

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **GENTLESHAW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Gentleshaw, Rugeley

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124210

Headteacher: Mrs H R Franks

Reporting inspector: Mr J P Latham  
1817

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 January 2000

Inspection number: 190111

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Darlings Lane Gentleshaw Rugeley Staffordshire
Postcode:	WS15 4LY
Telephone number:	01543 682476
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Green
Date of previous inspection:	21 – 25 October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J P Latham	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs J Beattie	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr M McEvoy	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs F Cheetham	Team inspector	English Art Physical education Under-fives. Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
Mrs D Smith	Team inspector	Geography History Physical education Equal opportunities	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Gentleshaw Primary School has 145 pupils on roll with 86 boys and 59 girls. At the time of the inspection eleven of the pupils were under five years of age. There is a gender imbalance at present towards boys and this is reflected in certain classes of the school. The numbers of pupils on roll has steadily increased by 10% since the last inspection. Pupil mobility is low. The school serves the rural villages of Gentleshaw and Cannock Wood, near Rugeley in Staffordshire and 25% of the school's intake come from outside the immediate area. The school does not have a nursery but many of the children receive nursery education either in a nearby Local Education Authority nursery class or in the private and voluntary sector. Attainment on entry to the school is above average but reflects a wide range of achievements.

Twenty six pupils have been identified as having special educational needs which is below average. There is one pupil for whom a statement is maintained. Just over eight per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below the national average for primary schools. At present no pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

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

Gentleshaw Primary School is a school with many good features. The school achieves good standards particularly in relation to the percentage of pupils achieving the national standard in the core subjects and in the work of current pupils on roll. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they enjoy coming to school. The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good teaching, particularly in lessons for the under-fives. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides opportunities for all pupils including those who have special educational needs. Better provision could be made for the higher attaining pupils. Overall, there are good arrangements to support pupils and to care for them. Measures are taken to enlist the support of parents. Leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors are strong and there are clearly identified priorities. The school has made significant improvement on most of the issues identified in the last inspection. The school is managed in a cost-effective way and provides good value for money.

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

- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English are well above the national average.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in English and mathematics throughout the school and in geography, history, religious education, swimming and gymnastics at Key Stage 2.
- The pupils have good attitudes to their learning and they want to learn.
- The quality of teaching overall is good.
- Children under five make very good progress and the provision made for them is good.
- Very good use is made of adult non-teaching staff and voluntary helpers to support lessons.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

## What could be improved

- The standards achieved by the high attaining pupils in mathematics and science.
- Teachers' knowledge and expertise, particularly in mathematics and science, building further on the professional development programme now in place.
- The standards and provision in information and communication technology.
- The consistency of procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science to ensure that curriculum planning is more precise.
- A vision of the longer term view for the future of the school expressed through the school development plan.
- Relationships with a minority of parents who feel the school does not make sufficient effort to work closely with them.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1996 and has made good progress in a number of important areas. For example, there has been improvement in curriculum planning and the teaching strategies employed by teachers. The national strategies of literacy and numeracy have helped in this process. There has been some progress since the last inspection in raising standards. In particular, there are now an above average number of pupils achieving the national standard in the National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2. The school is well placed to meet and exceed the targets that it set itself. However, there is still room for improvement especially among the high attaining pupils when compared to similar schools. There are an insufficient number of pupils gaining Level 3 in Key Stage 1 and Level 5 in Key Stage 2 and this is reflected in the average point score for the school where improvement is not being shown in mathematics and science. Whilst there has been marked progress in the overall assessment of pupils and the data kept on them, the process of tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science to ensure more precise learning objectives for pupils is still in the developmental stage. Serious attempts have been made since the previous inspection to improve the provision for pupils to learn through investigation and independent work and there is evidence of good practice in a number of curriculum areas notably in English, geography, history and religious education. There has also been an increase in the number of opportunities for working in an investigative way in science. This is reflected in an overall improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Good progress has been made in the provision for the spiritual development of pupils. The management of the school has responded well to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. In particular, the school development plan has now been revised and improved. It includes more detail in terms of costings, success criteria and timescales. There has been a good attempt to take a longer-term view of curriculum development but the plan still is not addressing important strategic issues, notably the fabric of the building. The school has made sound progress in devising a clear structure to monitor and evaluate the quality of most of its work. The school now provides good value for money.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	[1997]	[1998]	[1999]	[1999]	
English	B	A	A	C	Well above average A average above average B
Mathematics	C	C	C	D	Average C Below average D
Science	C	C	C	E	Well below average E

The above figures reflect average grades and therefore take into account the number of pupils in Year 6 last year who achieved Level 5, which was well below the average for similar schools. Inspectors in making judgements, take into account that this cohort of pupils was very small i.e. 15 pupils and that during the year there was an increase in the number of pupils eligible for free school meals which has a bearing on comparisons made with similar schools.

Results in English are well above the national average when compared with all schools. In mathematics and science standards are average. The trend in the school's performance for all three core subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. The school has worked hard to bring standards up to the level expected nationally over the last two years and in 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 in all three subjects was well above the national average. Moreover, in English and science the percentage of pupils achieving the national standard was above the average for similar schools and in mathematics they were above average. The Year 2000 targets set by governors are modest in that in 1999 they have been exceeded in English and met in mathematics.

Work seen in class shows that the standards acquired by pupils are mainly good, particularly in literacy and numeracy where, because of effective teaching, the majority of pupils achieve well and make good progress. Whilst the progress made by the low attaining pupils is good enabling many to reach the standards expected nationally, progress and attainment of the high attaining pupils is not high enough.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, particularly in the reception class. The majority of pupils are keen and eager to work in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally good, both in classes and around the school. A minority of pupils behave inappropriately in some lessons and there is an element of boisterous behaviour on the playground at lunch-times.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are taught to take responsibility and understand and value the needs of others. Relationships between pupils are very good.
Attendance	Good, reflecting national averages. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good.

This aspect of school life is a strength of the school and an area which most parents appreciate.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is better than when the school was inspected previously. In 93% of lessons the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and in 29% of lessons teaching was very good. In seven per cent of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching in both English and mathematics is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Very good teaching can be found throughout the school but is particularly prevalent for the under-fives. Where teaching is very good lessons are well planned and the content captures the imagination of pupils. Expectations are high in these lessons and care is taken to make clear to the pupils the objectives for the lesson. In the few unsatisfactory lessons there is a lack of teacher knowledge and occasionally expertise to challenge and extend pupils across the full ability range to include the high attaining pupils. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in the vast majority of lessons and teachers and pupils benefit from the national frameworks to enable them to teach pupils appropriately. Pupils make very good progress in reception, they respond with interest and an eagerness to learn. They quickly acquire new skills and knowledge. Throughout the school the majority of pupils make good progress, they settle well to their lessons and produce work expected of them. The provision made for average and low attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and gives due priority to literacy and numeracy and promotes good involvement with the community and other external providers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall but particularly with the younger pupils. Effective procedures are in place to enable good progress amongst the pupils involved.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good in all aspects. Provision is enhanced through assemblies, religious education and 'Circle Time'. There are opportunities in lessons for pupils to work collaboratively and share experiences together.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Matters concerning pupils' welfare are managed through good procedures. Good levels of involvement with external agencies to support developments in this area. Improvements are needed in assessment and monitoring and the levels of play supervision at lunch-times. A fire risk assessment should be carried out as soon as possible.

The school has established sound procedures for working in partnership with parents. Relationships are generally satisfactory and the school has effective communication channels through good quality information and making itself readily available to discuss pupils' progress with parents. A minority of parents feel their views are insufficiently valued by the school.

The school provides a rich range of curricular opportunities for pupils including well organised lessons in literacy and numeracy. The provision for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. The school also provides a range of visits to support the curriculum. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory for the size of school. The school meets its statutory requirements in this area.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides good leadership and ensures the professional development of staff. Co-ordinators fulfil their roles well and staff are aware of the need to promote high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good awareness of how to fulfil their responsibilities. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are actively involved in initiatives.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory action is taken to evaluate school performance. Data on standards is discussed and there is regular evaluation of the school's strategic plan.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the school's budget to match priorities identified in the strategic plan. The funding plans for longer term priorities are less secure.

The school has adequate staffing to meet requirements but must in the longer term seek to fill gaps in teacher expertise. At the time of the inspection two of the five full-time teachers were temporary. Provision for learning resources is satisfactory apart from computers where more spending is necessary. Accommodation is satisfactory. The new headteacher has brought new direction to the school which has yet to yield full results. The school is familiar with the principles of Best Value and has taken steps to ensure the best possible value for money in spending decisions. The school provides good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are happy and like going to school.</li> <li>• The good progress their children make at the school.</li> <li>• The good behaviour of most pupils at the school.</li> <li>• The good standard of teaching and the way the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school about issues affecting them.</li> <li>• The way in which the school encourages children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The information that the school provides for them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consistency and amount of homework set for pupils.</li> <li>• The range of out-of-school activities that are provided for their children.</li> <li>• The extent to which the school works closely with parents on a range of issues.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li> </ul>

Forty four per cent of parents took the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire. The meeting with the Registered Inspector was attended by 32 parents. The inspection team endorses the positive views of parents and agrees that the provision for homework could be improved. Whilst 77% of parents that responded to the questionnaire are satisfied that the school works closely with them, the fact that one in four parents would like to see improvements in this area gives cause for concern. Inspectors feel that the range of out-of-school activities provided are reasonable for the size of school given the number of staff and other volunteers available to run them. Although a small number of parents express legitimate concerns about a number of incidents that have occurred over the past two years, there is no evidence to support that the leadership and management of the school is weak.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The initial assessment of children under five in the reception class shows that the overall level of attainment is above the average found nationally. Children make an excellent start to their education and they achieve very well in all areas of learning defined for pupils under the age of five. Most are on course to meet the goals identified in the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children by the age of five and some exceed these goals and begin working within the National Curriculum subjects towards Level 1. This achievement is particularly marked in literacy and numeracy. The effects of very good teaching in the reception class enables most pupils to achieve well for their age and make very good progress.

2. Results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 is above the national average in reading and writing and very high in mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 is below average in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics. In science teachers' own assessments show that pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with national averages but with an insufficient number of pupils achieving Level 3.

3. In comparison with similar schools the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 in reading and writing is average, but well below average in science. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 remains very high. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in reading and writing is well below the average for similar schools, below average in mathematics and broadly average in science.

4. The 1999 Year 6 cohort was small and so the success or otherwise of just one or two pupils impacts significantly on test results. Nevertheless the results for eleven-year-olds in English show standards were well above the national average when compared with all schools. In mathematics and science standards are average. The trend in the school's performance for all three core subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. The school has worked hard to bring standards up to the level expected nationally over the last two years and in 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 in all three subjects was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was broadly in line with the national average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science.

5. When compared with similar schools the standards achieved by the previous Year 6 cohort of pupils were average in English but below average in mathematics and well below average in science. These average scores were adversely affected because the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well below the average for these schools in all three subjects. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the national standard of Level 4, compared with similar schools, was well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics.

