reach the more difficult level 3. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 is well above the national average while those achieving level 3 is close to the average. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that three out of every four pupils achieve the national average with one out of four attaining level 5 which is above the average. When judged against schools with a similar intake, results at Key Stage 2 were consistent with those in other schools, while results at Key Stage 1 were just below the average. Over the last four years the level of results has fluctuated but has been broadly linked with national improvements at both key stages. While girls usually achieve higher results in mathematics at Key Stage 1 this position is reversed at Key Stage 2 with boys reaching higher levels on each occasion over the four year period.

86 The inspection findings are that at both key stages the pupils' attainment in all aspects of mathematics including numeracy, is above the national expectation. This is an improvement when compared with the findings during the last inspection. Targets set by the school for the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or better in 2000 are appropriate and achievable. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress throughout the school.

87 At both key stages the pupils conduct mathematical investigations and undertake practical work thoughtfully. In lessons they demonstrate a good understanding of the mathematical content and are able to explain reasons for the processes chosen in calculations. They skilfully and rapidly carry out mental and written calculations using a variety of methods. Throughout the school pupils' show clear understanding and thorough knowledge when completing mental calculations.

88 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a secure understanding of the mathematics they are attempting and many exercise initiative and develop strategies of their own. They add accurately to 10, 100 and some more able pupils to 1000. They understand odd and even numbers and have an appreciation of subtraction and multiplication of simple numbers. Pupils confidently and accurately carry out practical calculation of money and many demonstrate an understanding of the time. Children collect data and convert their results into graphs, sometimes using skills in information and communication technology. In all classes in Key Stage 1 pupils have the opportunity to carry out practical mathematical investigations which help to firmly fix concepts, for example, when accurately measuring using metre sticks in a science lesson. Pupils have a good knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and confidently use the correct technical terms for the process they are carrying out. Mental mathematics skills are good and for some pupils very good with pupils able to count confidently



and accurately in two's and instantly know the number pairs to 20. Pupils are developing a good understanding of place value.

89 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have continued to extend their mental mathematics skills and have developed a quick and accurate recall of multiplication tables. Mental addition, subtraction and division skills are also above average. Pupils have a good knowledge of the correct technical vocabulary and use it confidently and accurately and develop a range of strategies to tackle questions related to problem solving. By Year 6, many pupils have good knowledge of percentages, fractions and decimals and discuss negative numbers in correct contexts. Appropriate links are made with other subjects such as the use of co-ordinates in geography and the creation of a variety of graphs from data collected by pupils.

90 The quality of teaching is good overall with some lessons being very well taught. The very good teaching is characterised by thoughtful planning which provides detail on the skills and knowledge pupils are to learn in the lesson. In these lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils behaviour and the amount of work to be completed. Pupils receive good levels of direct teaching from knowledgeable teachers whose questioning maintains a brisk pace and encourages pupils' learning. A particularly strong feature of lessons is the sharing of the aims of the lessons at the beginning and the checking of what pupils have learned in the final section of the lesson. Many mental sessions are well planned and pupils derive considerable benefit from these. In the best lessons pupils, the most able, are provided with additional challenges that extend their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Areas of weakness still remain in the teaching of mathematics. While marking of pupils' work is conscientiously completed, comments designed to improve the quality of pupils work are not often present. Presentation of pupils' work is also of variable quality and insufficient emphasis is placed on the layout of work.

91 In all lessons pupils respond enthusiastically to mathematics, listening carefully and responding to teachers questioning. Teachers introduce and reinforce the correct use of vocabulary and the good quality question and answer sessions provide ample opportunities for speaking and listening and this makes a valuable contribution to literacy.

92 The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and the subject is well planned. Monitoring of the quality of planning is completed by the subject co-ordinator who has a clear idea of areas covered and the strengths and weaknesses in the mathematics curriculum. There has not however, been the opportunity to work alongside colleagues to monitor and improve the quality of teaching. The arrangements for assessment have been improved although the information from an analysis of results is not used sufficiently to aid planning.

