

INSPECTION REPORT

Stapleford C of E (VA)School

Stapleford, Hertford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117455

Headteacher: Mrs. B. Bailes

Reporting inspector: Mrs P. M. White
23686

Dates of inspection: February 5-8 2001

Inspection number: 189936

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane,
Stapleford,
Hertford,
Hertfordshire

Postcode: SG14 3NB

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J. Goldsmith

Date of previous inspection: September 30th – October 2nd 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23686	Mrs P. M. White	Registered inspector	English, Information and communication technology, Geography, History, Music, Special educational needs, Equal opportunities.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19692	Mr. R. J. Folks	Lay inspector		Attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22396	Mrs. J. E. Young	Team inspector	Mathematics, Science, Art, Design and technology, Physical education, the Foundation Stage.	The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Stapleford, approximately 5 miles north of Hertford. It is a Church of England (Voluntary Aided) school, which serves the villages of Stapleford, Waterford and Bramfield. However, one third of the pupils (33%) come from outside this catchment area. The school is part of a local cluster of four schools that share staff training, educational visits, sporting and musical opportunities. Built in 1872, the school has been modernised and extended over the years and it now provides spacious accommodation for the pupils and a pre-school group, which meets each week day morning. The school and the pre-school are linked through the rural partnership scheme. There are 56 pupils on roll, which is much smaller than most primary schools. Five of the pupils are just four years old and they attend part-time. Four per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and sixteen per cent of the pupils have identified special educational needs; these figures are below those found in most schools. No pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and no pupils speak English as a second language. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. The overall quality of teaching is good and this results in high standards. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and the governors who are constantly reviewing their work and seeking ways to improve further. The management of finance and resources is good and the governors' finance committee is careful in applying the principles of best value to the school's spending on goods and services. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading, speaking and listening, mathematics and science are high. The pupils also achieve well in information and communication technology, art and design technology.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, together with the staff and governors, creates an ethos that strongly supports achievement and learning.
- The pupils achieve high standards because of the good quality of the teaching and learning. In Key Stage 2 the quality of the teaching is very good and sometimes excellent.
- Assessment procedures are excellent.
- The pupils' attitudes to school and to work are very good.
- Relationships at all levels are excellent.
- The partnership with parents is very strong and the support they provide makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' achievements.
- The curriculum is broad and stimulating. It meets the needs of all of the pupils and they enjoy learning.
- The provision the school makes for the pupils with special educational needs is very good and the good support they receive allows them to make good progress.
- The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

What could be improved

- The planning and organisation of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in writing at both keys stages so that more pupils attain at the higher levels.
- The pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their written work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in September 1996 and since then it has made very good improvement. All of the issues pointed out at that time have been thoroughly addressed and further progress and improvements have continued to be made. Schemes of work are now firmly in place and there is a regular cycle of review of all curriculum subjects. The teachers plan to a common format and the

headteacher monitors the plans regularly. Suggested approaches to teaching and learning are shared by the staff at their regular meetings and in informal discussions. The pupils' behaviour has improved dramatically and is now a significant strength. The school's provision for cultural development has also improved.

STANDARDS

The number of pupils taking the National Curriculum tests at age seven and eleven is small and the changing size of the year groups make it difficult to reliably compare the school's yearly results either with those found nationally or with those in similar schools. However, over the three years 1998-2000 the school's results in English, mathematics and science at age eleven have been consistently above the national trend. By the age of seven, over the same three years, the pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics exceeded the national average. The results of the most recent end-of-Key Stage 2 tests show attainment in mathematics and science to be very high (in the top 5%) when compared with the national average. The pupils' attainment in English is in line with the national average. In the most recent tests at age 7, the pupils' attainment is well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the Year 2000 tests, the school exceeded its targets in mathematics and science. The targets were met in English.

The findings of the inspection are that, by the time they leave the school at age eleven the pupils' attainment in mathematics and science is well above average. In English their attainment is above average. At the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. At all levels, the good quality of the teaching, and the excellent assessment and target setting procedures make a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by the pupils.

Through its own monitoring of standards, the school has identified that too few pupils are attaining the higher levels (Level 3 and Level 5) in English. This is because there is some under-achievement in writing at both key stages.

Standards of attainment in information and communication technology and in art and design technology are good at both key stages and the pupils make good progress. In all other subjects progress is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils respond very well to the high expectations of the teachers; they are keen to come to school and concentrate well on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. The pupils play well together. They are caring and considerate towards each other.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and the pupils arrive punctually.

The pupils' attitudes to school, their personal development and their behaviour are a significant strength. They are eager to come to school and are particularly secure and confident with the daily routines. The pupils are interested in their lessons and concentrate well. Most of the pupils are able to plan and organise their own work. The pupils get on well together and they have excellent relationships with the adults who teach and care for them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good. Seventy-five per cent of lessons seen were good or better. Some very good teaching was observed in all of the classes but particularly in the Year 4, 5 and 6 class where the quality of teaching in well over half of the lessons was very good or excellent. A strength of the teaching is the way the teachers make links across the subjects. This ensures the regular application of skills and knowledge and results in good progress in most subjects. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour. They plan interesting lessons and make good use of their assessments to plan work that builds on what the pupils already know and can do. The teaching of mathematics and science is consistently good or very good and there are significant strengths in aspects of the teaching of English in Years 2 – 6. The planning, management and delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy lessons is very effective. The teachers and the pupils are well aware of their targets and their progress towards achieving them. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is less effective because the learning objectives for the children of different ages and attainment are not always clear and the planning is not based on the Early Learning Goals.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a rich and stimulating curriculum which includes residential visits. The school gives due attention to the importance of teaching literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils are well supported and this allows them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' personal development is very good. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for all its pupils. The procedures for assessing their attainment and progress are excellent. The monitoring of the pupils' academic performance, their personal development and their attendance are very good.

The quality and range of the curriculum is good. Literacy and numeracy are given a high priority and the curriculum is enriched by interesting work in art, information and communication technology music and geography. Annual residential visits for the pupils in Years 2-6 enrich their learning experiences and make a positive contribution to their personal, social and cultural development. The extra-curricular activities such as recorders and a French club further enhance their cultural development. Parental support for the pupils' learning is very good and support from home is valued and well promoted by the school. The school's assessment procedures are excellent and the monitoring and support for the pupils' academic progress are further strengths of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She provides a high level of support for the staff. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and key staff has a very positive impact on standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are clear about the school's aims and targets. They take part in the development planning process and fulfil their monitoring role very effectively. They are very involved in the life of the school and strongly committed to its improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and staff monitor standards of teaching and learning rigorously. Strengths and areas for development are reviewed and analysed and targets are set for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staff, time and other resources are used well. The school gives good value for money.

The leadership and management is a significant strength of the school. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together to maintain and improve the standards achieved by the pupils. The school's systems for assessing and reviewing the effectiveness of its work are excellent. The governor with responsibility for literacy and numeracy has a good knowledge of the school's organisation and planning in these areas. The priorities in the school development plan are effectively linked to the school's budget and the principles of best value are applied to the purchase and hire of goods and services. The school's accommodation is spacious and well maintained. Resources are generally good and are well used by staff and pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high standards attained by their children. • The good progress their children make. • The good teaching they receive • The school expects the children to work hard and to try their best. • The care and concern shown by all the staff towards the pupils. • Their children are happy and enjoy school. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • They believe the school to be well led and managed • The parents feel that the school works closely with them and that the headteacher and staff are approachable . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework provided for the older pupils • The range and frequency of extra-curricular activities

The inspectors support the parents' positive views.

The inspectors found that the school provides a satisfactory amount of homework for all pupils.