6. In making judgements about standards, inspectors take into account that the size of the cohort of pupils on which the statistics are based was very small in 1999 i.e. 15 pupils. During the year there was an increase in the number of pupils eligible for free school meals which also has a bearing on comparisons that are made with similar schools.

7. At the end of Key Stage 1 there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in mathematics but girls do slightly better than boys in reading and writing. Both boys and girls do better than boys and girls nationally in both reading and mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2, there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. At this stage both boys and girls do better than boys and girls nationally in English but there are no major differences in either mathematics or science.

8. In English, governors set a Key Stage 2 Level 4 target of 84% for 1999 and 85% for the Year 2000. In 1999 the school exceeded its target by 9% suggesting that the targets being set are modest and insufficiently challenging. Governors should take this into account when setting targets for 2002. Similarly in mathematics, the school in 1999 already reached its Year 2000 target of 80%.

9. In English, the overall standard of current pupils' work is above average in both key stages and a concerted effort has been made to raise standards even further. Pupils speak and listen well throughout the school and most are confident and eager to share their experiences. The standard of reading in both key stages is above average and the majority of pupils display a genuine love and interest in books. In Key Stage 2 pupils read a wide range of materials with fluency and good understanding. Pupils' writing is above the standard expected nationally in both key stages and by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils write independently using vocabulary and sentences with a good level of accuracy. Pupils' writing in Key Stage 2 shows good organisation and use of punctuation and paragraphing. A good handwriting style is established from the beginning and by the end of the key stage most pupils present their work to a high standard. Although the progress made by the low attaining pupils is very good enabling many to reach the standards expected nationally, progress and attainment of some of the high attaining pupils are not high enough because teachers' plans are not always explicit in the detail of the learning outcomes for these pupils, and some opportunities to extend their learning are missed.

10. In mathematics, the standard of work seen in both key stages is above average. Work seen in pupils' books illustrates a good understanding of all of the programmes of study; in particular number and algebra, shape and measures and handling data. Pupils have a good understanding of the value of number. In lessons there are opportunities for pupils to engage in mental work but by the end of Key Stage 1 high attaining pupils are not given sufficiently challenging tasks to engage them in abstract mental calculations or to explore the strategies needed to produce accurate answers. Although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils in both key stages to use and apply mathematics through investigation and solving problems, the majority of pupils make good progress. This is due to effective teaching and well run numeracy lessons. The progress made by the lower attaining pupils in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1, is very good enabling many to reach the standards expected nationally. The progress and attainment of the high attaining pupils are still not high enough.

11. Overall the standard of work seen in science is above average in both key stages. Pupils have good scientific knowledge and understanding and progress is good in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, although overall progress is satisfactory, too little progress is made in acquiring the skills of scientific investigation.

12. In information technology standards are below that expected nationally at Key Stage 2. Work seen in Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with the standards of most seven year olds. The progress, made by pupils as they reach the end of Key Stage 2 is

unsatisfactory due to the failure to provide a sufficient, regular and challenging programme of work.

13. In design and technology the standard of work in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 insufficient work was seen to make a judgement on standards as no lessons were observed. Most of the artefacts and models produced in the previous term have been taken home by pupils.

14. In both geography and history the standards of work are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2 where learning is very good. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas of the curriculum are good and the majority of pupils have good locational knowledge, they analyse a range of evidence competently and make valuable contributions to discussion and produce thoughtful and detailed written work.

15. There was no opportunity to observe art lessons in Key Stage 2 during the inspection; however, pupils produce satisfactory work involving a wide range of techniques and media. There is a good range of artwork on display, some of which is connected with and extends other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to achieve well through effective teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1. They experiment with tools and techniques and record their impressions from their experiences, particularly from stories they enjoy. The work on display and in portfolios shows pupils' abilities to produce work that is inspired through environmental study and by examining the work of famous artists. There are some instances of carefully observed detailed drawings in pupils' sketch books.

16. Very little music was observed during the inspection to form an overall judgement on standards. Singing, particularly in assemblies, is good and all pupils play the recorder in Key Stage 2. The advanced recorder group play at a good standard.

17. The standard of pupils' physical education by the time they leave the school is good. Most pupils can swim to a good standard. Gymnastics is taught well and pupils reach a standard in lessons that is expected nationally.

18. Pupils meet the requirements of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus in religious education and by the end of Key Stage 2 the standard of knowledge and understanding is above average. Progress made by the majority of pupils is very good due to the commitment of the teachers to this area of work. Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religious studies.

19. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school but particularly in Key Stage 1. Sound systems of identification enable pupils to be supported well both within and outside the classroom. The support available to these pupils enables many of them to attain the national standard in English, mathematics and science.

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

20. The majority of parents agree with their children that they like coming to school and are happy. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and their responses to their lessons make a significant contribution to the progress they make. Behaviour generally is good. The school provides a good atmosphere for learning and is friendly and purposeful. Pupils arrive each morning eagerly and generally promptly. They begin their work without wasting time.

21. When children first begin school, they adjust very quickly to the routines and demands of school life. Their attitudes reflect much good or very good and enthusiastic teaching. They settle down quickly, and are excited by the interesting learning opportunities presented to them. These children work, without anxiety, in a busy mixed age class. They use all areas of the school for their activities and work happily and productively with their teacher, classroom assistant and parent volunteers.

22. Pupils throughout the school are very enthusiastic and keen to begin their early morning literacy and numeracy tasks. They demonstrate an interest in their lessons and a willingness to become engaged in the tasks set for them, which are usually very well organised and supported by teachers and other adults working in the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 with special educational needs, work with enthusiasm on timed and focused tasks aimed at helping them with their reading. Throughout the school these pupils are willing to learn and they succeed well in meeting their individual learning targets. Year 6 pupils present themselves punctually, keen to get a prompt start to their lessons. All pupils sustain their concentration, particularly in the literacy and numeracy sessions which they enjoy and often produce work of a high standard.

23. Pupils behave well most of the time in class and around school. Most pupils are polite to adults and other pupils. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education by the time they come to the end of Year 6. These oldest pupils are sensible, considerate and show kindness to others. They present themselves as excellent role models. There are however some incidents of inappropriate behaviour both in class, around school and in the playground by younger pupils. Occasionally incidents in classes disrupt the lessons and slow down the rate of learning for others. This inappropriate behaviour happens when teaching lacks pace and rigour, or when there are too few resources available. Teachers employ strategies outlined in the school's behaviour policy to get these pupils back on task but they are applied inconsistently on other occasions when pupils are out of class. For example, over-boisterous behaviour in the playground by a minority of pupils causes anxiety for some younger children. These pupils appear unsure of any regulations limiting such behaviour. The majority of parents hold positive views about the good standard of behaviour.

24. The school procedures encourage older pupils to get involved in the daily routines of the school, such as organising the music in assemblies, helping with the very young children and offering to assist with equipment and tidying. There are many good examples of pupils taking initiative, sharing, supporting and helping each other in lessons. Children in Key Stage 1 shared their knowledge of simple phonic skills and spelling strategies, and a Year 2 group when asked to put class names in alphabetical order, displayed high levels of maturity in arriving at agreement. Older pupils in gymnastics learn how to work alongside others productively and responsibly. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have opportunities to broaden their interests, skills and enjoyment of competitive sport in after-school clubs. A good number take part in instrumental music lessons and are encouraged to play at the school's assemblies.

25. Most children are confident even from the very beginning of their school life. The good relationships between home and school established in the reception class and the sensitive admission arrangements have contributed to this settled and strong community. In practical subjects such as design and technology, pupils accept guidance from adults, handle resources carefully and get on with their work independently. Many pupils demonstrate their initiative by using reference and non-fiction books for independent research producing some good history and religious education work, presenting it with

pride. Children's confidence continues to grow as they progress through the school. They converse with teachers, adults and visitors with clarity, confidence and interest. Pupils are eager to participate in class discussions and are sensitive to other points of view. Activities aimed at this make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of others within school, in the wider community and in other cultures, for example in the comparison of life on the island of St Lucia.

26. The attendance figures for the school are broadly in line with the national average and there are no exclusions in the recent history of the school. There are, however a number of families who continue to take holidays during term time. Registers are marked promptly and lessons get off to a brisk start. The school procedures for monitoring late comers and absences are very good.

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

27. The teaching of the under-fives is mainly very good and the teacher and support staff have an excellent understanding of young children's needs and how they learn. They plan together effectively to provide the children with a good range of lively and interesting activities. These activities ensure that the children are actively engaged in their learning beginning with early morning language and number activities. Children are able to gain maximum benefit from their time in school because of the brisk pace, clear objectives, good organisation, and excellent support they receive.

28. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. There are examples of good and very good teaching in both key stages.

29. Overall the teaching is better than when the school was inspected last. In 93% of lessons the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better with nearly one in three lessons judged to be very good.

30. In the many successful lessons the teachers plan their work well and put forward the lesson in an interesting and lively way which captures the pupils' imagination. For example, the fun with counting games seen amongst younger pupils in Key Stage 1 and the dramatic interpretation of literature in Key Stage 2. Most lessons have clear aims and pupils understand the purpose of lessons and the work they have to undertake. Most of the teachers and support staff know and understand their pupils' learning needs well.

31. The best teaching is also characterised by high quality oral work. This was seen in most literacy and numeracy lessons, particularly in the whole class work and plenary sessions. For example, when in discussion, teachers prompt pupils and use open ended questions to draw out very good responses, even with the very young in story and number activities. This quality is also to be seen in subjects such as history, geography and religious education where teachers use questions skillfully to promote thinking and problem solving. They engage pupils in investigative tasks such as finding out about their local church, and they deploy a good range of resources and other evidence to enliven the study. Teachers also take care to emphasise the importance of correct language in history and geography which contribute to pupils' overall literacy skills. Most teachers encourage pupils to contribute to lessons and become actively engaged in learning. This produces high levels of motivation and sustained concentration. As a result, good progress is made in many lessons.

32. The introduction of the strategies for literacy and numeracy has made a significant

impact on teaching. For example, teachers' skills of exposition are mainly good and in the best lessons they engage pupils with interest in discussion, reflection and mental skills. Teachers' use of demonstration is a feature of many lessons, notably in mathematics, art and physical education. Expectations are high for the majority of pupils.

33. Effort is made to tease out links between subjects. For example, in geography there are opportunities for pupils to exercise skills of data analysis and art is often linked to design and technology, history and geography. Most teachers look for opportunities to extend skills taught in literacy, the most noticeable examples being in history, geography and religious education, where research and opportunities for extended writing take place. Older pupils, for example, extended their reading and writing skills when researching, organising information and writing at length and in detail about the Tudors and religious festivals.

34. Most work is thoroughly marked with indications of what pupils need to do to improve although there are a few examples of very limited feedback to pupils on their written work.

35. Classrooms and pupils are mainly well organised. Appropriate support is available together with time for children to explore, experiment and complete work. Where additional adult helpers are available in the class they are always well briefed, talented and effective. This is particularly noticeable when pupils with special educational needs are supported in their reading.