## **SCIENCE**

93 The number of 11 year olds reaching the expected level in the 1999 tests was above the national average. However, because relatively few pupils achieved the higher level 5, the school's overall performance in science was about the same as in other schools. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was below average, with the number reaching level 5 being particularly low. Over the last four years results have improved slightly, but not as much as the national trend and less than the improvement in English and mathematics. The 1999 teacher assessments for 7 year olds were very positive with virtually all pupils achieving the expected level and almost half achieving the higher Level 3. There are no notable differences between the results of boys and girls.

94 The findings of the inspection reflect the picture revealed in last year's results and in the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is above average and pupils predominantly

achieve levels that match their capabilities. In Key Stage 2 some pupils do not achieve as well as they might, mainly because not enough is expected of brighter pupils in some classes. For example in a Year 4 class, all pupils repeated a familiar experiment where higher attaining pupils might reasonably have been expected to take greater responsibility for the investigation and so make greater progress. The school makes good provision for Year 6 pupils to revise the science curriculum before taking the tests and the great majority is on course to reach the expected level.

95 In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to observe carefully, using all their senses, and to record their observations in a good range of ways. Because careful arrangements are made to match the work to the different age groups and abilities in the mixed-age classes, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons. Pupils can name major body parts and distinguish between living and non-living things. As in the junior classes, very good provision is made for pupils to learn about healthy living, for example they know which foods are good for you and higher attaining pupils can say why. All pupils begin to classify using simple criteria, as when they correctly separate the features of humans, other animals and plants.

96 In Key Stage 2 pupils learn to use a wider range of measuring and recording instruments, for instance taking temperatures over a period of time and logging their findings in tables and graphs. Information technology is insufficiently used. Although most understand the features of a fair test, many pupils do not make the progress they might in using their scientific knowledge to predict what may happen in an investigation. They use equipment with care and attention to safety, but brighter pupils generally do not have enough opportunity to choose methods or equipment in designing their own experiments. This is the main reason that progress slows in Year 4 where too often all pupils are expected to complete the same work and teachers do not place enough responsibility on the pupils to think for themselves. Through the key stage, pupils acquire sound scientific knowledge, for example about the properties of solids, gases and liquids and most can describe, with appropriate vocabulary, the changes from liquid to gas through evaporation. The good progress in recording their work continues through the key stage, except where worksheets are used too much, hindering the skills pupils show in developing a range of recording methods.

97 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in science lessons are very good. Almost all are interested – an interest harnessed in some classes by good links with home and with the practical application of science in real life. Pupils listen carefully and in the best lessons have the confidence to raise their own questions as well as being keen to answer the teachers' questions. They collaborate very well in practical work, sharing equipment sensibly. Work is presented neatly, for example almost all pupils take care in drawing and labelling diagrams.

98 Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, reflecting the findings of the previous inspection. They are good in Key Stage 1 where learning objectives are clear and challenging and a very well-planned range of practical activities is provided. Good use is made of classroom assistants, often to support the younger or lower attaining pupils. Observation during the inspection revealed very careful grouping of infant pupils according to their age and ability. As a result, they all have to think hard, gaining confidence and understanding at an impressive rate. In both key stages, teachers use questioning well to deepen understanding and to get pupils to use scientific vocabulary. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2 because too many lessons do not stretch the pupils or require them to think for themselves, reflecting teachers' lower expectations and insecure subject knowledge. Good teaching was sometimes seen in Key Stage 2, for example in a Year 3 class where pupils were testing different types of rock and in a Year 6 revision class, where imaginative resources were used to help pupils remember the names and functions of different flower parts. In these cases, teachers' subject knowledge was good and relationships with the pupils particularly positive.

99 Coverage of the National Curriculum is underpinned by a recently adopted scheme of work and an unusually detailed and relevant policy for health education. Because the scheme was introduced with other subjects at relatively short notice, insufficient provision has been made to support staff in its implementation. However, sensible arrangements are in hand to evaluate each topic and to examine the implications of the National Curriculum revisions to be implemented in September. At this stage, the impact on standards is minimal, although there are good indications that progression is improving. There are weaknesses in co-ordination arrangements because too little use is made of the coordinator's enthusiasm and growing expertise to support and monitor the subject and to influence classroom practice. Information about standards in the subject has not been shared widely enough in the past to identify priorities for development. A useful portfolio of completed work is kept, including perceptive assessments of key learning by pupils. Overall, assessment and recording are not systematic enough to help teachers modify their planning. Resources are barely adequate to support the learning of all pupils and teachers are too often required to make their own to supplement the school's supply.