With regard to the range and frequency of extra-curricular activities, inspectors found that, taking into account the small number of teachers in the school, the activities provided are adequate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The number of pupils taking the National Curriculum tests at age seven and eleven is small and the changing size of the cohorts makes it difficult to reliably compare the school's yearly results either with those found nationally or with those in similar schools. However, taking a three year overview of the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) from 1998 to 2000, the school's results at the end of both key stages have shown a year on year improvement which is above the national trend.
2. At Key Stage 2, over the three years, the pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science is equivalent to more than one and a half term's advantage in their work compared to the national average for their age group. At the end of Key Stage 1, the same three year overview shows a similar picture of almost a one and a half term's advantage in the pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The results of the most recent end of Key Stage 2 tests show attainment in mathematics and science to be very high (in the top 5%) when compared with the national average. The pupils' attainment in English is in line with the national average. At the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils' attainment is well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
3. The findings of the inspection are that, by the time they leave the school at age eleven the pupils' attainment in mathematics and science is well above average. In English their attainment is above average. At the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average.
4. At all levels, the good quality of the teaching, and the excellent assessment and target setting procedures make a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by the pupils.
5. Although there is a wide range of ability, the attainment of the children who enter the Foundation Stage is broadly average. A baseline assessment completed soon after admission to full-time education, shows that attainment is similar to that found in most schools nationally. However, the same test shows that attainment is lower than the Hertfordshire average. By the time they leave the reception class, most children have made satisfactory progress and are working to the expected level of the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and the creative areas of learning. They are likely to exceed the expected levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. The provision for the children's personal and social development is excellent.
6. In English, the pupils in both key stages make good progress and achieve high standards in speaking and listening. They quickly learn to listen to others and to wait their turn to speak. As they move through the school, they make good and sometimes very good progress in expressing their thoughts and ideas in an increasingly clear and mature way. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are reading well. The teaching is effective in helping the pupils to sound out groups of letters as well as recognising words by sight. By the time they reach Key Stage 2 the pupils have a range of strategies to help them read new texts. They read fluently and with good expression. They are taught very effectively to appreciate the styles of different authors and use this knowledge when talking about or selecting books.
7. In writing, at both key stages, there is some under-achievement with fewer pupils attaining the higher levels (Level 3 and Level 5). The school has recognised this and has already implemented strategies to raise attainment further. Across the school, the pupils' writing shows

a clear development in style and content. Punctuation is well taught in Year 2 and in the Key Stage 2 class so that the pupils use full stops, commas, speech marks and question marks correctly. However, for many pupils, the amount of written work they produce is less than expected. This is particularly true of pieces of imaginative, extended writing. Additionally, there are noticeable variations in the maturity of handwriting style and the neatness of written presentation and this reflects inconsistencies in the teaching of this aspect as well as in the teachers' expectations.

8. In mathematics, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is well above average. The standards reached by the pupils with special educational needs are not far below those expected of average attaining pupils nationally. In both key stages, the pupils attain well because of the good and very good teaching they receive with well-planned lessons that provide very good opportunities for all groups of pupils to learn and make good and very good progress. The pupils' attainment in using and applying mathematics is a strength of the subject. They are encouraged to develop their own lines of investigation and they are able to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. At both key stages, the instant recall of number bonds or tables and the understanding of place value are well above average because of the rigour and the high expectations of the teachers during the daily mental mathematics sessions in the Numeracy Hour.
9. In science, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils attain well above average standards. Standards are much higher than at the time of the last inspection. This is due to the consistent monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and the emphasis the school places on ensuring that the pupils have opportunities to carry out their own investigations. They are expected to investigate, think for themselves and draw conclusions and they do. The good and very good teaching is also having a marked impact on the raising of standards at both key stages. The pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test and at both key stages the pupils show a deepening knowledge of physical and natural science. The pupils in Key Stage 2 can work collaboratively to devise their own experiments and they are able to choose the best way to record their findings.
10. By the time they leave the school, standards in information and communication technology are above average and the pupils have made good progress. The development of a computer area and the purchase of additional resources mean that the good standards at the time of the last inspection have been well maintained. Many of the Key Stage 2 pupils are confident in using the computers to support their learning in a variety of subjects. They can use the internet for research and can locate and download the information they need. They are confident when using spreadsheets, publishing programs and logo. The pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in art and in design technology where the necessary skills are well taught. In all the other subjects the pupils make satisfactory progress.
11. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported, particularly in literacy and numeracy and they make good progress in relation to their prior level of attainment. Individual education plans set out the pupils' specific learning needs and the pupils know what their learning targets are. These are reviewed at six weekly intervals to ensure good progress continues to be made.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The behaviour of some of the pupils was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Since then, the behaviour policy has been reviewed and updated and the pupils and staff have worked together to devise a code of conduct with appropriate rules and sanctions. These are applied consistently by all staff and the behaviour policy is reinforced at every opportunity. The result is that this aspect has improved dramatically and has become a significant strength of the school.

13. The pupils' attitudes to school are extremely positive and they behave very well. They enjoy the school and are exceptionally happy in it; a view that was unanimously supported by the parents at their meeting. During lessons, almost all the pupils listen attentively to adults and are keen to learn. They are hardworking, conscientious and concentrate for extended periods. In group work, the pupils co-operate well, discuss issues sensibly, handle and share materials with respect and work to the best of their ability. They use their initiative to organise their work and take a pride in what they do. The adults in the school display a firm commitment to the school's aims and values and provide excellent role models. The pupils follow their example and together with the excellent quality of relationships at all levels, these aspects are significant factors in helping the pupils to give of their best and to achieve above average standards.
14. At playtimes the pupils mix and play very well together. The playground is a non-threatening place where older pupils care for the younger ones. Although strategies for dealing with bullying are discussed within the classes no pupil mentioned any specific incidents. The pupils know and observe the school rules well and they value the regular praise and recognition for outstanding effort or behaviour. Lunch times are pleasant, quiet social occasions with good levels of adult supervision. The pupils are delighted to help in assemblies and in the classrooms. For example, two of the older pupils willingly gave up a break time to help set up the computers for a class lesson.
15. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is very high in comparison with other schools. Unauthorised absences are below the national average. All registers are accurately and clearly completed and during the inspection the majority of the pupils were punctual.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Overall the quality of teaching is good. In forty three percent of the lessons during the inspection the teaching was very good or excellent. Very good teaching was observed in all of the classes but particularly in the Year 4, 5 and 6 class where the quality of teaching in well over half of the lessons was very good or excellent. This represents very good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. At that time, none of the teaching was judged to be very good or better and there was a small minority of unsatisfactory teaching. The good teaching the pupils currently receive makes a significant contribution to the good progress they make and this includes those pupils with special educational needs.
17. At both key stages the teaching of mathematics and science is consistently good or very good and there are significant strengths in aspects of the teaching of English in Years 2 – 6. This has a positive impact on the high standards achieved by the pupils. The planning, management and delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy lessons is very effective. The teachers set very clear targets for all the pupils and are striving to improve standards of attainment in writing. The encouragement of the pupils to express their ideas and to justify their opinions is a very good feature of the school's work in the Literacy Hour and in other subjects. Consequently, standards in speaking and listening are very high. Throughout the school, the teaching of the Numeracy Strategy is good and in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2 it is very good. The quality of teaching in information technology, design technology, art and geography is also good. A particular strength of the teaching is the way the teachers make links across the subjects so that all pupils have opportunities to use and apply their learning in a variety of contexts. This ensures the regular application of skills and knowledge by the pupils and results in good or very good progress in almost all subjects.
18. The quality of the teaching at the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The class teacher enjoys excellent relationships with the children and he provides them with a happy, secure and confident start to their school life. He makes learning enjoyable for the children and they are keen and enthusiastic in completing the tasks prepared for them. The class teacher and the nursery nurse plan a range of activities and strong emphasis is given to the teaching of language and early numeracy skills. However, the curriculum at the Foundation Stage is not currently

planned according to the Early Learning Goals. Learning objectives are not linked to the 'stepping stones' which form part of each area of learning, nor are they sufficiently clearly focused on the learning needs of the full-time reception children. This lack of clarity slows the rate at which the children learn, particularly in language and literacy, mathematics and the creative areas of learning.

19. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is good. The class teachers and the classroom assistant plan and work very well together. The teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils' literacy needs and set tasks that ensure that the targets in their individual learning plans are met.
20. At both key stages, the most successful teaching is characterised by lessons that are very carefully planned and structured to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities within the group. It is made quite clear to the pupils what it is they are to learn and, in the Literacy and Numeracy sessions, the different stages of the lesson and progress towards individual targets are frequently discussed with the pupils. The teachers are confident and have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject. They know and manage the pupils well and enjoy excellent relationships with them. The teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. They use questions very effectively to make the pupils think and to guide them towards solutions to problems. In a very good science lesson exploring the links between weight, friction and speed, the teacher used open-ended questions very effectively to make the groups aware of all the issues to be considered in their investigation. During the plenary session, further carefully phrased questions and discussion enabled pupils of all abilities to consolidate and extend their learning. In an excellent geography lesson, good links were made with the pupils' previous learning in the Literacy Hour when they used and applied their knowledge of persuasive writing to draft arguments for or against a coastal building project.
21. All the teachers value the pupils' efforts and work very hard to include every group member in introductory and plenary discussions. They also move amongst groups as they work making informal assessments and intervening skilfully in order to maximise all learning opportunities so that the pupils succeed in their tasks. In all lessons the nursery nurse and the classroom assistant are well deployed and provide very effective help to individuals and to groups of pupils.
22. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection, but in the instances where the teaching is less successful, it is often because the learning objective is not clear to all the pupils or the task is too challenging for some of the younger or less able pupils and the pace of the lesson slows whilst explanations and clarification are given. In some English lessons, the amount of the pupils' written work is lower than expected when they either do not have the support of word banks or writing frames or when they are less well motivated by the task.
23. The pupils' work is regularly and rigorously assessed and the quality of marking in all classes is good. The very good oral feedback provided by teachers during the course of lessons promotes confidence and raises self-esteem. Written comments on the pupils' work help them with ways to improve their performance. In talking to pupils they are all well aware of what their personal targets are and of their progress towards them.

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

24. In Key Stages 1 and 2 there is a good and varied curriculum. It is broad and balanced with significant strengths in personal, health and social education and in the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. Sex education is provided within guidelines agreed by the governing body and statutory requirements are fully met. All pupils have full access to the curriculum. The Christian values and philosophy of the school are reflected in its commitment to provide the best possible curriculum for all of its pupils whatever their age, ability or background

25. The key issues concerning the curriculum, which were identified at the time of the last inspection, have been addressed very well. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and the school now has a clear, effective framework that enables the teachers to plan systematically and in detail in order to meet the needs of pupils of different ages who are taught in the same classes. The teachers plan and review their work together; they know what is to be taught to each year group and when it is going to take place. Further improvements to the planning, organisation and delivery of the curriculum have continued to be made in line with the school's programme of self-review and evaluation so as to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
26. In the Foundation Stage, planning is not currently based on the Early Learning Goals. The learning objectives for each area of learning do not incorporate the 'stepping stones' and the curriculum for these children lacks sufficient focus. For example, the tasks and learning outcomes are not adequately linked to ensure progression in learning and an appropriate introduction to the National Curriculum at the start of Year 1.
27. The school has responded positively to the national strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. High priority is given to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Daily Literacy and Numeracy lessons are well organised and provide very good opportunities for the pupils to learn the basic skills. The pupils are also encouraged to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and this is having a significant impact on standards.
28. The school makes excellent provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. This accounts, in large part, for the pupils' self-awareness, confidence and independence in every aspect of their learning. In assemblies and lessons, the pupils have opportunities to discuss personal issues and talk about the consequences of their behaviour and actions. The school successfully integrates social awareness and team building into formal lessons, sporting activities and personal research tasks and this makes a significant contribution to the pupils' positive attitudes, very good behaviour and excellent personal relationships.
29. The contribution of the community to the pupils' learning is very good. The school makes very good use of the locality to support work in art, geography, history and science. For example, the pupils visit Hertford and local parks and museums. Visitors to the school provide opportunities for the pupils to develop musical and sporting skills. The school has good links with the local cluster schools and makes effective use of the expertise and facilities. This enables the pupils to perform as part of larger sporting and musical events.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school's knowledge of individual pupils is excellent and this enables potential difficulties to be identified at an early stage. Individual education plans set out clear, achievable learning targets and the pupils' progress towards them is reviewed every six weeks. The pupils are well supported in class with the classroom assistant making a valuable contribution to both group and individual learning. This good quality provision has a positive impact on the good progress made by these pupils.
31. The overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good and is a further strength of the school. The provision for spiritual development is good. The school provides many opportunities for the sharing of thoughts and feelings. In assemblies the pupils reflect on their own feelings and beliefs, think about the world around them and the consequences of their actions. They also consider the wonders of life and the needs of people who are less fortunate.
32. The provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. The school sustains an extremely supportive atmosphere in which mutual respect, trust and honesty are valued and nurtured. The pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong, and are encouraged to be self-disciplined in order to pursue personal study independently. They are encouraged to think through differences of opinion and to accept that it is possible to have many different points of view. Both good

work and good behaviour are valued and rewarded with praise and the spontaneous approval of other class members.

33. The provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The pupils are encouraged to work together purposefully and to share and negotiate responsibilities. The rules and routines enable even the youngest pupils to work responsibly and independently. The pupils are supportive of each other and are generous in giving and accepting praise as well as constructive criticism. Each year, the pupils in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2 are given the opportunity to take part in residential visit which not only enriches their learning but also makes a valuable contribution to the raising of their self-esteem, confidence and social awareness.
34. Since the last inspection the school has purchased additional resources and has worked with a local adviser on developing the multi-cultural aspects of the school's provision. This aspect is now good. The school fosters aesthetic development through art, music and dance and in the careful choice of displays throughout the school. The pupils learn and talk about the work of famous inventors, artists and authors. Work in geography, history and religious education provides opportunities for the pupils to compare the customs and traditions of different countries and to study beliefs different from their own. For example, they share the celebrations of Chinese New Year and learn about cultural differences in Africa, India and Peru. The pupils learn about their own culture through school and community celebrations.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school cares very well for all its pupils and this has a positive impact on their personal and academic development. The school's very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of its pupils are a further strength of the school. Guidance and instruction for all the staff in dealing with child protection procedures has been a recent priority of the school development plan and this has been carried out very effectively. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
36. The school environment is safe and secure. The governors make regular inspections of the school and grounds and all statutory requirements in health and safety matters are met. The procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic performance and their personal development are very good. Detailed records are kept and there is particularly good support for the pupils with special educational needs. Their individual education plans are regularly updated and their targets are reviewed. All the pupils are at ease with one another and this is reflected in the way they conduct themselves in and around the school and in the excellent relationships between the pupils and adults. All the staff know and care for the pupils very well. The school nurse attends the school regularly and provides good support to the school. The educational psychologist provides good support in addition to the regular, formal visits to the school. She attends staff meetings to provide advice on such topics as differentiation and motivation within the classroom.
37. The procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very effective and all staff consistently apply them. This is evident in the very good behaviour of the pupils throughout the school. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection when the absence of rigorously applied procedures was a key issue. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and the pupils especially value the certificates awarded by the Educational Welfare Officer which are presented in assembly.
38. The procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are excellent. There is a consistency of approach in each class, with the headteacher and staff having a clear overview of the process. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is good overall with some excellent use of the information in Key Stages 1 and 2.

39. The children in the Foundation Stage are assessed shortly after they start full-time school and again before they enter Year 1. An individual record of achievement and pupil profile is compiled for each child from the time they start in the reception class. The same methods for assessing and monitoring the pupils' progress continue with increasing rigour throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The information is well used to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. The teachers record the pupils' progress and they analyse test and assessment results in order to identify particular strengths or areas for development. The evaluations are used to adjust the planning and teaching of the curriculum in order to meet the needs of all pupils.
40. The very good use that is made of assessment information makes a significant contribution to the maintenance of the school's high standards and the good and very good progress the pupils make.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The school's partnership with parents is very good and contributes well to the pupils' attainment and personal development. In their responses to the questionnaire and at their meeting, the parents had very positive views of the school and regarded this aspect as a very real strength. The inspectors fully endorse this view. The parents receive regular information about the school's activities and what their children learn. The quality of this information is good. Newsletters, a well presented school prospectus and the annual governors' report all provide a clear insight into the life of the school. The school holds regular workshops on curriculum matters for parents and there are consultation evenings where they can discuss their child's progress. Information to parents through written reports is very good. The reports are of a very high standard. They reflect what the pupils can do well, highlight areas of weakness and provide specific individual targets to help their child improve. This is a great improvement since the last inspection when the content of the school's written reports to parents was judged to have shortcomings.
42. Parental involvement in their children's learning is good. Support at home is well promoted and valued by the school and parents are welcomed and encouraged to play an active part in school life. The school operates an "Open Door" policy and a few parents take the opportunity to come into the classroom in the morning to look at the previous day's work and to speak with the teachers. Several parents assist regularly in classes and the organisation of the school's swimming sessions relies heavily on the support of parents.
43. The Stapleford School Friends Association holds many social and fund-raising events throughout the year. The amount of money raised is considerable and has been used towards providing additional computers and some large outdoor play equipment for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. She is assisted by supportive governors and a committed, dedicated staff. The parents who responded to the questionnaire support this judgement. There was 100 % agreement from them that the school is well led and managed.
45. The school is constantly evaluating and reviewing its work in order to find ways to improve and maintain the good standards already achieved. In discussions with the headteacher, staff and governors, it is clear that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning as well as the school's overall effectiveness is regarded as a collective responsibility. The headteacher, governors and all staff work very well together for the benefit of the pupils. This teamwork has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. All the staff share a monitoring role and the way the school assesses and reviews the effectiveness of its work is very successful. Results and achievements are documented and discussed at