36. Weaknesses in teaching are mainly due to lack of teacher expertise and subject knowledge in a number of subjects but notably in information technology. Whilst much effort has taken place over recent times to ensure that lower attaining pupils are provided with appropriate tasks with good levels of in-class support, on occasions the provision for the high attainers is less focused. Whilst many of the tasks are appropriate, they sometimes do not provide enough challenge to help pupils acquire the higher levels in national tests. The school is in the process of improving its monitoring and tracking procedures to remedy this problem. The school is adequately equipped in most subjects but gaps in subjects like information technology prevent access to a valuable resource for learning.

37. Homework is applied inconsistently and at present does not contribute in a significant way to improving standards. The school has plans to address this in the immediate future.

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

38. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught at both key stages, together with provision which addresses pupils' personal and social needs. Time allocations which reflect the school's priorities have been made. The amount of teaching time is in line with DfEE recommendations.

39. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and includes collective worship and religious education. The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural education is good, and spiritual development is a strength. The current curriculum provision for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs but is not always sufficiently challenging to



meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. The school has made good progress in addressing concerns raised in the previous inspection report.

40. The school has prioritised the introduction of literacy and numeracy in accordance with the national strategies and they are well established in all year groups. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively used to enhance teachers' skills. A good start has been made in introducing the demanding requirements of numeracy.

41. Pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. Where tasks and duties of responsibility are allocated both boys and girls are included. Arrangements for visits and residential trips include opportunities for all pupils to attend. Where non-teaching staff and adult helpers are used to support the curriculum they have a positive impact on the standards that pupils achieve.

42. The school has been developing its basic curriculum planning system, and this is helping to promote consistency. Arrangements are in place to monitor this development. The strategic plan has identified the task of reviewing subjects in the light of the new National Curriculum 2000, and a rigorous approach to this will be important in ensuring future work is well matched to pupils' needs.

43. Pupils have the opportunity to engage in competitive sport. There are a range of extra-curricular activities, which staff work hard to provide. Currently this includes choir, chess, football, netball, an internet club and a Fit 'n' Sporty Club provided by the local council.

44. Constructive relationships have been established with local partner institutions. The local cluster group of schools work together from time to time to consider common issues such as drug awareness.

45. The provision for pupils' spiritual development was criticised in the last inspection report but is now well established. Acts of collective worship include prayers and the opportunity for reflection. The school's religious education curriculum makes a strong and planned contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness. Work observed with the local church and lay preachers was of good quality.

46. The school does much to develop pupils' moral, cultural and social awareness. This is often done through work which takes place in 'Circle Time' where pupils can discuss and share ideas openly. Pupils are taught right from wrong, and are given tasks in their work which allow them to consider wider moral issues, for example, the conflict of economic development in areas of natural beauty. Pupils learn to work together and form constructive relationships with each other and with adults through their work in areas such as English, science and physical education.

47. The curriculum is enriched by cultural visits and experiences both locally and regionally. This provides pupils with opportunities to consider different cultures and lifestyles.

48. The provision for personal, social and health education is a strength. School provision includes sex education, personal hygiene, drug awareness, health and safety, healthy eating and the dangers of over exposure to the sun. The school is currently involved with the 'Health Promoting Schools' scheme.

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

49. Overall the school has good procedures to provide for pupils' academic progress and their personal growth and well-being. The questionnaires returned by parents before the inspection indicate that 95% agree that their children like school.

50. The school has a good policy to provide for pupils' safety in class and on school visits. The arrangements for physical education are secure but the health and safety policy is not always applied in connection with earrings and some pupils have inappropriate footwear.

51. Teachers lack clear guidance in practical activities for science and design and technology. Fire appliances, portable electrical equipment and physical education equipment are checked regularly. However, the school's provision for fire exits and fire doors is a concern and the management should initiate immediate risk assessments of all areas of the building. Pupils benefit from the school's good links with health and educational support services and from the good opportunities for class teachers and parents to discuss every pupil's well-being, both informally and at termly parents' evenings. The governing body has decided to take part in the government's 'Healthy School' initiative. Medical and police specialists contribute to the programmes for sex and drugs education. Procedures to provide for child protection are in place and all staff know what to do if any concern arises. The provision for play at lunch-time is not sufficient to provide for the needs of all pupils and supervisors do not always intervene soon enough to prevent unacceptably boisterous behaviour. On wet days the upper Key Stage 2 classes are not always closely supervised.

52. Since the last report, procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress have been developed and improved. In English, mathematics and science, there are procedures now in place to monitor academic performance. In science, end of year assessment is insufficient to inform the next year's curriculum and the tests given at the end of each topic are not always passed on to the next teacher covering the same theme. The school does not make enough use of its assessment information to set specific curricular targets for individual and groups of pupils and to make sure that high attaining pupils are making best progress. Teachers make effective use of target boards to develop an individual approach and there are plans to use this strategy throughout the school. In the early years class teaching and support staff have very good procedures to use baseline and continuous assessment to plan activities which match the needs of every pupil so that all make good progress. Procedures to meet pupils' special educational needs have improved and are now satisfactory overall. Continuous assessment in lower Key Stage 2 has been hampered by staff changes and in Classes 3 and 4 staff have shown insufficient concern over unfinished work.

53. Throughout the school, procedures for assessing pupils' progress in the non-core subjects are under-developed. This results in teaching and learning activities which are not always appropriate for all pupils. The school has good procedures to monitor pupils' attendance and personal development but staff changes for lower Key Stage 2 pupils have hampered the development of the secure relationships which build up trust between teachers, parents and pupils.

54. Family assemblies, which celebrate academic achievement and personal progress, contribute well to pupils' care and support. A good programme of topics for 'Circle Time' enhances personal and social development. All members of each class are encouraged to talk and listen, to value their own strengths and those of others and to form relationships based on sensitive awareness of the needs of individuals and of society.

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

55. Since the last inspection the school has developed its procedures to work in partnership with parents. Parents are pleased with the regular letters and newsletters, the open-door policy which enables them to discuss concerns with teachers and the termly parents' evenings. Parents welcome the school's close links with the local playgroup, the 'before and after' care club and the participation in village activities. The school has responded to the previous report's comments that they did not give parents sufficient regular advice and information about the work their children do. Parents now receive half termly notification of topics. These notifications are brief and some parents would like more detailed information so that they can support their children's learning in the most effective way. The school has made good arrangements to inform parents about the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

56. Some excellent research has been conducted at home by Year 6 pupils, but overall a significant minority of parents do not think that their children get the right amount of homework. Many parents throughout the school use the home-school reading diaries but teachers do not always consistently scrutinise all reading logs and a minority of pupils do not have additional support in reading. Overall the school does too little to build on the skills and knowledge of information and communication technology that pupils have acquired at home. The school has plans to revise the homework policy in consultation with parents. A minority of parents feel that their concerns and suggestions are not given due attention and that the skills and interests which they would wish to give to the school are not valued. Some parents have this perception and the school should take steps to bring about improvements in this area.

57. Procedures to introduce pupils into school life are very good. Parents and their children are well prepared with visits and a full range of information. Staff share the results of the baseline assessments and work in close partnership with parents during pupils' first year in school. The school has good plans to give parents guidance on activities at home which will help to develop their children's numeracy. The school is quick to involve parents with any concerns about their child's well being and any special needs. Several parents help in school and make a very good and skilled contribution to literacy, numeracy and many other subjects including extra-curricular netball and the internet club. A grandmother has talked about her own experiences of school and village life. Parents prepare resources and help with activities such as swimming and after-school netball. The Parents and Friends Association organises social and fund-raising activities and makes a substantial contribution to funds for extra resources, chosen in consultation with the headteacher and staff. Parents are well represented on the governing body and the latest Governors' Annual Meeting was well attended.

58. The school has sought parents' views following the governors' discussion on the home-school agreement and has good plans to survey parents' opinions with an annual questionnaire. Parents are pleased with the end of year reports and the opportunity to discuss them at the end of the school year. However, the reports do not always provide parents with clear information about what their children are doing in every subject, how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve.

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

59. The headteacher was appointed just over two years ago and is providing firm and assertive leadership. She makes explicit the aims and values of the school. The staff is small and there have been a number of personnel changes in the past twelve months due

to promotion and illness. During the inspection two of the five teachers were on temporary contracts and a further teacher is in her first year of teaching. The deputy headteacher, internally promoted shortly after the arrival of the new headteacher, was absent during the inspection.

60. The headteacher has acted on the majority of key issues identified in the last inspection report. There is strong evidence that she has managed to set the tone for academic improvement by taking a strong lead in the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. As a consequence there has been a sharp increase in the number of pupils achieving the national standard in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. As part of the school's planned programme for professional development of staff, delegated responsibilities amongst the permanent staff are beginning to have an impact, notably through improvements in their curriculum planning and knowledge and understanding of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Those concerned take their responsibilities seriously, without additional remuneration. The deputy headteacher was absent and so an evaluation of her effectiveness has not been possible.

61. The governing body has also undergone a number of changes including the appointment of a new Chair and Vice Chair. Governors are well aware of the need to raise academic standards and have been very supportive of the headteacher in this process. The Chair of Governors takes her responsibilities seriously and good systems have been established to make the school more accountable for its performance and improvement. This is evident through the progress made on the school's action plan since the last inspection. There is healthy debate amongst governors, particularly parent governors, as to what constitutes improvement. Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there is good evidence, through minutes, of their involvement in initiatives of the school. The committee structure works well and meetings are documented. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities although arrangements for formal appraisal are not in place.

62. The school has attempted to appoint and develop professionally a good team but sickness and staff leaving have prevented plans from coming to fruition. Teaching staff are encouraged to develop themselves professionally and a record is kept of this. Staff development interviews by the headteacher take place and constructive written feedback is given. The support package for the newly qualified teacher has been very well organised. Monitoring of teachers' plans, again with comments, takes place regularly. The school is very much aware of its strengths and weaknesses and takes steps to bring about improvement.

63. Systems for monitoring the overall performance of pupils, evaluating the quality of teachers' planning and providing support for teachers in the classroom during the introduction of the literacy hour and numeracy lessons have all proved effective. Evidence of this is the increase in the percentage of pupils reaching the national standard in English, mathematics and science. However, there is insufficient rigour in the overall monitoring procedures to target those pupils who have the potential to achieve Level 3 at Key Stage 1 and Level 5 at Key Stage 2. The attainment of high ability pupils still remains an issue from the previous inspection. The school is well aware of this issue but newly formed strategies, such as enabling staff to raise levels of subject knowledge and expertise, and individual pupil monitoring procedures are not yet secure.

64. Clear educational priorities are identified in the schools' strategic plan which is shared with staff and governors. These priorities are monitored and subject to review with the governing body. Priorities identified have in the past three years included the key

issues raised in the previous inspection report and other related issues such as introducing more opportunities for investigation in the curriculum. Priorities identified are properly costed and frequently demonstrated by the effective use of specific grant funding. However, a longer term strategy for the future of the school is not given sufficient emphasis especially matters associated with the internal refurbishment of the fabric of the building.

65. The school makes good and appropriate use of specific grants which are targeted at priorities frequently determined at national level, such as the additional support for literacy and booster class training in Year 6. The principles of Best Value are beginning to have an impact. A questionnaire completed as part of the home-school agreement exercise has helped to identify the parent community's needs. Buildings related matters such as the painting of the perimeter fence, the fitting of new sinks in classrooms, new blinds and carpeting, have all been subject to seeking competitive quotes. The staff and governing body have been fully involved.