## **ART**

100 Very few lessons were seen in this subject, and it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Evidence from a range of other sources, however, indicates that standards are broadly in line with those found nationally at the end of both key stages. This is a similar picture to that reported at the last inspection.

101 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' work is of at least a satisfactory standard, with some examples of higher quality work. The pencil drawings of sections of vases based on direct observation, for example, are good. Pupils have worked with care and observed closely, recording in some detail. They begin to understand how shading gives depth to objects. Similarly, the very striking collages of bicycles make good use of an appropriate range of materials, and although supported by adults, children add their own distinctive touches, for example silver foil handle bars and chains. All the work produced at this key stage is bold and imaginative. Children have painted portraits, designed patterns after looking at the work of Kandinsky and made imaginative collages of toys, using a range of materials, including fake fur and wool. A good range of work is completed, often linked appropriately to work in other subjects, notably design and technology, but also history.

102 By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are variable, but broadly satisfactory, with some examples of good work. The best work, for example a large collage inspired by the work of Gauguin, is planned and created by pupils independently, working in groups. Some of the papier mache models of Polynesian women show appropriate levels of skill and the ability to think and work creatively. This good work is stimulated by knowledgeable teaching that gives pupils opportunities to make choices and use their initiative. There is some good observational work throughout the key stage. In Year 3, for example, pupils have drawn very carefully observed sketches of rocks. In Year 5, pastel and chalk pictures of different kinds of bread are very well observed. Painting and work with textiles are less well developed. Lower standards are achieved in classes when work is over-directed, tasks are too narrow and pupils are given insufficient choice of materials. In these lessons, pupils could achieve more.

103 A significant amount of work has been done based on pictures by a range of modern artists. This has resulted in a bright hall display which has given art a higher profile in the school. The work of other artists has mainly been used appropriately to stimulate pupils' own work, though occasionally pupils tend to copy.

104 The co-ordinator is recently appointed and very keen to develop the subject. Currently, she has no way of knowing whether skills are being developed systematically, or how confident teachers are in teaching the subject. As in many schools, art has taken a back seat whilst national initiatives in literacy and numeracy have been implemented. As a result, the quality of provision is uneven, and the teaching of skills is not systematic enough to lead to very high standards. Little use is made of community links, for example bringing artists into school to inspire pupils. Sufficient time is given to the subject, however, and there is a good base from which to develop it further when time allows. Resources are broadly adequate, though there are some significant shortages, for example in fine brushes for painting.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105 The timetable during the inspection meant that no design and technology lessons were observed. Consequently no overall judgements can be made about standards or teaching. However, scrutiny of pupils' past work, discussion with them and their teachers and a review of planning indicates that satisfactory provision is made for pupils to work with a range of media, such as paper, card, food and wood, and to gain skills in designing and evaluating their products. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can design and make a wheeled vehicle, including a simple axle mechanism. Skills that have been acquired through using construction kits are applied well and pupils are notably creative in the range of types of vehicle they produce. For example, one pupil decided to include a caravan to be towed by their model car.

106 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have experience of researching and designing a range of artefacts such as the sandwiches designed – and enjoyed - in Year 3 and the slipper designs in Year 6 where pupils chose from a number of alternative designs. They have satisfactory opportunities to develop making skills, including appropriate attention to hygiene when handling food. However, because they only work with materials such as wood on an occasional basis, there is insufficient opportunity to develop skills to the full. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate what they have made, but sometimes the evaluations are superficial and do not refer sufficiently to the original design brief. Designs become increasingly detailed, although they are rarely drawn to scale and older pupils are not normally expected to show step-by-step drawings.

107 Pupils enjoy showing and talking about their work. They are proud of the finished products which show satisfactory care in finishing and decorating. On occasions they make things intended for different users, such as the Year 4 project on designing and making simple interactive books for younger pupils. In these cases, pupils appreciate the needs of others in making artefacts that respond to their preferences.