governors' meetings. Governors are clear about the school's aims and targets. They are realistic about the school's strengths and relative weaknesses and what needs to be done to maintain the present high standards. The governor with responsibility for literacy and numeracy has a particularly good knowledge of the school's organisation and planning for these subjects. All the governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They have formed committees to oversee staffing, financial and buildings and maintenance issues and they are clear about what they want to achieve for the school.

46. There is a firm commitment to maintaining and improving the current levels of attainment. The headteacher rigorously monitors standards of teaching and learning, the staff, as co-ordinators work alongside colleagues and observe teaching in their subjects and at regular staff meetings they carefully analyse test and assessment results so that individual targets can be set and appropriate action taken. For example, the school's current priority is to raise the levels of attainment in writing. As a result, additional time has been allocated for extended writing and the local adviser has spent time discussing strategies for placing greater emphasis on writing and sentence level work in the Literacy Hour.
47. The key issues of the previous inspection have been thoroughly addressed. A culture of achievement is firmly embedded and good progress has been sustained. Schemes of work are now firmly in place and there is a regular cycle for the review of all subjects. The teachers plan to a common format and the headteacher monitors the plans regularly. Suggested approaches to teaching and learning are shared by the staff at their regular meetings and in informal discussions. Because of the small number of pupils in each year group the school sets individual targets and the pupils' progress towards these is regularly monitored and evaluated. The pupils and their parents are very much a part of this process. They are clear about what their targets are and the older pupils also know what they must do in order to achieve or exceed them. The behaviour of the pupils is now very good. Staff, pupils and parents know and understand the school's code of conduct and in personal and social education as well as in their daily interactions it is clear that pupils of all ages and abilities are fully aware of what is expected of them and they respond very well. The school's approach to cultural and multi-cultural studies has been fully reviewed, additional resources have been purchased and further emphasis is placed on learning about world faiths and their influence on people's lives.
48. The school development plan outlines the school's aims along with timescales and costings for their implementation over a three-year period. The governors and staff all take part in the development planning process so that all are aware of the priorities and goals in each curriculum and management area. The plan is detailed and relevant to the school's needs. It is used as a working document during staff and governors' meetings when it is regularly evaluated and annotated as the school makes progress towards its targets.
49. The priorities in the school development plan are effectively linked to the school budget and the governors' finance committee applies the principles of best value to the purchase and hire of goods and services. There has been a sizeable underspend in the budget in recent years which has been accumulated as a contingency fund to support the favourable pupil teacher ratio which the school currently enjoys. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are well qualified to meet the needs of all the pupils and they regularly undertake training to update their skills and knowledge. The nursery nurse is used very effectively to work with the youngest children who attend part-time and the classroom assistant provides additional literacy support as well as helping groups of pupils in other areas of the curriculum.
50. The school's accommodation is spacious and well appointed. There is a designated computer area and the gift of the schoolhouse has been put to excellent use as a meeting place for the pre-school group. It also provides a useful music room. The school is well resourced in all curriculum areas with the exception of history and geography. There are few artefacts to support work in these subjects and there is a need for more books, maps, photographs, charts and posters.

51. Taking into account the high standards achieved by the pupils, the good progress they make, the good quality of teaching and the school's overall effectiveness, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to build on its many strengths and to improve the quality of education further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- **Improve the planning and organisation of learning opportunities for the children in the Foundation Stage by:**
 - ensuring that the learning objectives for the different groups of pupils are clear
 - ensuring that the planned activities are linked to the stepping stones of the Early Learning Goals
(paragraphs 22, 26, 46, 54, 58)

- **Maintain the drive to improve standards in writing by:**
 - providing more opportunities for the pupils to write at length
 - raising teacher expectations of the amount and quality of the pupils' written work across the curriculum
(paragraphs 7, 22, 59, 63, 65, 97)

- **Improve standards of handwriting and the presentation of the pupils' written work through the regular, consistent and progressive teaching of the required skills.**
(paragraphs 7, 63)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

28

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	36	32	25	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		55.5
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		8

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	51
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y R– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.75
Average class size	17

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Financial information

Financial year	00/01
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	£
Total income	168753
Total expenditure	161987
Expenditure per pupil	3176
Balance brought forward from previous year	22662
Balance carried forward to next year	29428

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	51
Number of questionnaires returned	22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	45	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	59	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	86	14	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	36	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	32	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	55	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	41	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	41	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5	43	43	0	9

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. At the time of the inspection there were five part-time children and thirteen full-time reception children in the Foundation Stage. There were five Year 1 pupils in the same class. The children who are just four years old initially attend school part-time and are taught mainly by the nursery nurse. They enter the full-time reception class in the term before their fifth birthday. The majority of the children have attended the Pre-school Group which is linked to the school through the rural partnership scheme and which meets on the school premises each morning.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. Personal and social development is given a high priority and this area of learning is promoted very effectively. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that the children feel safe, happy and secure. The strong focus put on daily routines and personal and social development activities impacts extremely positively on the overall attainment and progress made by the children. In the part-time class, the group activities cater very well for those children who are slowly gaining confidence. They are sensitively encouraged to experiment and participate. A great deal of time is given to the introduction of basic routines and in this way the children have a very good introduction to school life. Although, at the time of the inspection the very youngest children had only been in school for a short time, they showed their increasing maturity and confidence as they took turns whilst playing games and were able to line up quietly and sensibly. The caring and supportive atmosphere enables all the children to settle quickly into work and play. The older reception children are eager to take part in activities. They treat equipment with care and put things away willingly. This increasing independence enables them to make choices for themselves, to be responsible and care for the things they use. They show their self-help skills are developing well when fastening buttons and putting shoes on the correct feet. The quality of the teaching in this area is good. Excellent relationships exist between all the staff and children. All the adults ensure that the children are clear about the expectations for behaviour and as a result, it is consistently very good. There is good provision for the children with special educational needs. Through close liaison with parents and the staff of the pre-school, potential learning difficulties are identified early and appropriate assessments made.

Communication, language and literacy

54. By the time the children enter Year 1 most of them are attaining the expected level for their age. The majority of children express themselves clearly. They make their needs understood, speak distinctly and are easy to understand. They are given every opportunity to copy the good examples of speech and vocabulary offered to them by adults. Time is given to teaching speaking and listening in activities such as whole class discussions and the sharing of news. The quality of questioning during these sessions is a strength of the class teacher's work and it makes a significant contribution to the widening of the children's vocabulary and spoken language skills. The children are encouraged to explain themselves in many different situations, for example when preparing fruit for a Chinese meal, or choosing milk at snack time. During the activities, the teacher and the nursery nurse use formal and informal conversations very effectively to assess and develop the children's language. There are numerous opportunities for the children to develop literacy skills. Books are readily available and the children enjoy them. The teacher ensures that early reading skills are developed systematically as the children share books, enjoy the illustrations and talk about the characters. Most children are developing their understanding that print carries meaning and are able to answer questions about the content of the story and predict what might happen next, particularly when they are familiar with what they

are reading. The higher attaining pupils read their own books with confidence and accuracy. The teacher has introduced the Literacy Strategy successfully. The whole class introductory sessions with the older reception and Year 1 pupils are well planned and organised. The group tasks that follow sometimes lack challenge for all of the children. When they are provided with differentiated tasks that have a clearer focus, the children tend to make better progress.