66. Although good relationships lie at the heart of the school's aims, the school does not enjoy the full support of a significant minority of parents. A small number of parents feel their views are not sufficiently valued. Letters sent by the school responding to complaints show that matters are dealt with sensitively and in the interests of all pupils.

67. The use of new technology to support the school's management is under-developed. E-mail facilities are available in the school office although not operational during the inspection. There is little evidence of staff engaged in using the computer to help them manage their planning or recording systems. The school is equipped with good photocopying facilities.

68. The school enjoys excellent support from ancillary staff. Those providing classroom support are extremely conscientious. The school secretary is a real asset particularly in ensuring the day-to-day administration runs smoothly. The school is clean and is kept in good working order by an enthusiastic and helpful janitor. Accommodation places restrictions on the learning environment for pupils. Corridors and circulation spaces are congested and parts of the older original building are in need of refurbishment in terms of fixtures and fittings such as a modern writing board, display surfaces and shelving. The 'shared area' now serving as a reprographics/resource area is a potential fire hazard. In the newer area, the reception/Year1 class has no external access for outdoor play. Externally, the playground is bleak with no creative play facilities. The narrow shape of the hall inhibits movement in some gymnastics lessons in Key Stage 2. Learning resources are satisfactory, overall, but improvement is needed in the provision for computers and relevant software to meet the full requirements of information communication technology.

69. Current staff work hard to develop the necessary expertise to cover the whole curriculum. Opportunities to make permanent appointments in the future will, through a rigorous selection procedure, enable the curriculum expertise in the school to be further enhanced.

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

70. In order to enhance what the school does well and raise standards further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- **Raise the standards achieved by the high attaining pupils in mathematics and science by:**
  - monitoring their progress more closely; (*paragraphs 63, 120, 121, 122, 130*)
  - improving teacher knowledge and expertise in these curriculum areas, building further on the professional development programme now in place; (*paragraphs 36, 63, 121, 122, 125, 128, 131*)
  - ensuring that assessments are adequately reflected in short term plans; (*paragraphs 121, 122, 128, 130*)
  - raising the level of challenge in the work provided. (*paragraphs 10, 11, 114, 116, 121, 128*)
- **Raise standards and improve provision in information and communication technology by:**
  - ensuring pupils have sufficient, regular and appropriately challenging work; (*paragraphs 12, 36, 158, 160*)
  - making more effective use of existing computers and relevant software; (*paragraphs 36, 121, 162*)
  - accelerating the programme for the purchase of additional resources. (*paragraphs 68, 162*)
- **Improve the consistency of procedures for assessing and monitoring individual pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science to ensure that curriculum planning is more precise by:**
  - monitoring staff, including temporary staff, more closely to ensure they are keeping and making use of records;
  - collecting samples of pupils' work which describe and illustrate the expected standards;
  - monitoring lessons to ensure that provision is well matched to the needs of all pupils ensuring that work set is completed. (*paragraphs 9, 10, 63, 107, 121, 122, 128, 129*)
- **Develop a vision of the longer term view for the future of the school expressed in the School Development Plan by:**
  - consulting with all governors, parents, teachers and other interested parties;
  - extending the current priorities to include the longer term future of the school especially the development of the building and external provision for pupils. (*paragraphs 64, 67, 68*)

- **Improve relationships with a minority of parents who feel the school does not make sufficient effort to work closely with them by:**
  - seeking clarification of the issues involved;
  - clarifying the arrangements and channels of communication for parents to discuss their concerns and involving them in the work the school undertakes to resolve these concerns;
  - developing strategies that promote mutual respect.  
(paragraphs 56, 58, 66, 72)

**Although not identified as separate Key Issues, in preparing their action plan, governors should also pay attention to:**

Establishing clear guidance and policy on the arrangements for homework in order to reduce inconsistency and provide assurance that it will contribute towards raising standards.

Improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils on the playground, particularly at lunch-times.

Request a fire-risk assessment from the appropriate body.

## 71. PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

41

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

22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	29.3%	26.8%	36.6%	7.3%	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)		145
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		26

#### 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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5%
National comparative data	5.4%

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2%
National comparative data	0.5%

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	12	11	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	21	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91% (96%)	91% (96%)	100% (92%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (81%)	87% (84%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	10
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	21	21	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91% (96%)	91% (100%)	87% (96%)
	National	82% (81%)	86% (85%)	87% (86%)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	3	12	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	2	2
	Girls	12	10	12
	Total	14	12	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93% (88%)	80% (71%)	93% (65%)
	National	70% (65%)	69% (58%)	78% (69%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	2	3
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	13	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87% (65%)	93% (59%)	100% (69%)
	National	68% (65%)	69% (65%)	75% (72%)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	133
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: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29:1
Average class size	25.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	207,946
Total expenditure	206,494
Expenditure per pupil	1,497
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,940
Balance carried forward to next year	21,392

## 72. Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

	Number of questionnaires sent out				145
	Number of questionnaires returned				64
Percentage of responses in each category	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	52	5	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	50	8	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	44	18	8	6
The teaching is good.	48	35	10	6	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	40	11	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	34	6	8	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	40	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	48	6	15	2
The school is well led and managed.	24	50	10	13	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	45	10	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	38	21	15	5

*(Figures are rounded to whole numbers and may not always add up to 100%)*

### Other issues raised by parents

- The provision for pupils' outdoor play and the levels of supervision at lunch-times.
- The lack of provision of fire exits.
- Incidents of over boisterous behaviour on the playground.
- High staff turnover in recent years.
- Mixed aged classes.

Inspectors agree that measures should be taken to improve provision at lunch-times including taking appropriate action to curb over boisterous behaviour. This report recommends that the school should undertake a fire risk assessment. The turnover of staff has been due to staff illness or promotion and arrangements to provide alternative cover have been managed as well as could be expected. It is inevitable that a school the size of Gentleshaw Primary will need mixed aged classes in order to maximise resources but the school has a clear policy on admission to mixed aged classes to reduce the age span. There is no evidence that comments about standards in this report are as a direct result of mixed aged classes.

## 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**

#### **Provision**

73. At the time of the inspection there were eleven children under the age of five who were taught alongside those recently turned five together with eleven Year 1 pupils. There is no nursery provision at the school although children come to school having a nursery experience either at a nearby Local Education Authority nursery class or from the private and voluntary sector.

74. The initial attainment on entry to school shows that children's attainment is above average particularly in literacy. Children enter school when they are still under five years of age. The admission arrangements are sensitive. The induction process is carefully managed and extended by a programme of visits and information for parents. This ensures that good relationships are fostered from the beginning and helps children settle down quickly into school routines. Children make an excellent start to their education, where they achieve very well in all the areas of learning and are on course to at least meet or exceed the goals expected of five-year-olds.

75. The curriculum for the under-fives is securely linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes and is planned appropriately, taking good account of their prior attainment. The teaching and non-teaching staff have an excellent understanding of young children's needs and how they learn. They plan together effectively to provide the children with a good range of lively and interesting activities. These activities ensure that the children are actively engaged in their learning, beginning with early morning language and number activities. Teaching is mainly very good with a very effective support assistant who is well briefed and plays a full part in planning, organising, assessing and supporting children. Children are able to gain maximum benefit from their time in school because of the brisk pace, clear objectives, good organisation, and excellent support. Clear assessment of children's attainment helps to distinguish between those who require an early years' curriculum and those who are progressing onto the early levels of the National Curriculum. There are no children currently identified as having special educational needs but appropriate support is available to all pupils.

76. There are good procedures for assessing children's attainment on entry and these results inform the teacher's initial curriculum plans. Parents' views on their children are not fully discussed or used in this initial assessment process but there are plans to develop this. The teacher maintains detailed records on each child, which help her monitor the children's progress closely. Detailed planning and the excellent teamwork between all the adults involved, including volunteer helpers, ensure that all children experience a balanced range of activities.

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

77. Children come into school each morning eager to begin their early morning activities in numeracy and literacy. They work co-operatively, playing simple number games in small groups taking turns and sharing the equipment fairly. These activities are very well planned and classroom routines flow very smoothly. They show particular confidence in speaking and listening during the shared reading times, when they are encouraged to contribute their own imaginative ideas to the class discussion. Children working with the Roamer, [a toy designed to encourage simple programming] gave instructions with a clear purpose and a

certainty that they would achieve their goals. They use resources well and share them when their design tasks or creative endeavours require it. Staff encourage children to treat the many resources in their classroom with care and respect. They behave very well with each other or when working with their teacher, classroom assistant or parent volunteers. All the children in the group display remarkable perseverance in their work. Staff know the children very well. They observe their reactions carefully and ensure that good progress is made in personal and social skills.

### **Language and literacy**

78. When children start school they have language skills above those expected for children of four years of age, confirmed by the initial assessments used by the school. They are making good progress and are very well prepared for the work they will be expected to do in the National Literacy Strategy. Children come into school from supportive backgrounds and use their well-developed vocabulary to communicate effectively with everyone in class.

79. Pupils talk confidently to their teachers, to each other and to other adults in the class about a wide range of interesting things they have experienced. They join in the shared reading sessions included in the literacy hour and become familiar with well-known stories such as *The Gingerbread Man*, poems and non-fiction books on animals. They listen carefully and can recount the stories later, when asked. They answer questions eagerly and offer vivid suggestions when asked to predict what happens next or what the characters may say. Some children were amused by the 'silly' *Gingerbread Man* and thought about what 'sly' meant in relation to the fox. Skilful planning serves to emphasise language development through baking and modelling.

80. In music, children use the names of many of the instruments they play such as tambourine, Indian bells, drum and maracas. They know book terminology such as, cover, print, beginning, word and sentence. All children recognise their own names and many recognise simple words that appear around the class or in their books. Some try to read unfamiliar words independently, using context, picture and initial sounds. They use and enjoy a range of books understanding that pictures and words have meaning. The high attaining children in the group are already reading sections of familiar stories. All children are provided with a wealth of valuable reading experiences through the suitably adapted literacy sessions. The high quality reading resources available in the classroom help to develop a love of books, and promotes the good standards achieved. Many children write their names independently and clearly or write letters from their names without support. Writing in books shows that high attaining children make steady progress in skills from simple pencil markings to writing of simple words and sentences. Good pencil control is practised and encouraged to enable children to make good progress in their handwriting.

### **Mathematics**

81. Attainment and progress in mathematics is good, for children under five. Assessment on entry indicates that children have a number of gaps in their knowledge and experiences and overall is below that expected for this age. However, the teaching is good, supported effectively by the classroom assistant. These adults make effective use of demonstration and discussion. The teacher has a good knowledge of all the children and how they learn making the most of first hand learning experiences. This understanding results in clear assessment of pupils' needs and consequently they make good progress. The school provides a range of good quality mathematical experiences and encourages the development of a wide range of concepts. This is achieved through excellent planning which combines areas of learning. Children are presented with opportunities to count and

order numbers to twenty, matching number names to objects. They use money in their role play opportunities. Through the range of experiences, children use mathematical language, such as 'more and less' in solving their number problems and some recognise the vocabulary of addition. They describe shapes and position in gymnastics, they count the characters in their favourite stories and in baking and modelling they recognise that instructions have an order.

