

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BIRCH HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bracknell

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 109839

Headteacher: Mr Alan Harding

Reporting inspector: Mrs Barbara Parker  
22261

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> July 2000

Inspection number: 190386

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Leppington Birch Hill Bracknell Berkshire
Postcode:	RG12 7WW
Telephone number:	01344 455815
Fax number:	01344 306573
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Roe
Date of previous inspection:	11/11/96 – 14/11/96

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Barbara Parker Registered inspector	The provision for children under five	What sort of school it is and what it should do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well the pupils are taught
Mrs Geraldine Osment Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mrs Carole Jarvis Team inspector	Science Physical education	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils are
Mrs Beryl Rimmer Team inspector	English	How well the school is led and managed
Mrs Judith Morris Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr Mike Wehrmeyer Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
Mr Peter Dexter Team inspector	Art Design and technology Music	The effectiveness of assessment

The inspection contractor was:

Schoolhaus  
Riverbank  
Station Road  
Old Ollerton  
Near Newark  
Nottinghamshire  
NG22 9BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Birch Hill is a very large primary school for pupils age 4 – 11. Of the 524 pupils on roll, seven per cent are eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average. Most pupils come from white English speaking families, but there are nine pupils who speak English as an additional language, one of whom is in the early stage of English language acquisition. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than in most other schools (14 per cent), but more pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need (two per cent). Pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is similar to that found in most other schools. Last year's low take-up of free school meals (which is declining year-on-year) does not accurately reflect the pupils' socio-economic backgrounds, which are broadly average.

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

This is an effective and improving school. The leadership and management of the head teacher and deputy head (both appointed within the last two years) are very good. Because of their excellent working relationship, their determination to bring about improvement, and their ability to manage change effectively, the school is well placed for further development. Pupils are enthusiastic and want to learn and by the time they leave the school, their attainment is broadly as expected for their age. Teaching is effective overall and pupils' learning is sound. In relation to the circumstances of the school and its achievements, the school gives sound value for money.

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

- Standards in reading are above average.
- The teaching of children under five and pupils in Key Stage 1 is good.
- Teachers throughout the school manage pupils well. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils of all ages concentrate well.
- Learning support assistants are very effective in helping those pupils with special educational needs to do their work and make good progress.
- The school has good relationships with parents and keeps them well informed about their children's progress and what is happening in school.
- The school has very effective links with the local secondary schools, preparing pupils' transfer to these schools well.
- The head teacher's leadership and management are very effective.

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

- Standards in information technology are below the expected levels and teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers do not assess and record pupils' achievements accurately and work is not always pitched at the right level.
- Not enough detail about pupils' learning is passed between classes.
- Lesson plans are insufficiently clear about what pupils are to learn.
- The learning of those Key Stage 2 pupils moving to a different set during the year is interrupted because teachers in the same year groups do not teach the planned curriculum in the same order.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to learn about other cultures.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

There has not been enough overall improvement since the last inspection in 1996. Although standards are better than they were and some of the key issues have been successfully dealt with, there is still work to be done on two of the issues. Nevertheless, many improvements have been made since the appointment of the head teacher and deputy. Subject co-ordination has improved significantly. Teachers' subject knowledge is better than it was, particularly since the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Pupils are better at research and investigation in art and design and technology. The building has been altered, and is being altered further to reduce the distraction caused by noise from adjoining class activities. Assessment procedures remain ineffective and the use of information technology to support work in other subjects is still under-developed.