108 The school has very recently adopted a new scheme of work, although there has been little opportunity for staff to examine it as a team. In their planning, teachers make good use of the scheme often linking the subject effectively with other work. For example, in the infant classes, the study of transport and forces in science have been very sensibly combined with the project to design and make their own toy vehicles. In Year 5, musical instruments are being researched that can then be used in music lessons. Subject leadership is confined primarily to resourcing with little opportunity so far to support and monitor the work across the school. This is a weakness remaining from the previous inspection. Resources are adequate, but not yet linked clearly enough to the topics of the new scheme.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109 By the ages of 7 and 11 standards are generally in line with those expected nationally, although some brighter pupils could achieve higher standards if the curriculum allowed them to apply their knowledge and skills in more extended fieldwork and research studies.

110 Most seven year olds are beginning to recognise major features on a world map. They have a good understanding that some parts of the world might be warmer or cooler and that different types of transport are needed to travel short or long distances. This work is often linked imaginatively to their personal holiday and travelling experiences, creating a background for the imaginary travels of Barney Bear. They can talk about the local area and describe their journey to school. Some higher attaining pupils can express views about what they find attractive or unattractive about Helmsshore. This work is developed well in Year 3 where pupils begin to make good use of geographical language to describe features such as “temperate” or “polar” climates.

111 By the age of 11, most pupils can use an atlas well, including familiarity with grid references to locate a specific place and a key to identify important features. For example, almost all can work out alternative routes on the London underground map. They have a secure understanding of the water cycle. In Year 3 they make good progress in understanding climate and weather, again showing a very good general knowledge of features of the world such as mountains or historical buildings. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils develop a good understanding of how humans have affected and damaged the environment, although some are less sure about steps that might be taken to counteract these problems. Pupils’ skills in undertaking fieldwork to investigate local issues are less well developed and the current Year 6 group has only a limited recall of having studied a different country to compare it with the United Kingdom. Because time is limited, few opportunities are presented for older pupils to undertake a more extended study and brighter pupils particularly are generally not experienced in using first and second hand sources to investigate geographical questions in sufficient depth. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in lessons and through the school.

112 Pupils’ attitudes in lessons are good, although the subject is generally not amongst their favourites. This reflects the relatively low profile given to geography in the past, for example, very little work is displayed in most classrooms and communal areas and in some year groups the subject is insufficiently enlivened with first hand fieldwork experience. Pupils listen attentively and usually show an appetite for new information. For example, they will sometimes look for further information in their own time, which they are eager to share with others. They take care in recording their work in exercise books, but some pieces of work are kept loose or in poor quality topic books and presentation is compromised. Too few opportunities are presented for older pupils to complete an extended study involving personal research as well as taught material.

113 Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and in some lessons it is good. In contrast to the previous inspection report there was some unsatisfactory teaching seen in each key stage, when the subject matter was inappropriate for the age group or worksheets were given out without adequate discussion. In these cases, pupils’ learning was inhibited either because the work was too hard, or the task demanded too little of them. Good teaching is characterised by very good relationships and management of pupils so that they work hard, behave well and show interest in the area of study. In most classes there is a sound balance of instructional and more practical work, for instance interpreting maps. The curriculum rightly places greater emphasis on fieldwork in the summer term, but teaching throughout the year needs to focus more on pupils applying a broader range of geographical skills if standards, particularly for brighter pupils, are to be raised further. Planning is generally good, based on the recently adopted scheme of work and including good collaboration between teachers in parallel classes. Assessment is under-developed, sometimes resulting in a mismatch of the work to pupils’ existing knowledge and understanding.