82. Expectations in class are high; lessons are interesting and move along at a brisk pace. For example, the opening activities of the Numeracy Strategy grab children's attention to focus on counting to ten and beyond, through lively, practical activities. Others in the group used the Roamer to calculate how many more to reach ten. Children use dice, counters and number lines effectively to help in their calculations or in their early morning mathematics games. They all knew their age, some very precisely [I am four and three quarters] and how long they have been at school. More able pupils count up to thirty and backwards from twenty. They join in with older children counting and adding in twos and tens. They recognise the symbols for add and equals as well as some odd and even numbers. These children worked through some problem solving activities involving counting numbers to ten. In baking and art activities children understood the practical application of counting, weighing and measuring. The excellent range of activities ensures that children make good progress. All children are now working to the levels expected for their age, though some are working well within Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

83. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops well, so that by the age of five most of them are attaining the outcomes expected, whilst some of them exceed these. Children discuss freely their experiences outside school. They talk about their families, their birthdays, Christmas celebrations and recent visits they have made to relatives, friends and to the shops. The enjoyable range of experiences offered to them draws on good links with previous work done in literacy and numeracy. Extending these activities allows children to investigate and discuss changes to materials, for example, when baking and when they enter instructions into the Roamer and predict the possible outcomes. Through skilful planning of language work, children have opportunities to consider the importance of cleaning, feeding and caring for a hamster. Children generate ideas in response to the problem posed and choose materials to help them achieve these ideas, for example, when designing and making a boat for the gingerbread man to get across the water. The lively and interesting environment created in the classroom enables children to explore everyday situations. Consequently children make good progress in this area of learning.

### **Physical development**

84. Children achieve at the expected level even though they have limited opportunity for planned outdoor play and exploration. The provision for such play is insufficient, although the current building work inhibits any plans for improvement in this area. Staff do, however, try to compensate by providing opportunities for the children to use the hall whenever possible so that they are able to develop an appropriate awareness of space and of other children around them. When they are indoors, either in the classroom, hall or using space in the corridors, children show a well-developed sense of space and good control of themselves, particularly when faced with the limitations imposed by the building. Although it was not possible to observe children performing their gymnastic or games activities, the teacher's plans for the term reveal continuous development. The activities planned are appropriate and challenging focusing on running, jumping, hopping and producing shapes and balances. In games pupils are expected to use balls to develop their control and skill. Fine motor skills are developed well, through the variety of well-organised and carefully supervised practical experiences, which require cutting, painting, modelling and writing.

Children are making good progress in this area.

85. Children record their experiences and imaginings in pencil and crayon in their books. They enjoy the freedom to paint large pictures with poster paint. They cut paper and card for their boats in design and technology and manipulate modelling materials and tools as seen when making characters from their story books.

### **Creative development**

86. Provision for creative development is good. Some children exceed the levels expected for their age. There is a wide variety of media and tools available for children to use for their art and craft work. These are very well organised and readily available in sufficient quantities. The teacher and classroom assistant provide a good range of experiences over time. These include exploring sound, colour, texture, shape and space. Opportunities are provided for experimenting but children are also taught specific skills such as modelling techniques. They also have the opportunity to look at the work of other artists. The support they receive from a number of adults is excellent and encourages children to discuss their activities, listen to others and express themselves freely. Although they had examined examples of completed models many children wished to express themselves in their own way. Good opportunities are presented for children to use and respond to a variety of musical instruments. They sing a selection of simple songs with their teacher and in the school assemblies. Progress in creative development is good.

87. Pupils achieve very well in all the areas of learning and are on course to at least meet or exceed the goals expected of five-year-olds.

88. The school makes effective provision for the early years of their education. However, the school does not provide an appropriate area for safe outdoor play and exploration, nor is there sufficient and suitable large play equipment.

### **ENGLISH**

89. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven show that overall standards are well above the average nationally and average when compared with similar schools.

90. At the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level for seven year olds in reading and writing at Level 2 was above the national average and when compared to similar schools these results were broadly average. However, pupils reaching the higher level [Level 3] were well below the national average in reading and below the average in writing. Taking all grades into account, when compared with similar schools standards in both reading and writing for 1999 tests were well below the average. Trends over the past four years have been higher than those nationally, apart from 1999 when a dip in standards in reading brought the average point score in line with the national average.

91. The results of the 1999 tests taken by last year's cohort of Year 6 pupils show that the standard was broadly average when compared with similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level [Level 4] was well above the national average and also well above the average for similar schools. Although the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was close to the national average it was well below the average for similar schools. Trends over the last four years have tended to fluctuate due to the size of the cohort but are consistently higher than the national average.

92. Findings from the inspection confirm that pupils' standards in English are above average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school has made a

concerted effort to raise standards even further, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs and also for the high attaining pupils. Efforts have also been made to raise standards in writing throughout the school. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been effective and gives teaching a focus and direction. English on the whole is well taught and the introduction of the literacy hour has been beneficial to planning, continuity and delivery of the curriculum. By the end of Year 6, the pupils read and write well and their research work and written evaluations in history and religious education are very good. Pupils' presentation skills are very high. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in English throughout the school.

93. Attainment in speaking and listening is above average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils listen attentively, and respond eagerly and confidently in class. They express their ideas in a mature and interesting way, using a rich and varied vocabulary. They are enthusiastic participants in their literacy sessions. They listen with rapt attention to traditional stories offering imaginative suggestions when predicting what might happen next.

94. In reading, attainment at Key Stage 1 is now well above the national average but some pupils do not regularly practise reading independently, while a few others fail to read books that challenge them. The majority of children display a genuine love and interest in books. From the reception class and throughout the key stage, many children read their books fluently, accurately and with good expression. They confidently choose from a range of graded fiction. Children use phonic knowledge, graphics and pictures to help them tackle unfamiliar words. From a young age they use correct terminology when talking about books. Many pupils are able to discuss the settings of stories and offer opinions about their favourite characters with ease.

95. Pupils' writing by the end of Key Stage 1 is now above average and most pupils can independently write basic vocabulary and sentences with a good level of accuracy, not just in their English books but also in other subject areas. Spelling is of a satisfactory standard. In Year 1, children write their own versions of familiar stories developing structure and sequence of events, logically. They display a good grasp of character, sequence and story setting when retelling the stories. Children use phonic strategies, their own word books and simple dictionaries as well as the printed captions around the room, to help in their spelling. Pupils in Year 2 achieved well in exploring the functions of a dictionary when defining words and investigating the meaning of topical words. They write and present in a 'published' form their own stories, and detailed accounts of their Christmas holiday. They use capital letters and full stops but not always correctly. They write for a variety of purposes in different areas of the curriculum, such as history and religious education. Some of this writing shows good attempts at listing the main points, for example in demonstrating their understanding of Louie Braille. A good handwriting style is established from the beginning and continues to develop as children progress through Key Stage 1. Most pupils write legibly and correctly using upper and lower case letters. Some children attempt to join their script but they are not yet comfortable in using a cursive style for all purposes. Older children's writing often lacks lively, imaginative content developed to a sufficient length.

96. In Key Stage 2, pupils are good at listening and are confident in speaking in class. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 in these aspects of English is above average. Most pupils use a range of language to convey their ideas effectively. They offer thoughtful and imaginative contributions to class discussions. Pupils in Year 6 shared their own views and ideas on how best to manipulate words and used rhythm when creating their own poetry in the Japanese Haiku style.

97. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 is above average. Pupils read a



wide variety of materials with fluency and good understanding. Many recognise genre and choose books well. The number of books available for older pupils offers a limited choice for some which inhibits their interest. Many opportunities for researching information to support their studies in history and religious education are provided across the key stage. Pupils enjoy the variety of literature, including a good range of poetry they study in class, but a few do not read regularly and independently, for interest and enjoyment.

98. Attainment in writing at Key Stage 2 is also above average. At the end of the key stage, pupils can organise their ideas logically, use punctuation and paragraphing correctly, and write neatly to present their work to a high standard. Spelling throughout Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Pupils show their ability to choose words carefully, as in their poetry, when the words and rhythm are important considerations. Pupils are able to successfully construct detailed accounts based on evidence they examined relating to the Tudors. The breadth of writing in Year 6 is limited, with little evidence of persuasive argument or review. For example, pupils' reading logs contain brief comments about books, but opportunities to develop and refine their personal responses to a text, are overlooked. There are, however, excellent opportunities for using writing skills to enhance learning in other subjects. In their accounts of The Flight into Egypt and their descriptions of Jewish Festivals, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used drafting and extended writing opportunities to write with attention to detail and language. There is no significant variation in attainment of boys and girls in either key stage in English.

99. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes to learning are good and in some classes very good. At both key stages most pupils behave well in their English lessons. They settle down quickly to their work and take a full and active part in the literacy sessions. They have good relationships with staff and each other. The majority of pupils consistently approach their work with interest and conscientiously complete their tasks. They contribute ideas openly and display a mature respect for the contribution of others. A few children cause minor disruptions when they talk needlessly.

100. The quality of teaching is good overall in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Occasionally teaching is good or very good, particularly in Key Stage 1 where pupils achieve well and make good progress. Where teaching was unsatisfactory it was because the activities set for pupils did not offer sufficient challenge in relation to what they already knew. Successful lessons occur when they are well planned, interesting, lively and capture children's imagination. Permanent and experienced teachers are confident, know and understand their pupils' learning needs and express high expectations. Successful teaching is characterised by high quality oral work. Older Key Stage 1 pupils, when presented with a problem, debated ordering children's names beginning with the letter 'J' into a correct alphabetical order. Year 4 pupils shared their versions of a fairy story offering interesting and colourful adjectives following the teacher's reading of a shared text. This was seen in most literacy lessons, particularly in the whole class work and plenary sessions. Most teachers encourage pupils to contribute and become actively engaged. This produced high levels of motivation and sustained concentration. As a result good progress is made in understanding a range of texts, story, poetry and non-fiction. Literacy lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to hear and share views with others in the class.

101. In whole class lessons teachers demonstrate very effectively how to follow the text. They read punctuation from the shared big book and in the guided reading and demonstrate how to use a dictionary. Classroom assistants and volunteer helpers make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils in reading and writing. Teachers and classroom assistants carefully guide the development of phonological awareness for children in the early stages of reading. Lessons are very well organised, usually well delivered and pupils

are well managed most of the time. There were a few occasions in both key stages when noisy interruptions were allowed to slow down the pace of learning.

102. Most pupils take their books home regularly and receive valuable support. However, some home school reading diaries are not sufficiently monitored and as a consequence some children do not regularly receive additional help in their reading. Pupils in Year 3 working with the additional literacy support assistant, make good progress in developing their reading strategies.