Mathematical development

55. By the time they leave the reception class, most children are attaining the expected level for their age. The children play mathematics games and begin to develop their knowledge of number as they count and sort bricks, shapes and toys. They count and match as they make sure every milk carton has a straw and they make up games as they match familiar objects by colour. Older children extend their previous learning by estimating and balancing. With adult prompts, they quickly compile sets and subsets of objects according to the different criteria suggested. The children are confident in explaining why they made certain decisions when working with the water or wet and dry sand. They learn a range of simple mathematical terms as they compare size and shape accurately when using containers in the sand and water. For example, they can use words such as, 'half full', 'empty', 'more than' and 'less than'. The children join in number rhymes and games enthusiastically, improving their recollection and understanding of numbers. The class teacher and nursery nurse encourage the children to sing and clap as they count to reinforce the rhythm and pattern of numbers. In whole class sessions where learning is linked to the National Numeracy Strategy the teacher develops and extends their mathematical thinking. For example, some of the higher attaining children are beginning to count on and back to twenty and they can also count in twos. Many of the children can read and recognise numbers, particularly the date for each day of the week. The quality of teaching in this aspect is satisfactory overall with some good teaching of counting skills to the older reception children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56. By the time they leave the reception class, the majority of children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals for this aspect of learning. They are able to reason and make connections easily between past, present and future events. They develop an understanding of the order of events in the school day. They know what happens, for example, at assembly and dinnertime and record their findings in drawings and pictures. The younger children are confident as they find their way around school, describing how to get to the playground or dining hall, often using gestures as well as carefully thought out directions. The teachers constantly reinforce the children's learning and understanding by giving them opportunities to handle objects and materials and to talk about how they are made. When testing the properties of different foods, the children learn how chocolate and a fruit drink change when they are exposed to extremes of temperature. The birth of a new baby in the family and individual children's birthdays are treated as special times and, as they learn about themselves, and study pictures and photographs, they recognise how they have changed over time. For technological learning, the children cut, stick and join as they construct three-dimensional models using re-cycled materials. The teacher carefully guides a small group of younger children through the different skills needed to successfully complete collage pictures, using wool and a range different materials and textures. The children use the computer to support their reading and recall of number facts. They use the mouse and arrow keys successfully to move on or find the correct answer. The quality of teaching is good in this aspect because the adults make sufficient provision for the children to learn about themselves and their environment. They have numerous opportunities to discuss events and express opinions at various times during the school day.

Physical development

57. Almost all of the children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they start in Year 1. The youngest children have very good manipulative skills as they steer wheeled

toys when learning the rules of the road. The older children are given a variety of activities that extend their manipulative and physical skills. They gain finer control through cutting, painting and building and they gain great benefit during the times allocated to showing them how to use tools, equipment and materials. The younger children also benefit significantly from the chance to experience carefully structured outdoor play sessions. The outside playground provides a safe enclosed area, which is sufficiently challenging and encourages children to respond confidently as their skills increase. Most of the children learn to move confidently, imaginatively and with good directional control. This is well demonstrated as they move at different speeds during an indoor physical education session. Their learning is extended as they respond very positively to the requests to stop, look and listen in order to cross the road safely. During their physical education lessons the children show good control and balance as they perform fast, slow, high and low movements. They further develop effective control of their bodies as they join in playground games at playtimes. The quality of teaching for this area of learning is good because the planned tasks encourage the children to be aware of their body and to persevere in order to improve on all their physical movements.

Creative development

58. Most children achieve the level expected for their age by the time they reach the end of the reception year. The Foundation Stage classroom provides a wide range of creative resources and activities including sand, water and paint and these are regularly used as part of the planned daily tasks. The children use a range of percussion instruments and sing simple songs and rhymes when participating during class music-making times. They improve their voice control through frequent opportunities to sing and many respond very well to a range of action rhymes and songs as well as singing in assembly. However, musical instruments are not readily available for free and independent learning. As the children play in the Chinese Restaurant they take on the roles of waiters and customers. They initiate their own ideas, as they make meals and order a take-away. Some opportunities arise for emergent writing as the 'waiter' takes a customer's order. The children play together extremely well, co-operating and communicating as they act out different situations and use the role-play area spontaneously and inventively. The children use construction materials well to create imaginary structures and the younger children offer complex explanations as they show each other what they have made. They use tools, scissors and a variety of brushes with increasing competence as they complete their tasks. There are numerous opportunities for the children to experiment and learn through the process of trial and error. However, the teachers frequently miss opportunities to extend the children's learning in the aspects of role-play, art and creative crafts.

ENGLISH

59. At the end of both key stages, standards in English are above average. Over the past three years (1998-2000), the pupils' overall attainment in English has risen steadily and their performance over the three years shows that at the age of seven and eleven the pupils have an advantage of approximately 2 terms over the national average for pupils of a similar age. Whilst this represents an overall improvement since the last inspection, in the most recent end-of-key-stage tests the results show some under-achievement in writing in both key stages. For example, at the age of seven no pupils attained the higher levels in writing (Level 3) and the number attaining the higher level (Level 5) at the end of Year 6 was below the national average. Inspection findings show that in the current Year 2 and Year 6 standards in reading and in speaking and listening are well above average whereas standards could be higher in writing and in handwriting and presentation. The school has recognised the need to improve standards in writing and has already taken steps to address this. Additional time has been allocated for extended writing. The school's adviser has recommended strategies to improve performance and adjustments have been made to the amount of word level and sentence work in the Literacy Hour.

60. The results of the national tests show no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in English. However, the school's own assessment and analysis suggest that the girls perform better than the boys, particularly in writing. As a consequence, the teachers are employing specific strategies to better motivate the boys, although the time of the inspection, it was too early to judge the impact of these on standards. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both teaching and non-teaching staff. Their individual education plans set out small, attainable targets to improve their skills in reading, speaking and listening and writing and these pupils make good progress.
61. When the pupils enter the Reception/Year 1 class, their standards of speaking and listening are broadly average. The excellent relationships and the secure atmosphere provide the pupils with the confidence to speak out and to share their views and opinions. They quickly learn to listen to others and to wait their turn to speak. They make good and sometimes very good progress in expressing their thoughts and ideas in a clear and mature way and by the end of Year 2, their speaking and listening skills are above average. Throughout Key Stage 2, group and class discussions are a part of many of the lessons. Additionally, the teachers of the Year 2 and the Key Stage 2 pupils teach them how to support their viewpoints with reasons. As a result of the very good teaching they receive, the pupils make very good progress and by the time they are eleven, they are able to take part in a well organised, high level debate about aspects of their geography topic. They also act out plays, perform in assemblies and report back to their peer group at the end of lessons.
62. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are reading well. They know many key words and have appropriate word attack skills. In the shared text work in the Literacy Hour the youngest pupils enjoy the Big Books and can use phonics along with picture and context clues to help with their understanding of the story. They know that bold print is frequently used for speech and that words in italics may require extra emphasis. The majority of pupils make good use of these strategies when they are reading aloud. By the time they are eleven almost all of the pupils are reading fluently and with good expression. They can talk about their preferences for particular authors and titles. They can also recognise different types of punctuation and are able to explain how it assists the reader. All the pupils have a reading diary, which contains individual targets for improvement and personal comments on what they have read. However, the older pupils' individual progress in reading is not always monitored carefully enough and a great deal of reliance is placed on parents hearing their child read; a task that most of them do willingly.
63. In the Reception/Year 1 class the pupils make sound progress as they learn to write and spell. They learn letter sounds and blends and many pupils are able to attempt to spell simple, unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2 most of the pupils can develop their writing using interesting ideas and words but their rate of progress is inconsistent and their output is sometimes insufficient. For many of the pupils their handwriting is joined and legible but, in both key stages, there are noticeable variations in the maturity of handwriting style and the neatness of written presentation which reflect inconsistencies in the teaching. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils are able to write for a range of purposes and audiences. In the Literacy Hour the Year 6 pupils show a good understanding of the different genres of writing and apply their good knowledge of previous texts to create a myth which includes the personification of one of the elements. They also understand how the use of specific vocabulary can create the right mood for the piece. Across the school, the pupils use their writing skills to good effect in topic work as they write notes, accounts and instructions to support their work in a range of subjects. By the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 spelling and punctuation become increasingly more accurate and many pupils make good progress in their ability to self correct their work using dictionaries and a thesaurus effectively. However, as the pupils move into the upper classes, spelling practice becomes less structured. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers, the nursery nurse and the classroom assistant. In many cases they are able to make good use of prompts and writing frames as a basis for their writing and in a lesson in Year 2 they achieved well when the classroom assistant acted as a scribe. In both key stages

the pupils use computers very well to consolidate their reading and spelling and as a word processor.