114 The curriculum is well supported by a recently adopted scheme of work. This has not yet had a significant impact on standards, partly because there has been no opportunity for staff training and there are some gaps in resources. The subject shares curriculum time with history and in recent terms insufficient time has been allocated so that topics are isolated and important skills cannot be taught and applied consistently. Some useful cross-curricular links are planned, but sometimes, as in the case of younger pupils colouring an unlabelled European map to show Florence Nightingale's journey, the geographical learning is inappropriate. Curriculum co-ordination is underdeveloped, although the recently appointed co-ordinator is well-qualified and enthusiastic, recognising the need to promote the subject through the school. Staff have begun working together to look at the National Curriculum revisions to be implemented in September. However, most of the weaknesses identified in the previous report, for example in assessment and in the lack of release time for the co-ordinator, have not yet been resolved.

## **HISTORY**

115 During the inspection it was only possible to observe 2 lessons and both of these were in Key Stage 1. Judgements are based on these lessons, scrutiny of pupil's work and discussion with pupils in Year 6 on the work they have done. Standards are in line with expectations at both key stages and many pupils have good knowledge of historical information and understanding of chronology and change. Their skills in finding out about the past from using different sorts of sources are sound. This reflects the limited time available to develop these skills as a result of the emphasis being placed on the core subjects following the relaxation of the time for foundation subjects, including history. Given the prior attainment of many pupils, their knowledge and understanding are appropriate but their skills are not high enough.

116 Many Year 6 pupils have a secure understanding of chronology. They can put in date order the periods they have studied and they can use terms such as decade, century and generation accurately to describe historical time. They use conventions such as AD and BC appropriately and successfully relate to specific events. Year 2 pupils can sequence events in famous peoples lives, for example, Florence Nightingale and understand the impact she and others, such as George Stevenson had on other people's lives. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have acquired a good factual knowledge of different historical periods, which reflects the interest they show in the subject. Year 6 pupils can describe aspects of every day life in Victorian Times, for example child labour and can explain how exploitation led to reforms such as those introduced by Lord Shaftsbury. They understand concepts such as "trade" and "empire" and used them when talking about the past. Pupils in Year 2 have good knowledge of transport in Victorian Times and of how it contrasts with what is found today.

117 In both key stages teachers encourage pupils to record what they have found out using their own words and a range of appropriate ways of recording are found in their work. This often enables higher attaining pupils to be extended by writing detailed accounts. For example, in Year 6 they have written about what life was like in a Victorian school and the empathy shown indicates good understanding what life was like for children at the time. Time lines, family trees, diagrams and cartoon strips are used effectively to present what the pupils have found out, for example from books and information sheets. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were successfully challenged by the teacher to find information out for themselves about transport in the 19th century from information books and to compare a pupil's modern cycle with pictures of a Penny Farthing. Careful matching of this work and well focussed questioning by the teacher ensured that all pupils developed a good understanding of change. There is less evidence in pupils' completed work of them being able to use a range of primary sources, such as photographs and artefacts to explore and find out about the past, although when the opportunity arises teachers have made good use of resources from the loan services to provide valuable experiences of artefacts. This was the case in Year 3's work on Vikings. The two lessons seen were

well taught by teachers who were well prepared, managed pupils effectively and made clear what pupils were expected to learn and do.

118 History is led by an enthusiastic coordinator who has a good understanding of the subject and knows what needs to be done to move it forward. She has mainly focused on managing resources and supporting colleagues with appropriate curriculum materials and has had no opportunity yet to monitor or evaluate standards and the quality of provision made in practice.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

119 Standards in information technology (IT) are well below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 in all aspects of the subject. At Key Stage 1 pupils are achieving in line with expectations in using computers to communicate and present information using a word processing program, but are below expectations in other aspects of the subject. Recently the school has adopted an effective approach to teaching information technology using the national model scheme of work. Unfortunately this has not had time to make an impact in raising standards. Its effectiveness is also reduced because too often teachers are using the IT lessons to explain to pupils how to use programs designed to develop knowledge in other subjects rather than to develop the IT skills identified in the scheme of work.

120 Pupils in Year 6 have skills in word processing that are no better than those in Year 2. They are able to select different fonts and letter sizes for particular effects, such as titles, but do not plan or choose formatting features to produce careful and imaginative work. Scrutiny of their work and discussions with them indicate that they have very little understanding of how computers can be used to store, sort and search through information and that they have no experience in using computers to handle data they have collected themselves. On occasions they have searched for information on CDROMs as part of their topic work but overall have poor understanding and skills in handling data. Apart from using a Roamer earlier in the key stage, Year 6 pupils have not been able to develop their skills in programming and controlling devices. There have been no opportunities for them to learn about how computers can be used to monitor events, such as changes in room temperature over time. As a result the school is not currently meeting requirements to cover the National Curriculum requirements for information technology. Individual pupils who use computers at home have better understanding and skills than other pupils.