103. In Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils gain experience of extending their reading, through class or group work sharing a variety of texts, led by their teacher. Most pupils make good progress in these sessions where teachers provide opportunities for reinforcing grammar, punctuation and vocabulary as well as giving pupils experience of books of greater richness and complexity. However, pupils' independent reading habits are insufficiently monitored by teachers. This results in limited challenge given to the high attaining and older pupils, as well as to some individuals in all classes who are not yet committed, enthusiastic or confident readers. High attaining pupils do not reflect on or analyse the books they read in depth, or sufficiently expand the range and length of their reading. Others are unhappy with the choice of books available and lack direction in choosing suitable material.

104. By the time pupils are eleven they have made good progress in developing their writing skills. Teachers use the shared sessions and guided reading to explain and clarify the way different kinds of writing are used to serve different purposes. When expectations are high pupils meet the challenge by producing work of good quality.

105. Pupils expressed perceptive ideas as they compared the story of Beowulf, The Glass Cupboard and others in the same genre. The class then began re-writing the middle and end, after reading extracts describing features of good and evil. There are other good opportunities provided for broader and sustained writing experiences in history and religious education, when writing is used as a tool to help pupils' thinking, investigating, organising and learning. On these occasions older pupils make good and occasionally very good progress.

106. All teachers in the school ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the focus of the lesson and know what they should be doing. Plans define a clear objective for the lesson and the activities that groups will undertake. There is, however, inconsistency in the detail given to explain what pupils of different abilities will learn. Resources are well prepared and easily available so that time is well used. Teachers across the school use the plenary session of the literacy hour very well. They stimulate and extend pupils' contributions and encourage them to discuss and evaluate their work. This gives an excellent opportunity to review progress and make informal assessments on pupils' learning. Marking in some classes confirms the key learning points and indicates further improvements. Marking in this way is not consistently applied however, across the school and in some books there is too much unfinished work. This inconsistency inhibits the progress in writing, particularly amongst the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 and at the lower end of Key Stage 2. Although the school encourages reading at home, pupils' home-school reading diaries are not regularly monitored in all classes. The school is currently developing a consistent system across the school, for monitoring, assessing and recording pupils' skill development. This is to include setting realistic targets for individuals and for groups to achieve.

107. The headteacher and co-ordinator have led and managed the introduction of the literacy hour very well. The introduction of the literacy hour has been very successful right across the school. The literacy strategy is helping to establish continuity of planning and

teaching throughout the school and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. The detailed planning of precise learning objectives, particularly for groups of different ages and abilities requires more attention. The direction of in-service training and quality of support offered to staff has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Further development is needed particularly in expanding teachers' subject knowledge and expertise so that they are able to successfully challenge high attaining pupils. Whole school monitoring of English is good and should be extended to identify in a more focused way precise learning objectives for the high attaining pupils.

108. Resources used in classes are satisfactory. Reading areas are often well ordered and attractive but not so in all classes. In general the selection of reading books offers a well ordered, reasonable and interesting choice to pupils, but provision for all levels of ability particularly at Key Stage 2 is inconsistent. A new library area has been provided which is attractive and well resourced but as yet is not a feature of pupils' learning. Information technology has very little impact on learning in English.

109. Since the last inspection many improvements have been made in raising standards for all pupils and in particular those with special educational needs and pupils of higher ability. At present this improvement has been most significant for pupils with special educational needs. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has contributed to improvements especially in the teaching of writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

110. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds show that overall standards, when taking into account all grades, are average compared with schools nationally but below average when compared with similar schools.

111. At the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was very high compared with the national average, with the percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels broadly similar to the national average. Teacher assessments particularly in using and applying mathematics reflect this picture. However, when compared with similar schools the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was below average.

112. At the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was above the national average but a below average number of pupils attained the higher levels. Results in mathematics over the past four years have never been lower than the national average and trends have tended to follow the national picture. Over the same period boys tend to do better than girls except in 1999 when girls did better. Overall, boys perform better than the national average for boys, and girls are close to their average nationally.

113. During the inspection, observation in lessons and analysis of work of current pupils on roll confirms that the majority of current pupils are meeting the national standards and that overall attainment is above average in both key stages.

114. In Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well and make good progress. In Year 1, pupils show confidence in their counting skills and a good understanding of tens and units, including counting in tens and doubling of numbers up to thirty. Recorded work shows a range of activities aimed at securing pupils' understanding of number pattern, common number bonds, simple addition and subtraction activities involving a range of related vocabulary. Pupils are beginning to acquire the skills of estimating and approximating and most are proficient in the use of number lines as an aid to counting activities. They are introduced to the skills of measuring and most pupils are familiar with the full range of coins. By Year 2 most pupils have a secure understanding of place value up to a hundred and some beyond this; they can add and subtract multiples of ten and a hundred; they have a firm grasp of odd and even numbers, and are beginning to use standardised measures with a degree of accuracy. Most pupils are able to identify and name common regular shapes and solids. However, the progress made by some high attaining pupils is not sufficient. Activities set for these pupils are not demanding enough to assure they reach Level 3 standard. The pupils do not receive enough tasks to enable them to engage in abstract mental calculation and the strategies they need to produce accurate answers.

115. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have made satisfactory progress in their learning and have acquired a good understanding of the number system involving very large numbers. They are able to manipulate numbers mentally and explain precisely how they arrive at their answers. The majority of pupils can use pencil and paper methods to record and explain calculations in all four rules of number including decimals. Recorded work in pupils' books over the past two terms is impressive. It shows progress across the full range of programmes of study in mathematics. For example, in Years 3 and 4 the majority of pupils have made good progress and show good understanding of data collection and interpretation, properties of regular shapes, construction of shapes, fractions, simple multiplication and division, addition and subtraction calculations involving three digit numbers and a variety of tasks supporting a developing understanding of place value. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' recorded work shows good progress and development on previous work including work on integers, negative numbers and rounding numbers up and down to include decimals. Work also shows a good understanding of the principles of multiplication, the concept of area, equivalent fractions, percentages, properties of regular solids, plotting co-ordinates, square and triangular numbers. Most work is well presented and marking is thorough and includes constructive and supportive teacher comments. Some of the Year 4 work is less well presented.

116. There are some gaps, however, in pupils' understanding, in particular their knowledge of standardised measures. Some pupils are not confident in demonstrating a practical understanding of weight, distance or capacity. Similarly, by Year 6, pupils are not sufficiently confident in their mental ability to quickly calculate problems involving larger numbers. Some high attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged by the rigour of mathematics needed to acquire Level 5. Homework and other out-of-school activities in mathematics are not used enough to extend mathematical thinking. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work on open-ended tasks or to apply the skills they have learned and to solve mathematical problems.

117. The previous inspection report said that standards were sound in both key stages and that progress was satisfactory throughout the school. There have been all round improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the progress made by pupils having special educational needs which was judged to be unsatisfactory. Although there has been an increase in the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills through investigations, the emphasis placed on this area of mathematics is still insufficient. This is

particularly so amongst some high attaining pupils.

118. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is mainly good and very good in Year 1. This part of the school benefits from the experience of the mathematics co-ordinator who has a good understanding of how pupils learn and who has been strong in ensuring the benefits of the National Numeracy Strategy have a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils are managed well and good use is made of other adults including parents in supporting groups of pupils in their learning. In one very good lesson objectives were well focused on counting to thirty and backwards from twenty. The activity grabbed the pupils' attention and from their response it was clear they enjoyed the challenge which also gave opportunities for them to discuss their knowledge of odd and even numbers. In another lesson, the teacher had carefully prepared materials to pursue the concept of odd and even numbers and this was later linked to activities involving doubling. In the warm up session on this occasion pupils sat in a circle with teacher-prepared number cards and they had to listen carefully to the responses of others before making their contribution. This activity was much enjoyed by the pupils due to the good relationships they had with their teacher. However, there are occasions when some Year 2 pupils are not fully involved in their lessons and are allowed to become too noisy when engaged in group activities. Generally, the vast majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy their mathematics and are willing to participate eagerly in whole class activities. Expectations are mainly high, as the quality of ongoing assessment by teachers is good.

119. In Key Stage 2, teaching overall is mainly satisfactory but in some lessons, particularly in Years 4 and 6, teaching is good with high demands being made on the majority of pupils. For example, in Year 4, a brisk warm up session challenged pupils to counting on in tens starting from quite large 4 digit numbers. Later in the session the teacher's enthusiasm led pupils to recall their understanding of multiples and square numbers. Similarly, in a carefully worked out class lesson in Year 6 the teacher challenged pupils by selecting a target 3 digit number and inviting them to apply their knowledge and understanding of the four rules of number to manipulate random digits to arrive closest to the target number. In both of these lessons the majority of pupils made good progress particularly in the oral work when they were asked to explain how they had arrived at their answers. The two temporary teachers in Key Stage 2 respond well to the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy. In Year 3, pupils are continuing to make steady progress despite several interruptions due to a succession of supply teachers in this class.

120. The structure of the numeracy lesson is beginning to have its impact in terms of clarity of purpose. For example, teachers make clear the objectives at the start of each lesson and evaluate progress towards the end. This technique contributes significantly towards the progress made in lessons. Invariably the pace of lessons is good and pupils participate enthusiastically in oral contributions demonstrating their thinking skills and what they already know. Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes to mathematics and respond well. Good questioning, particularly in the Year 4/5 class impacts considerably on the improvement of pupils' mental agility when asked to recall and articulate how they have arrived at answers. Pupils in this class enjoy being challenged. Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are conscientious and show a very good attitude to their work. In Year 6, expectations are high for the majority of pupils but there is insufficient targeting of those pupils who could attain Level 5 in the forthcoming National Curriculum tests.

121. Throughout Key Stage 2, teachers demonstrate an improving ability to run brisk lessons to which the majority of pupils respond well. Pupils are keen to succeed and take advice readily on how to improve their work. However, there are instances particularly in Years 3 and 5 where tasks given to the high attaining pupils are insufficiently demanding.

Whilst lesson planning is generally good in all lessons, objectives set are not cross-referenced with the objectives in the Numeracy Strategy Framework. This makes monitoring of the mathematics by the management of the school unnecessarily difficult. Assessments, both ongoing and those at the end of the year, do not play a strong enough role in determining priority learning objectives, particularly in the case of the high attaining pupils where there is insufficient monitoring of the progress needed to assure the higher levels in National Curriculum tests. Homework in mathematics is inconsistently applied and does not contribute sufficiently to the progress that pupils make. The use made of information and communication technology to support both teaching and learning in mathematics is poor.

122. Mathematics is well led in the school and teachers' planning and curriculum balance is carefully monitored. Plans are in place for the Summer Term 2000 to monitor teaching within numeracy lessons. The management of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been good and ideas on best practice have been disseminated well to teachers through staff training. Profiles are kept on pupils' attainment based on tests given but this has yet to be translated into specific curriculum targets for individual or groups of pupils. The school does not make use of the optional National Curriculum tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 but there are plans to do so in the near future.

## **SCIENCE**

123. In the 1999 teacher assessments for Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils who reached the expected level was in line with the national average but well below that achieved by similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was above the national average and broadly in line with similar schools.