64. The overall quality of teaching in English is very good. In half of the lessons observed the teaching was very good or excellent and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. In the Reception/Year 1 class, the teacher uses the Big Book very effectively to encourage the less confident readers and to draw attention to the text. Questions are used well to move the pupils' thinking forward and to encourage closer observation of the use of vocabulary and punctuation. In a lesson with the pupils in Years 2 and 3 the teacher's enthusiasm and sense of humour means that the pupils enjoy writing bathroom rules and they are motivated to include practical as well as 'tongue in cheek' suggestions. In an excellent lesson in the upper Key Stage 2 class, the teacher's high expectations and the challenging task made the pupils analyse their thoughts carefully. The learning in this session was maximised for all the different age groups and ability levels.
65. Much hard work has gone into the planning of the Literacy Hour and the teachers have successfully adapted it to ensure that the work meets the wide and varying needs of the mixed age range within each of the classes. In all the lessons the objectives are clearly explained to the pupils and the groups are organised effectively with extension activities provided for the higher attaining pupils. The majority of the pupils respond well to the deadlines set by the class teacher, but in the less successful lessons the amount of the pupils' written work is lower than expected. This is because there are too few aids such as word banks or writing frames or because they are less well motivated by the task.
66. The quality of the marking and other assessment procedures is very good in all classes. Oral feedback to pupils about their work is very constructive and written comments almost always include ideas and points for improvement. From Year 1 onwards all of the pupils have individual writing targets and these are regularly reviewed with the pupils. Formal assessments of the pupils' attainment and progress are carried out and the information gained is used to set new targets for the next stages in learning.
67. Planning and teaching in English is based on the National Literacy Strategy Framework supported by commercially produced materials. The teachers use a common framework when planning for the Literacy Hour and learning objectives are included at every stage. The co-ordinator and the headteacher oversee the planning and teaching and learning are monitored regularly.
68. The Literacy Hour is well resourced with a very good selection of Big Books and texts for shared reading. There is range of fiction books in the classrooms. The school has a library with an ample selection of fiction and non-fiction books and the majority of the older pupils are able to use it for independent study and research.

MATHEMATICS

69. Over the past three years the pupils' attainment in mathematics at age seven and eleven has risen steadily and a three year overview of their performance shows that at the end of Year 2 the pupils have an advantage of one and half terms over the national average for pupils of their age. A similar three year overview of the pupils' performance at age eleven shows they exceed the national average for their age group by almost two and a half terms. In the most recent end-of-key-stage tests standards by the age of seven were well above the national average and at the age of eleven it was very high, being in the top 5% nationally. For the current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above average by the age of seven and well above average at age eleven in all aspects of the subject. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately for their abilities. The standards reached by the pupils with special educational needs are not far below those expected of average attaining pupils nationally. All the pupils attain well because of the good and very good teaching they

receive with well-planned lessons that provide very good opportunities for all groups of pupils to learn and make good and very good progress. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well and the headteacher, as an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator has ensured the school has made good progress in this subject and has continued to improve since the previous inspection. As a result, standards are now high.

70. The pupils' attainment in using and applying mathematics is above average and is continuing to develop. The pupils are given many opportunities to develop their own lines of investigation and this improves the standards they attain in applying their skills, both in mathematical investigations and also in other subjects such as science, design technology and information and communication technology. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils, including those with special educational needs, confidently apply their knowledge and skills in a range of circumstances. For example geographical, scientific and mathematical skills were applied very effectively in a study of water. The older Key Stage 2 pupils also apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in information and communication technology when they confidently work with spreadsheets and other data handling programs. The pupils' positive attitudes, very good independent learning skills and work ethic ensure that almost all pupils achieve their best.
71. At both key stages, standards in number are well above average. By the age of seven, the pupils have a secure understanding of place value up to 100. They recognise odd and even numbers and the multiples and factors associated with 2, 5 and 10. They confidently add and subtract two digit numbers and understand simple fractions. Many pupils are secure with addition involving numbers up to and above 100 when using practical equipment. They also collect and display information in the form of block graphs. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils work accurately as they add, subtract, divide and multiply numbers up to 1,000. They have a good understanding of the equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages. Many of the pupils are confident in using their skills and knowledge in a range of computation work and when handling data using graphs and frequency tables. At both key stages, the instant recall of number bonds or tables and the understanding of place value are well above average because of the rigour and the high expectations during the daily mental mathematics sessions.
72. The standards of work involving shape, space and measure are above average. The higher attaining pupils are confident when identifying a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and their understanding of the properties of shapes is very good. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs are offered good opportunities to use programmable machines to help them understand angles as turning measurements. The pupils are skilled in estimating and using both standard and non-standard measures to compare amounts accurately. The Year 2 pupils can tell the time reasonably accurately and by the end of Year 6 the pupils have developed their learning and can use it to work out the length of journeys as well as departure and arrival times.
73. The majority of teaching in mathematics is good at both key stages with examples of very good teaching in both the Key Stage 2 classes. Particular strengths are in the thoroughness of the teachers' planning, their good subject knowledge, very good pupil management and the brisk pace of the lessons. In a good lesson with the Year 2 pupils, the class teacher successfully motivated and urged the pupils to do their best through the good use of praise and encouragement. She challenged the different attainment groups with a variety of quick fire problems and, through the effective use of individual whiteboards to record their answers, she ensured no time was wasted and kept the momentum going. In another good lesson in Year1, the good use of questions and the strategies the teacher gave the pupils to help them with counting on and back made a significant contribution to their learning. Additionally, the plenary session was very well used to revise the given strategies and to share new ones. Throughout this session the teacher made the learning fun and for their part, the pupils responded well and achieved success.
74. The high level of improvement since the last inspection is due to the good quality of the teaching and the successful way that the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented. The

subject is very well led and co-ordinated by the headteacher and her rigorous monitoring of teaching, learning and attainment have made a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by the pupils.

SCIENCE

75. When the test results of the pupils at age eleven are considered over the three years from 1998-2000 they show a continuing pattern of improvement since the last inspection. The results for the year 2000 show that all the pupils in Year 6 attained at the higher level (Level 5) and this makes the pupils' attainment in science in the top 5% nationally. The results of teacher assessment at age seven show that the number of pupils attaining the average level (Level 2) is also very high (in the top 5% nationally) but that attainment at the higher level (Level 3) is well below average. The inspection findings reflect these results and confirm that by the age of seven the pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' attainment is well above that expected for pupils of a similar age. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
76. Standards now are much higher than at the time of the last inspection. This is because the standards in the subject are consistently monitored and evaluated to find the best ways to move learning forward for all groups of pupils. Standards of teaching and learning are high and, at both key stages, there are increased opportunities for the pupils to carry out their own investigations. They are expected to experiment, think for themselves, and predict what might happen in order to form their own conclusions. This very good provision is having a marked impact on the raising of standards at both key stages. It further enables the pupils to transfer and apply their knowledge to other situations. For example as Key Stage 1 pupils experiment to find out how food changes when it is exposed to different temperatures, they also discover factors that cause reversible and irreversible change. Other pupils discuss which of the foods constitute a healthy diet. These ideas are developed and extended at Key Stage 2 when the pupils research the prevention of disease by examining samples of stale and fresh foods in their learning about different microbes.
77. By the time they are seven, the pupils understand the difference between a fair and unfair test as they investigate vehicle performance when different heights of ramps and different surfaces are used. When feeling, tasting and smelling samples of food, their knowledge and understanding of the senses is enhanced significantly when the teacher asks questions that make them think more deeply. A comparison between foods that animals and human beings need in order to grow and keep healthy is very successful when the higher attaining pupils identify water as a common requirement for plants, animals and human beings.
78. The scrutiny of work shows that the pupils' scientific knowledge develops very well over time. By the end of Key Stage 2, the higher attaining pupils are able to devise their own experiments and use a variety of ways to record their results. They show a good knowledge of physical and natural science, understanding the principles of electricity and the properties of different materials. Within health education, the life processes of people and plants are researched. Environmental issues and drug awareness are often raised and discussed competently as pupils mature and gain a growing ecological awareness. When recapping aspects of recent topics the pupils show their increased knowledge of gravity, forces, the solar system and the human body.
79. In all the classes, attention is given to the individual learning needs of all pupils. Extension tasks and class challenges are provided when the pupils have finished their work. For example, the older, higher attaining pupils are asked to find the mean of three timings after investigating the planets and their orbits around the sun. The younger pupils value the class discussions and feedback sessions where there are opportunities to share their findings and answer questions about the methods used to ensure a fair test. Lower-attaining pupils and those who have special needs are well supported. This enables them to participate fully in all the activities and to play their part in discussions.