121 Pupils at Key Stage 1 are achieving relatively better than those at Key Stage 2. Scrutiny of their work and observation of them in class indicates that when using word processors pupils are able to achieve in line with expectations. They can select different fonts, change letter sizes and many are able to use emphasis, such as italics and underlining in their writing. They have also produced some effective pictures using a paint program's freehand, fill and spray tools.

122 Overall, the teaching of IT is satisfactory and is often good or better when teachers focus on developing specific aspects of IT in lessons. They then successfully encourage pupils to make good progress and to quickly learn new skills. This was the case in Year 3, where knowledgeable and confident teachers ensured, through their clear explanations and careful checking of understanding, that pupils in their class were able to program a Roamer to negotiate different routes on a grid. Teaching was equally effective in Year 5, when pupils were taught how to cut and paste when word processing. Too often, however, time identified for IT is spent helping pupils to use programs that are designed to consolidate learning in English or mathematics. The monitoring of teachers' planning has not identified or tackled this weakness. This is something that will need to be addressed if the National Curriculum is to be covered and pupils are to make sufficient progress as they move through the school. Resources are currently adequate but will be improved when the second year of funding from the National Grid for Learning is used to provide a new network and to replace older machines. The coordinator is taking

positive action to identify and address weaknesses in the skills that individual teachers have with aspects of IT.

## **MUSIC**

123 The overall standards at both key stages are in line with those expected and above in singing at Key Stage 2. Pupils who receive additional tuition achieve well. Pupils sing in assemblies with enthusiasm and in tune and the quality is often good. The school choir can sing a range of unison songs well but dynamics are not as well developed. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are able to clap out a rhythm successfully using animal names. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 5 pupils are introduced to simple notation to develop pitch and understand dynamics. They possess good listening skills, can write simple notation using notes given by the teacher and are able to sing an African song to a round. In Year 6 pupils can recognise sounds and their meaning in Saint Saen's "Carnival of the Animals" in relation to birds and animals. The pupils' knowledge of composers is limited and there is little attention drawn to the music that they hear in assemblies. Pupils enjoy their singing and this indicates an improvement throughout the school on the last inspection report. Their understanding of terms such as beat, rhythm and dynamics is good. Their attitudes to music are very good and they listen intently to instructions. Behaviour is always very good.

124 There is a wide range of extra curricular music available to all pupils and its quality is good. As well as the school choir, there are three recorder groups and a band ensemble. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of basic music theory and play competently. Most can read music. Music lessons in violin, recorder and brass are available for pupils, who are withdrawn from lessons. There is a strong commitment of peripatetic music teachers to the school. The extra experiences provided for pupils throughout the school, in these activities, enhances standards and performance of pupils who take part. School musical productions have been successful and pupils were seen performing a range of songs from "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", which also included dance routines. Progress in lessons is often good and learning at Key Stage 1 provides a solid foundation for the opportunities available at Key Stage 2. Pupils make good use of a range of tuned and untuned instruments in group work.

125 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and sometimes it is good or very good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge and are supported well by the headteacher, who is the co-ordinator. Lessons are well planned and teachers make positive use of resources. Pupils are encouraged to work practically and in groups. Pupils' strengths are in performance and appreciation but opportunities for composing music, particularly at Key Stage 2 is a relative weakness.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126 The standards observed in lessons are above average in dance at Key Stage 1 and in swimming at Key Stage 2. The standards in games and gymnastics at Key Stage 2 are generally average. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. At Key Stage 1 pupils move sensitively in their dance and respond to music effectively. Many demonstrate good co-ordination and an awareness of space. They can create a simple dance based on an African story. At Key Stage 2 most pupils in Year 6 are able to swim using a range of different strokes both on the front and back. They demonstrate good technique and have a good awareness of water safety. The majority of pupils are able to swim at least two lengths of the pool and do so with confidence.