124. The Key Stage 2 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds showed that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was well above the national average, and above average when compared to similar schools. This was a considerable improvement on the 1998 result. The performance of pupils at the higher Level 5 in the Key Stage 2 tests was very low compared with the national average and well below average compared to similar schools. The improvement over the past four years is broadly in line with the national trend. Despite the large increase in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 in the 1999 tests with so few pupils achieving Level 5, the school performs well below similar schools when measured using average points.

125. Overall, the standards of work seen in science are above average in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupil attainment in the areas of scientific knowledge and understanding is good. Pupils make too little progress in acquiring the skills of scientific investigation and working independently due to the programme of work in Key Stage 2 which does not adequately build on pupils' attainments in this area.

126. Pupils in Key Stage 2 can recall their work on the human body and can name the major organs. Pupils present their work neatly and methodically. They are able to use scientific terms such as filtration and evaporation in their work on materials and are clear about their meaning. They understand what causes the seasons, and in their work on sound they know that vibrations can travel through different materials. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to make simple observations of how materials change and are learning to record their work independently. Pupils in Key Stage 2 can describe a fair test and give reasons why it is important that investigations are conducted fairly. Within the context of their given practical tasks pupils are able to handle and use resources sensibly and with due care.

127. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Lessons have clear aims and pupils are clear about the purpose of lessons and the work they have to undertake. In most lessons resources are sufficient, well organised, appropriate and readily accessible. In the one unsatisfactory lesson there were too few resources and this led to difficulties in managing pupils and tasks resulting in lost time and a slow pace. Teachers have sufficient knowledge to deliver the school's scheme of work. They make appropriate use of scientific vocabulary and use questions to ensure pupils understand their work as seen, for example, in the teaching on sound and in the way materials change.

128. The school's scheme for science ensures that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements. The provision made by the school is sufficiently progressive for pupils to make gains in their knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and physical processes. Pupils are regularly engaged in scientific investigations, but these experiences do not provide sufficient opportunities for them to develop their independence. The teaching of scientific investigation as pupils move through Key Stage 2 fails to adequately build on pupils' prior attainment and is insufficiently challenging for some pupils.

129. Pupils in all year groups are able to acquire and recall science knowledge. Pupils have good attitudes to science and they are pleased to engage in practical work. They co-operate sensibly with adults and other pupils. When they are given the opportunity they are able to work independently although some pupils do not always apply themselves as readily as they might.

130. The school has satisfactory arrangements for the assessment and reporting of pupils' progress. Too little emphasis is given to using these assessments to inform curriculum planning. The result of this is that work is not always well matched to pupils' abilities. This is most noticeable in Attainment Target 1 [Scientific Investigations] in the later years of Key Stage 2. The school should clarify its expectations of standards of health and safety required for practical work.

131. The school has made progress in developing science through its strategic plan. This has led to a revision to the scheme of work and some in-service training for staff. The next steps in the plan have been delayed due to circumstances beyond the school's control, but the headteacher is fully aware of what now needs to be done.

## **ART**

132. It was possible only to observe an art lesson in one class in Key Stage 1 but a review of pupils' work, teachers' plans and discussions with teachers and pupils show that pupils have worthwhile experiences of art in both key stages and make satisfactory progress in learning.

133. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the standards attained across the school even though the school has experienced substantial changes in staff. Standards of work seen in Key Stage 1 meet those expected for most children, whilst some examples at the early stages are of a good quality and indicate higher standards. There is some variation in standards in work seen between classes. Pupils in Year 1 use a variety of materials, experiment with tools and techniques in their drawing, they engage in painting, collage and simple sculpture. Work seen involving Gingerbread models, showed detailed consideration of hair, facial features and clothing. As part of the lessons, pupils considered similar work done by an adult using the same material before beginning their own creations.

All pupils in Key Stage 1 understand that art can look different depending on the medium used. For example, a display of stained glass effects using tissue paper was designed after studying photographs of Chagall's window designs. Year 2 pupils represent ideas in a variety of ways, developing their cutting, drawing and close observation skills using different materials. This work arose as a result of their science investigations culminating in a display of silhouettes.

134. In Key Stage 2 standards from the work around school are meeting the expectations for pupils by the time they reach the end of the key stage. Pupils' work in a variety of media use sketchbooks, first hand experiences and study the work of artists as a source of inspiration for their own work. The range of work available in portfolios and displays confirms pupils make sound progress overall with examples of work indicating good progress as illustrated through work completed by pupils in Years 3 and 4 on their local environmental project [Gawain Project]. The work produced was of large-scale designs of stained glass windows using acrylic paints on heavy-duty tracing paper. The final display was of a good standard. This project gave pupils the opportunity to experiment with ideas, colour and design. They were called upon to observe the environment, make a record of their experiences and use their imaginations to create their designs. Portraits done by pupils in Year 5 show experiments with the Pop Art style of David Hockney. Pupils in Year 6 use their well-developed painting skills when experimenting with stretched paper and watercolour to represent their experiences and impressions following an outdoor visit. Some observations in older pupils' sketchbooks are recorded carefully taking particular notice of the line and shape.

135. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are enthusiastic about the art. They listen carefully and examine the artefacts they are shown asking questions such as 'How do you make the hair?' They discussed ways to solve the problems presented by the medium, with the teacher and other adults. All children concentrated on the task in hand for a considerable amount of time. They all persevered until they achieved their desired effect. Year 1 pupils explained clearly how they would continue to improve their models after the hardening process. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were able to remember what techniques and materials they had used in their paintings and models. They enjoy using their skills to record and illustrate their work in history and geography and are proud of the display of portraits depicting Tudor costumes which show fine brush work and detail. Pupils take care of exhibits and unfinished work around school and in class. Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development, and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

136. In the small amount of teaching observed the quality was good. It showed effective demonstration, clear learning objectives and good links to other subjects, especially literacy. Good classroom organisation provides appropriate support and time for children to explore, experiment and complete their work. Adult helpers in the class are well briefed, talented and effective. Good art resources are available for children to use easily. Planning throughout the school is clear and well structured and includes assessment opportunities. It is often linked via cross-curricular themes to design and technology, history and geography.

137. Standards of display in classes vary too much and not all teachers are pursuing the standards of the best. Some teachers keep a range of work but there is no consistent practice across the school. Assessment in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent and lacks guidance from someone with expertise.

138. Unfortunately there is no one available at present to co-ordinate and lead the



subject. Although the policy and scheme of work are ready for review they are serving the staff adequately. When the review takes place and a co-ordinator is appointed, it will be important to ensure that pupils of all ages have sufficient experience of three-dimensional work and to avoid mere copying of an artist's work. Pupils' sketchbooks are currently used inconsistently and could be more extensively used.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

139. Standards of work by the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with that expected nationally. Reception pupils are able to generate ideas in response to a problem and are able to choose materials to help them achieve their idea. They can explain the purpose of their models and can cut and fix materials with adult help. When working with food, Year 2 pupils are able to draw their ideas in the form of a simple plan. Some pupils can draw very clear diagrams, which show their intentions. Pupils can make evaluations of products giving sensible reasons for their choices.

140. Pupils of all abilities are enthusiastic about their design and technology lessons, which clearly they find interesting. They enjoy making things and they co-operate sensibly with others. They are able to sustain their concentration and persevere with their given tasks. They handle resources with due care, and act with a degree of independence. Their behaviour in lessons is good.

141. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is very good and it ensures that pupils make good progress in the time available. Tasks have clear purpose and are well resourced. Due care and attention was paid to health and safety. There are good levels of supervision and adults make a very good contribution to lessons.

142. In Key Stage 2 there was insufficient evidence available during the inspection to make a reliable judgement on standards or work and pupils' progress.

143. The school provides a programme of design and technology for all year groups which when taken together meet statutory requirements. Pupils work with a range of materials, including food, textiles, clay and craft materials. The curriculum that the school provides is generally progressive but needs to be more closely monitored against the National Curriculum programme of study to ensure it is challenging for all pupils.

144. There is little formal assessment of pupils' progress in design and technology. There is insufficient monitoring of pupils' attainments against national expectations in order that curriculum planning is precisely informed. There is a health and safety policy but the school does not provide staff with additional guidance on practical work to ensure that expectations in these matters are clear.

145. The recently appointed co-ordinator has the expertise to lead the subject. The school's strategic plan has identified a review of the curriculum to incorporate the new national requirements for September 2000 onwards. A clear statement of how the arrangements in design and technology are to be developed will help the school to raise standards further.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

146. It was possible to see only two Key Stage 2 lessons in geography during the inspection period. Evidence from pupils' work in books, their work on display throughout the school and detail from teachers' plans indicate that standards in geography are in line with national expectations at Key Stage 1 and often above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

147. The oldest Key Stage 2 pupils have good locational knowledge, apply map skills competently and analyse data effectively. For example, this is very evident from work on industry and occupations in the local area. Pupils compare and contrast the lives of people and environments, for example in St. Lucia and the UK, drawing conclusions which often demonstrates good levels of knowledge and understanding. Year 6 pupils apply knowledge from enquiry tasks to explain, often in good detail, the effects of human processes on the environment and the economy in their work on industry in St. Lucia.

148. Pupils display keen interest in geography and take pride in the high standard of presentation of their work. They show independence in note taking and present their findings in a variety of styles. On occasion higher attaining Year 5 pupils are insufficiently challenged. For example, the work observed on rivers involved closed tasks that did not provide opportunities for pupils to achieve at higher levels or engage in enquiry. Attitudes of pupils to geography are very good.

149. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good and teachers have very good subject knowledge. Teachers' planning is also very good and it ensures that pupils make good progress through the programme of study. Teachers use geographical questions skilfully to promote thinking and problem solving. They engage pupils in investigative tasks, deploy a good range of resources to enliven the study of geography and usually set tasks which encourage all pupils to achieve. Teachers set clear objectives for older pupils and engage them in an evaluation of how well they have met these objectives. The teaching of geography makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills, particularly to research skills and note taking. Pupils understand the importance of organising and communicating information and the use of appropriate geographical terminology. Numeracy skills are enhanced through tasks involving data analysis tasks of occupations and weather. The use of day-to-day assessment to inform future planning and identify areas where pupils might improve their work is inconsistent between classes resulting in some pupils sometimes being insufficiently challenged. While some work is thoroughly marked with indications of what pupils need to do to improve, there are examples of very limited feedback to pupils on their written work. There is insufficient use of the rich geographical resource provided by information and communication technology.

150. The subject is very well co-ordinated by a well-qualified geography specialist. There is good monitoring of planning to ensure learning objectives are clearly set, although there is currently no monitoring of teaching or pupils' learning outcomes.

151. There has been significant progress since the last inspection where progress was sometimes limited by inappropriate tasks. Most tasks are now designed to extend children's thinking skills and provide opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to achieve at a good level. Extension tasks are provided and pupils with special educational needs have good support to achieve at a level appropriate to them.

## **HISTORY**

152. It was only possible to see two lessons at Key Stage 2 in history. The range of evidence considered from work in pupils' books, on display and from teachers' planning indicates that standards are average by the end of Key Stage 1 and are above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

153. In Key Stage 1, pupils gain good levels of knowledge and understanding of the lives and achievements of famous people, for example, Louise Braille and Pasteur and many communicate what they have learned effectively in writing. Year 6 pupils work competently with a range of evidence on aspects of life in Tudor times and draw valid and informed conclusions from the evidence. Many communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in extended writing at an above average level. Pupils respond well to the subject, show a keen interest; take pride in their well presented work; make good progress and are keen to communicate their knowledge and understanding of topics studied. They often pose searching questions related to the evidence they consider.

154. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan their lessons effectively to ensure the pupils make good progress through the programme of study. They use skilful and well directed questions, and engage pupils in evaluation of a very good range of historical evidence. Pupils are frequently challenged to think and to achieve well. Teachers set investigative tasks which ensure that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are able to achieve at a good level, and therefore make good progress. Pupils produce some very good extended written accounts. This is a result of stimulating teaching which engages them in consideration of a good range of evidence and emphasises the importance of use of language in history. Pupils' literacy skills and understanding of historical terminology are well developed in this context.

155. However, formative assessment is not used well to inform teachers' planning and to show pupils how they might further improve. There is limited use of information and communication technology to enrich history teaching.

156. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection when tasks set in history were sometimes not matched to the ability and needs of pupils. The school engages pupils in investigative tasks which challenge the higher attaining pupils to achieve at a good level. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported with differentiated tasks and additional teacher guidance. They engage in discussion and make good progress.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

157. Standards in information technology in Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are below that which are expected nationally.

158. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have made insufficient progress in their knowledge and understanding of information technology. They fail to develop the independence to work with and use computers and programs with the required confidence and understanding. Pupils' knowledge of the range of information technology applications is limited. Their word processing skills are under-developed and many do not know how to perform common operations such as cutting and pasting one piece of text to another part of a story. They have too few opportunities to combine different types of

information, such as words and pictures into a document, or to add, amend and interrogate information that has been stored.

159. The work seen in reception and Key Stage 1 lessons was often good. Pupils using the 'Roamer Turtle' could give clear instructions with purpose and with confidence. They are able to describe their work and share their ideas with others. They are beginning to learn how to use information technology to communicate and handle information. The information technology work observed in both key stages was linked to pupils work in other areas of the curriculum.

160. The quality of teaching is good in reception and in Key Stage 1. It is characterised by a very good pupil to teacher ratio, clear tasks, good resources and work pitched at an appropriate level. Where adults, other than the teacher, were used to work with children they were well briefed and managed pupils well. In Key Stage 2, because the programme of work did not systematically develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, the teaching was unsatisfactory.

161. The school has revised its information technology scheme of work and this forms the basis of the programme of work for pupils that meets statutory requirements. It provides guidance to teachers on the work to be covered in each year group. The scheme lacks precision and too little is done to ensure that pupils in all year groups receive sufficient, regular and appropriately challenging work. The arrangements for assessing pupils' capability in information technology and monitoring their progress are unsatisfactory, although in reception and Key Stage 1 coverage is well monitored by teachers. The consequence of these shortcomings is that the work planned by teachers does not sufficiently develop pupils' knowledge and skills as they progress through the school.

162. The school has a strategic plan, which has been consistently implemented. This has led to some recent improvements in teacher expertise and resources. The plan is ultimately dependent upon the additional resource input for the school as part of a national initiative for information technology scheduled in 2001. The current provision of computer resources is limited and variable in quality. They are, however, in working order but insufficient use was made of them during the inspection.

163. Many pupils have positive attitudes to information technology and are keen to learn. Many have developed knowledge and skills through their work at home. Their experiences at school do not adequately build on this.

164. There is insufficient teacher expertise in information technology. The co-ordinator has made a useful start in defining staff needs as part of the strategic development. The school is linked to the internet and a club has been established to promote its use. Older pupils benefit from this provision.

## **MUSIC**

165. Only one music lesson was observed in each key stage and it is not possible to form an accurate overall judgement on standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers' timetables show that all classes receive one music lesson a week and this is confirmed in the schools' planning arrangements.

166. Year 1 pupils enjoy singing especially to action rhymes and participate well in lessons involving younger under-fives. Most pupils can name the percussion instruments they play such as the tambourine, Indian bells and maracas. Clear instructions are given to

the children on how to hold and strike the instruments. Due to very good teaching efforts are made to ensure that the low attaining pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, make appropriate gains from the lesson. The listening skills of pupils of this age are very well developed and they are rapidly learning the importance of co-operative playing to enhance the sounds and rhythms they create. Pupils respond well to their teacher's suggestions on how they might improve the sounds they create. Opportunities created by the teacher for pupils to demonstrate their playing to others made a positive impact on the progress made by most pupils in the lesson.

167. Year 4/5 pupils made sound progress in a lesson involving duration of notes. By using football chants they were able to experiment with length of note and use symbols to record their creations, some of which were quite imaginative and indeed authentic to the game. Pupils demonstrated good understanding of rhythm and pitch encouraged by the enthusiasm of the teacher. The majority of the pupils are prepared to offer plenty of their own ideas and interpretations for symbols and contribute positively to the lesson. The teaching in this lesson was satisfactory.

168. In both lessons observed, pupils showed good levels of control over rhythm and pitch. Their attitude is good and they show a very good response to music. Pupils enjoy the activities created for them by their teachers and partake with enthusiasm.

169. In assemblies pupils sing familiar hymns to a good standard. Singing is taught weekly by the headteacher. The school also receives the services of three peripatetic teachers who provide brass, woodwind and string tuition to a small group of pupils. The school also teaches the recorder to all pupils in Key Stage 2 and as the pupils become more experienced they are placed into groups depending upon the standard acquired. The standard of playing of the advanced group comprising an enthusiastic group of boys and girls under the leadership of the headteacher is very good.

170. Teaching of music in Key Stage 1 is very good and the one lesson observed in Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. Musical expertise of staff is variable and efforts have been made to compensate for this through the use of a commercial scheme of work for music which in itself does not compensate for personal enthusiasm and demonstration by the teacher. Little monitoring of pupils' skills in music takes place. There is some evidence in teachers' planning for opportunities for concentrated listening to good quality recorded music to enhance pupils' cultural development.

171. Although the school has a keyboard little evidence was seen that extensive use is made of this aspect of music. Similarly the use of new technology and software to enhance music creation has not been developed. Resources are just about satisfactory and include a small range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

172. It was not possible to see the full range of activities in physical education during the inspection or to see any activities undertaken by pupils in Key Stage 1. The focus was therefore in Key Stage 2 with lessons in gymnastics and swimming across all classes observed.

173. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are good. In swimming lessons pupils achieve a good standard with the majority of pupils swimming with confidence at least 25 metres. Older pupils swim unaided for long periods of time, they use arm and leg actions while lying on their front and back with recognised well formed swimming strokes. Competent swimmers are also able to float and practice surface dives. In gymnastics, pupils achieve standards that are in line with national expectations. In some aspects of their movements pupils achieved high standards.

174. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 develop and improve a sequence of travelling movements taking their weight on different parts of the body. Year 6 pupils working in pairs practise and perform their own created sequence of balances, concentrating on the quality of their movements. The limited space in the hall prevents pupils from emphasising changes of speed and direction in their movements and from developing a good range of turning, swinging and energetic jumping movements. Apparatus activities do not always produce movements of quality.

175. Most pupils enjoy their physical education lessons. Their levels of concentration remain high in most lessons and particularly in swimming. They work very well in groups or with partners in gymnastics. They plan their sequences carefully, observe each other critically, make positive evaluative comments, which help to improve their movements. Pupils in swimming work hard and make good progress. The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in one gymnastics lesson caused interruptions and slowed the rate of learning for all the other children.

176. Overall, teaching was good and never less than satisfactory. In swimming the teaching is very good. The best teaching arises when the teacher is confident and clear about what can be achieved by the class. All teachers work from well-constructed plans, based on a progressive scheme of work. They included a suitable warm up activity, an active section focusing on progression in knowledge and skills, some observation and evaluation, reference to safety and finally a cool down activity. All teachers made good use of demonstration, which enables pupils to evaluate their own work and plan how to improve it. In some lessons teacher explanations are unclear and take too long leaving little time for pupils to be active. The quality of teaching in physical education assures good progress for the vast majority of pupils.

177. Physical education is well managed. The co-ordinator is confident with a clear direction for the subject. He offers good support to staff, especially the temporary staff. The policy and scheme of work provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all children and indicates appropriate progression. Over the year pupils are offered an excellent range of experiences which include games, gymnastics, dance, swimming, athletics and outdoor and adventure activities. The swimming programme includes children from Year 1. The outdoor and adventure activities are undertaken during a residential experience for pupils at the upper end of the school. All eligible pupils will be attending this year. The school has sensibly taken a lead in the 'Top Sport' initiative, which gives the staff access to training to enhance expertise and the school access to a wider range of equipment. Parents support the schools efforts to maintain physical education equipment by raising funds from events such as a 'Dad's Football Challenge'.

178. The school has made significant improvements in provision for physical education since the last inspection. The school has access to nearby playing fields which are used for football. Netball is also provided for Key Stage 2 pupils and the netball team has achieved particular success. Including children from Year 1 in the swimming programme has a positive impact on standards achieved by the time pupils are eleven years old. The success of the residential stay at the outdoor and adventure activity centre is confirmed by 100% interest this year. The school is offering a balanced and varied curriculum to all its pupils. Whilst there are limitations imposed by the hall, this problem is beyond the school's control.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

179. Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 is in line with the requirements of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education. At Key Stage 2 attainment is above average. Pupils make good and at times very good progress especially in Key Stage 2 in knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major religions represented in Britain. In their investigative work on Gentleshaw Church they gain clear insights into the symbolism of features of the church and their relevance to Christian worship. They also gain clear understanding of the role of the church in the community and reflect on the importance of the church to their own lives and those of people in the past. At the same time they gain a good understanding of change and continuity in the community and way of life, and of the importance of the church as a leader in moral and spiritual matters. Year 4 pupils attain well in their study of the mosque and its importance in the life of Muslims and show good understanding of the detail of Muslim prayer and its role in Islamic society.

180. Teaching is good overall but better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Teachers' lessons are well planned to ensure continuity and progression and to help all pupils achieve well. They use effective questions to draw out and extend pupils' thinking, written skills and attention to the use of evidence, as for example, in the Year 6 work on the ways in which the Bible can provide evidence on the lifestyle, values and experience of Jesus as a child. Teachers lead the pupils to consider the limitations of such evidence and to make hypothesis on the basis of the evidence which is available. Overall, good teaching and planning ensure that pupils attain well; make good progress in learning about religion and from religion and its importance to believers. Lessons also develop pupils' literacy skills and use of appropriate language. It is clear from their enthusiasm that pupils have regard for the value of the subject.

181. Religious education is well co-ordinated and makes a very strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and also to the aims of the school. The school has devoted considerable attention to ensuring that issues identified in the last inspection have been improved. Much attention has been given to exploring the opportunities for spiritual development and reflection in this curriculum area, and to ensuring that the study of other major religions makes a strong contribution to pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of society in Britain. The programme of visits to other places of worship has been extended and Year 3 will visit a Sikh gurdwara in March. The extension of the planned programme of visits to other places of worship will build on this success and consolidate understanding in this area of learning.