80. The quality of teaching in science is very good. An important feature of the teaching is the high profile given to the development of investigative skills and the use of scientific language. The emphasis placed on these two aspects is having a significant impact on the raising of standards. Other strengths in the teaching are in the teachers' very good subject knowledge and the way they pose questions which help to focus the pupils' thinking and extend their understanding. The teachers enjoy excellent relationships with their pupils and this provides a very good climate for learning where all the pupils want to do their best. Good class management and appropriate attention to health and safety encourage the pupils to have responsible attitudes, use resources sensibly and work together safely.
81. The co-ordinator has monitored the teaching and learning of this subject thoroughly and has a clear vision of how the development can continue. Analysis of tests and assessment data and the school's own excellent assessment procedures mean that areas for improvement are swiftly targeted for action in order to continue to improve standards.

ART AND DESIGN

82. Little direct teaching of art was observed during the inspection. However, the inspection findings are that standards in the subject are better than in most schools by the end of both key stages. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection.
83. The younger pupils are encouraged to recognise primary colours and know that when mixed together different shades are created, for example that blue and yellow make green and that the same result can be achieved when blending pastels. Some higher attaining older pupils show good skill when drawing plants, flowers and winter scenes. Throughout the school, these detailed observations are translated very successfully into three-dimensional clay replicas.
84. Throughout the key stages, pupils make good progress as they develop their knowledge, skills and techniques. They are given opportunities to draw what they see using a variety of media. When painting, they are encouraged to experiment with colour and texture. They work with pastels and in the style of famous artists. Older pupils show an understanding of the techniques they have used to create particular effects: for example, when designing their own figures after studying the style of David Hockney. Their ability to mix colours improves and they match and blend colours to create a suitable background. At times, some pupils have difficulty in recalling the names of the artists they have studied, but they successfully refer to evidence in the pictures they have painted, or in those around them, when talking about their work.
85. The pupils enjoy expressing their feelings and ideas through their work and do so using a wide range of good quality media and materials. This was particularly evident as older pupils discussed how their field work observations were used as a stimulus for a piece of work. The pupils use their sketchbooks as a valuable resource. By Year 6, they have acquired very good technical skills, understanding the importance of testing shades when colour mixing, and how to trim a picture so that the finished size makes the most of the subject or the perspective of the scene. The pupils are enthusiastic when discussing their finished product and show great pride in their work on display. When offering constructive advice during feedback sessions at the end of lessons, they support each other well. They also show a high degree of maturity in offering constructive criticism of each other's work.
86. The quality of teaching in the small number of lessons observed is very good. The teachers enjoy excellent relationships with the classes and have high expectations of their pupils. This has a significant impact on how the pupils learn and the high standards they achieve.
87. The co-ordinator is an accomplished artist and all pupils benefit from her talent and expertise, particularly when she teaches other classes and year groups in an exchange of skills. Although the pupils have visited art galleries and benefited from visitors to the school, it is intended that

such initiatives are to be more fully integrated within the subject development plan. The co-ordinator monitors the quality of teaching and learning regularly throughout the school and has a clear vision for future developments in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, there was a wide range of pupil's work available on display and in album portfolios. An analysis of this work and discussions with the pupils show that at both key stages standards are above those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The scrutiny of work and teachers' planning reveals that tasks are carefully linked to the topics and that there is due emphasis on the two elements of designing and making.
89. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have used a wide range of materials including construction kits, recycled materials, textiles and food technology. The older pupils in both key stages, including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs progress well in their learning because the chosen activities match their abilities and offer challenge. One particularly good feature of the teaching and learning is the pupil's ability to design, make and, where necessary, produce ongoing adjustments in order to refine or improve their work. For example, the pupils in Year 2 and 3 make finger puppets, following given instructions, and then adapt the original design to meet their own requirements. The Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils design and make a variety of purses and wallets as Christmas gifts. Their initial design task was to decide what the gift would be used for in order to fit it to the needs of the receiver.
90. In both key stages, the pupils show they have gained a good understanding of the purpose of a design and the use of different materials. The younger pupils know the importance of moulding from a complete piece of clay, or layering sufficiently when using papier-mâché. Older pupils transfer their knowledge by identifying the need to apply a specific technique in order to achieve the required end product, as when designing paper sculpture, making large domes or preparing different types of pizza. They understand the importance of having an attractive finish when completing their clay models. They compare their ideas and talk confidently about how their original design was modified and adjusted in order to improve it.
91. A particular strength of this subject is the way that pupils of all ages and abilities are able to work collaboratively. They learn from the experience and expertise of the older pupils, share in the more complex design ideas of the higher attaining pupils and aid those with special educational needs to help them achieve success.
92. Planning for design technology is undertaken jointly by the staff and is based on a scheme of work, which contains a rolling programme of skills to be learned with extension activities for pupils of different ages and abilities within each class. The co-ordinator manages the subject very competently and has opportunities to monitor and assess the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Her overview and evaluation of school-wide progress makes a positive contribution to the good standards and progress that the pupils achieve.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

93. Throughout the school, the pupils make satisfactory progress in history and geography and their levels of attainment are in line with those expected nationally. These standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. It was not possible to observe any teaching in history during the inspection but two geography lessons were observed. The quality of teaching in geography is very good and in one of the lessons observed it was excellent.
94. From the scrutiny of work, teachers' planning files, the topic plan and from discussions with pupils it is evident that, by the time they reach Year 6, the pupils have a sound knowledge of historical facts and they are able to use a variety of sources of evidence to support their work in

history. They show an enthusiasm for their work in history and geography and are very keen to talk about what they know. The Key Stage 1 pupils can talk and write, in simple terms, about the passing of time. For example, they know that Queen Elizabeth 1 ruled in England 'a very long time ago'. They are also able to explain the link between the story of Guy Fawkes and our celebrations of bonfire night. When the Year 2 pupils study the Victorians, they can use postcards and photographs as clues as to why certain elements were as they were. In Key Stage 2 the higher attaining pupils have a sound understanding of sources of evidence and are able to explain some of the ways in which we find out about the past. They can talk about the invasion of Britain by the Romans and know something of the legacy of those years. The older Key Stage 2 pupils are confident in using the internet for research into history and geography topics and they are competent in using the 'Living library' program to find and select sites with information about, for example, Shakespeare or Sir Francis Drake.