Pupils' attitudes are at least very good, sometimes excellent, throughout the school. They listen intently to instructions and always work with enthusiasm. The maturity of pupils in Year 6 is particularly noteworthy. Pupils' behaviour is at least very good in all lessons.



127 Most of the teaching observed was good, with some being excellent. Teachers act as good role models for pupils and all change into appropriate clothing for lessons. Teaching is well planned and teachers have sound subject knowledge. Pupils are challenged appropriately in dance at Key Stage 1 and in swimming at Key Stage 2. Relationships with pupils and the encouragement of collaborative group work, are a strength of the teaching. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching resulted from too high expectations of pupils, who in a games lesson, were not able to succeed in a task of hitting a shuttlecock into a hoop. The stages of progression were not helpful. Pupils made good progress in their learning. The ability of pupils to link movements together in dance at Key Stage 1 enabled them to create a dance successfully. Pupils in Year 6 were able to take part in a range of swimming games with confidence and care, demonstrating above average stroke technique.

128 The curriculum at both key stages relies on a commercial teaching pack but this does not always give sufficient continuity and progression in both learning and teaching. An enthusiastic co-ordinator has recently taken over this role and has mapped out areas for coverage in the National Curriculum. The policy is in need of updating. There has been no monitoring of the teaching. Assessment procedures do not indicate what pupils are able to do, understand or know and reports to parent indicate pupils' attitudes to the subject. Resources are adequate although the outdoor hard play area is small and limits the range of experiences for pupils. The large playing field has not been developed sufficiently to extend opportunities for pupils' play and games.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

129 Limited opportunities existed during the inspection to see religious education lessons but teachers planning and pupils' work were examined and discussions held with pupils to give a further insight into the work completed. From this range of evidence standards in Key Stage 1 are judged to be in line with those identified in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education but standards in Key Stage 2 are below those expected. This represents a fall from the standards recorded in the last inspection.

130 In Key Stage, 1 pupils take part in age group assemblies which add appropriately to their understanding of stories taken from the Bible. They examine ideas such as friendship and kindness respond with confidence and willingly put forward their own ideas. The story format is often used well in lessons, for example, the story of "The Lost Sheep". The teacher ensured that the children knew the story well and used this knowledge skilfully to draw out pupils ideas about who loves them and why. This led one pupil to comment that even though we may do something wrong it doesn't mean that people stop loving us. Periods of quiet reflection and prayer are often features of religious education lessons and assemblies and provide pupils time to consider what they have heard. There are also links with other subjects, notably English, when pupils carry out role play activities based on the stories they hear.

131 By the time pupils have reached Key Stage 2, they have heard and understood many Christian stories. However, their understanding of other major world faiths is limited. This is, in part, because teachers attempt to cover too wide a range of material rather than concentrating on providing a greater depth of information on fewer faiths. Time given to religious education also appears to be limited with recorded examples of work covered in the subject often many weeks apart. This situation is further compounded because much work in some classes is copied rather than providing pupils with opportunities to retell stories or develop points of view in their own style despite them having the skills to do so.

132 The quality of teaching seen was never less than satisfactory and occasionally good. Where lessons are good as in a Years 1 and 2 lesson on “The lost sheep”, teachers have a clear idea about what they want pupils to learn, give them ample opportunity to express their views and use skilful story telling techniques to ensure that pupils understand the content of stories. In other lessons, for example, on Easter story, teachers skilfully encourage pupils to reflect and express their views, such as those on the Roman occupation of Palestine.

133 Pupils’ attitudes to religious education are good overall with sometimes very good levels of interest and participation. They think carefully about what they are being asked to do and this adds to their wider understanding of ideas such as trust, support and reliance on others.

134 The co-ordinator has recently become responsible for the subject and has, as yet, had insufficient opportunity to develop a clear idea about the quality of planning, coverage of the curriculum and the quality of work being completed by pupils. Resources to enliven the curriculum are sufficient and well organised and enough reference materials are available to increase teachers’ knowledge of the range of world faiths.