95. In geography in Key Stage 1, the pupils are beginning to learn about the local environment and can express some likes and dislikes. Some pupils are able to use and draw simple maps and plans. The pupils in the Year 2 and 3 class have visited Hertford to compile a local study. In a good lesson on how our actions affect the environment, the Year 2 pupils showed a sound understanding of the effects of pollution and could talk about the benefits of recycling. The teacher's very good use of open-ended questions made the pupils think more deeply about waste and how materials can be re-used. Together with the teacher's high levels of enthusiasm for the subject this resulted in increased learning for almost all the pupils.
96. Much of the geography work in Key Stage 2 centres around the annual residential visits to a contrasting location. These visits are the source of some good quality learning where the pupils' enquiry skills are used well. Their learning about coastal erosion, linked with the need for employment from tourism was the focus for an excellent lesson with the pupils in the Year 4, 5 and 6 class. The teacher maximised every learning opportunity as she combined their existing knowledge with role-play and persuasive argument in the form of a debate. The teacher's expectations of success were very high and the pupils' response and the quality of their learning were equally high. By the time they leave the school, the pupils have also studied a contrasting location in other parts of the world such as Peru or an African country. They have a sound understanding of the features of a river and the water cycle.
97. In both key stages, and in both subjects, the pupils frequently use worksheets and there are insufficient opportunities for them to write freely and independently about their topics. Consequently, opportunities to further increase the pupils' motivation, output and consequently their standard of written work, are lost.
98. Work in history and geography is planned to a cycle of topics and the teachers make use of the nationally produced schemes of work to guide their planning and teaching. There is good collaboration between colleagues in the planning of work. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning and has taught geography in other classes as part of a review of the subject. Resources for history and geography are, however, barely satisfactory. Through the National Grid for Learning the school has access to a range of interactive programs to support learning in both subjects. There are no artefacts to support work in history and the school's collection of posters, books and photographs for both subjects is sparse.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

99. At the end of both key stages standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above those expected for the pupils' age. This is mainly as result of good teaching and well-planned learning opportunities.
100. Since the last inspection the school has created a computer suite with seventeen computers; fourteen of these are connected to the internet. Due to the increased resources and additional training to raise teacher knowledge and expertise, the school has maintained the good standards noted at the time of the last inspection. The computer area is used regularly for whole group

teaching and also by smaller groups of Key Stage 2 pupils who are able to use the computers and the internet to support their learning in a range of subjects.

101. The pupils develop high levels of confidence in using computers for a variety of tasks across the curriculum. Some of the youngest pupils demonstrate good skills in using the mouse, the keyboard and the shift and arrow keys when they use an inter-active program to extend their reading and language skills. The pupils in Year 1 and 2 can use drawing and painting programs confidently and they are able to print their work for display. They are successful in using the computer as a word processor and are confident when using different fonts. In Year 2 many of the pupils are able to use data handling programs and the majority of them can save their work and access it at a later date. In a very good lesson with the pupils in Year 3, the teacher built on the pupils' existing knowledge of every day appliances to extend their learning about programming. She maintained their interest and enthusiasm by using a programmable robot to demonstrate moves and turns and then moved the lesson onto the playground where the pupils worked very well together in pairs, programming each other and designing routes. Back in the classroom, the majority of the pupils could successfully apply their learning to writing their own programs that would move the robot either along a rectangular route or up some stairs.
102. In a good lesson with the Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils they demonstrated their ability to use logo to produce a drawing of a house. The older, higher attaining pupils extend their learning by adding a door to the program commands. In discussions with the Year 6 pupils it is obvious that they are confident when using spreadsheets, publishing programs and programs to support decision making and mapping skills. They can use the internet for research and can locate and download the information they need. Control technology is an aspect of the subject that is underdeveloped at present, although the older pupils have used a microscope connected to the computer and were very excited to share the magnified pictures which had been printed out. The older pupils have a personal disk on which they store their work and they enjoy sharing and talking about their achievements and the good progress they know they have made.
103. The teachers' planning is based on the nationally produced scheme of work (QCA) and this ensures that the pupils systematically develop their skills. Daily lesson plans are very clear about what skills and knowledge are to be taught and they usually include extension tasks to move learning forward for the older or the higher attaining pupils. The pupils' attainment and progress are assessed regularly and pieces of work that are a particular source of pride are added to the pupils' record of achievement.
104. The head teacher, as the co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She has identified areas for future development and these include the completion of staff training, the purchase of additional control software and the increased use of e-mail. In the management and continuing development of the subject, as well as in the purchase of resources, the school has made very good use of the knowledge and expertise of advisers and also friends of the school.

MUSIC

105. Only one music lesson was observed during the inspection and this took place with the Year 2 and Year 3 pupils. However, from discussions with staff and pupils it is evident that in both key stages, all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are provided with a range of experiences that enables them to make satisfactory progress and to achieve standards that are in line with those expected nationally. This is similar to the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection.
106. Many of the pupils know the names of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and they know that they can be made of wood or metal. Almost all of the pupils can sustain a rhythm and keep to a beat whilst listening and singing. They have good control of their own voices and they know and can sing a range of songs. The pupils enjoy singing in assembly as well as in music lessons. When listening to recorded music the older pupils can identify some orchestral instruments and they can make comparisons with other types and styles of music heard previously. They respond well as they listen to a range of music at the beginning and end of assembly and this makes a positive contribution to their spiritual and cultural development. This is an improvement

since the last inspection when the lack of opportunities and resources to enhance the pupils' cultural development was criticised.

107. In the lesson with the Year 2 and the Year 3 pupils they showed a good understanding of the difference between loud and soft sounds and the differences between the main melody and the accompaniment to a song. Almost all of the pupils understood and could use the correct musical vocabulary of 'dynamics' and 'ostinato'. The pupils were further able to give opinions, backed up by reasons, as to why the accompaniment needed to be quieter than the melody.
108. The quality of the teaching in the lesson observed was very good. The session was well planned and incorporated the elements of listening, appraising and performing. The teacher built on the pupils' previous learning and used skilful questions to draw out what the pupils already knew so that their learning could be extended. She provided good support and encouragement in the task of responding to a rhythm by passing a beanbag on a syncopated beat. Several of the pupils found this challenging, but the teacher's good use of praise and her high expectations spurred them on to try their best and to achieve a degree of success. As they practised their singing in two parts the teacher used the pupils' own evaluations of their performance as an aid to improvement. A less successful aspect of this lesson was that it required the pupils to sit for too long whilst they either listened to others or waited their turn to join in.
109. The music co-ordinator is very conscientious about her role and has worked hard to provide support and guidance for colleagues. She has monitored teaching and learning in the subject and has provided detailed notes and feedback on the subject's strengths and areas for further development. An exchange of skills also takes place in music and the co-ordinator teaches other year groups to share her knowledge and expertise. This has a positive effect on standards in the subject. The pupils have the opportunity to join a recorder group as an extra-curricular activity and four pupils have weekly piano lessons from a visiting music teacher.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. Most pupils, at both key stages, attain the standards expected for their age. These standards are similar to those of the previous inspection.
111. The younger Key Stage 1 pupils quickly acquire simple skills such as throwing and catching a ball, changing pace and direction when running and skipping, and using different parts of the body to explore ways to move. They show an awareness of space when, for example, they play team games or work with a partner. They respond well to music and stories when they explore how movement may be used to express feelings and ideas. They watch each other's performances and learn from them so that they can refine their own movements. During activities, they are gaining an understanding of the importance of warm-up and cool-down tasks. They know that the heart is affected by exercise and that pulse rates increase during vigorous movement and decrease when they rest.
112. In Key Stage 2 the pupils demonstrate their developing skills. For example, in rugby, they know ways to control the ball, using chest, legs and head. They mark an opponent in defence well and know how to find a space in attack. When sending and receiving the ball an appropriate degree of control and accuracy is used. By the age of eleven, almost all of the pupils attain the standard expected of them in swimming because all pupils in both key stages have opportunities to swim regularly. The pupils take part in outdoor and adventurous activities both at school and in the locality. All of the older pupils have the opportunity to experience a range of adventure activities on organised visits to residential centres. No gymnastics lessons were seen during the inspection, but the teachers' planning and recording of attainment indicate that the pupils attain the expected standard across a range of activities.
113. The pupils enjoy their lessons and respond positively and enthusiastically to all aspects of their work. They persevere in acquiring new skills, helping each other to succeed. Their collaboration and co-operation ensures that maximum benefit is achieved from team and group

activities. The standard of dress for physical education lessons is excellent. All the pupils wear appropriate clothing and footwear with very few pupils forgetting or not having a change of clothes.

114. The quality of the teaching is often good. Lessons are well organised and planned. The pupils are challenged to work hard and they respond well to this. The interesting and varied organisation of the curriculum offers opportunities for pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, to participate fully in the lessons. Consequently, the pupils approach their lessons with enthusiasm and interest and make good progress. A strength of the teaching is the school's use of outside professional expertise from local teams. This partnership with the teachers contributes significantly to the development of skill and stamina over time for the pupils at both key stages.
115. The school enhances its curriculum by providing sports and games outside lessons with the cluster schools. This gives the older pupils opportunities to participate in inter-school activities and to be part of a larger group. This makes a significant contribution to their social and personal development, as well as to their physical development.