### **STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	B	C	C
Mathematics	C	B	C	D
Science	C	C	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards are average in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave the school. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in the core subjects. In comparison with similar schools, the 1999 test results for eleven-year-olds were average in English and science. They were below average in mathematics. However, the number of pupils reaching the expected level and above has increased this year and standards in mathematics are better than they were. Taking the three subjects together, the trend in improvement is broadly in line with the national trend. The school exceeded its targets in all three subjects slightly this year and last. Children's attainment is secure in all areas of learning by the age of five. They have well-developed physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world are very secure. Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 1, and more pupils attain the expected and higher levels than in other schools nationally. Test results are not as good in Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, a similar percentage of pupils attaining the higher-average levels at seven years of age reach, as expected, the average level at eleven. Standards in reading are above average by the end of both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils' pencil and pastel artwork is of a high standard and their mapping skills in geography are good. Standards in information technology are below average by the end of both key stages and pupils' spelling skills are weak. Attainment in all other subjects are broadly as expected.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good and contribute significantly to pupils' learning in both key stages.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in and out of lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. More could be done to encourage pupils to become independent thinkers and extend their answers to teachers' questions.
Attendance	Above average.

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and want to learn. They are interested in their activities and consequently become involved in lessons. There was no bullying evident during the inspection. Pupils understand the implications of their actions and respect each other's feelings and beliefs. Pupils' personal development and responsibility are under-developed, particularly in Year 6. Relationships are good. Pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start promptly.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of the lessons seen. It was good or better in 51 per cent, including nine per cent in which teaching was very good. Eight unsatisfactory lessons were seen; they were in both key stages. Teachers throughout the school manage pupils well. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. Classroom assistants help these pupils with their work and support them very effectively. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in English and mathematics lessons is good in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2. The effective implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has resulted in more focused lesson structure and better teaching. Because the teaching is more effective in Key Stage 1, the learning is better and standards are higher. However, there is some confusion in this key stage over the method of recording pupils' achievements, which is inconsistent between classes. Pupils' records do not give precise enough detail about their learning within each level, and their level of attainment is sometimes not as high as that recorded, particularly in science. Throughout the school, teaching pays insufficient regard to pupils' previous learning and work is not suitably adapted to meet the needs of the different attaining pupils within sets and classes. Teachers in Key Stage 1 have high expectations about what pupils can learn. Whilst this results in good challenge for the brighter pupils, the lower attaining are sometimes set work that they do not fully understand. Because the medium-term curriculum plans are not implemented consistently across the same year groups, pupils moving between attainment sets are not ensured continuous learning. Some of the questions teachers ask require only short answers, limiting pupils' ability to explore different solutions. Teachers' lesson plans do not always identify clearly what pupils are to learn by the end of the lesson, causing lessons to lack direction at times. The teaching of information technology is unsatisfactory and Key Stage 2 pupils' progress in history and geography is limited over time.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Good for children under five in the nursery.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Competent and suitably trained assistants support these pupils effectively in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well supported in lessons so that they are able to participate fully in the work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for spiritual, moral and social development. Satisfactory development of pupils' own cultural heritage, but unsatisfactory awareness of the different cultures represented in Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. Assessment procedures and the use of information about pupils' learning are unsatisfactory.

The school works well with parents and the information it gives them is of good quality. There are inconsistencies in the setting of homework and its relevance to what pupils are doing in lessons. There are very effective procedures in place for monitoring and improving attendance and promoting good behaviour. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and the school has effective links with its partner institutions. The learning opportunities for children under five are good in range and quality. Pupils with special educational needs consistently miss the same lessons when they are withdrawn for additional support. Assessment procedures are inconsistent and teachers do not use what they do know about pupils' previous learning to adapt work appropriately to meet their needs.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head is a very effective leader and manager and steers the school well to improvement. He knows exactly where the school needs to go and how to get there. He manages change very effectively and sensitively. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in decision making and committed to raising standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Effective procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in particular. However, they are not yet impacting on raising standards in Key Stage 2 in particular.
The strategic use of resources	Good and effective financial planning and management.

There is a lack of cohesion in the leadership and management in Key Stage 2, where staff do not plan together effectively enough and this results in curriculum plans being implemented inconsistently across the key stage. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. There is a good number of learning support assistants, who contribute effectively to pupils' learning and progress. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The progress their children make in general and the information they receive about their children's learning.</li> <li>• The promotion of good manners and the resulting good behaviour of their children in and out of school.</li> <li>• The good quality teaching in some classes.</li> <li>• The approachability of the head teacher and staff.</li> <li>• The way teachers expect the children to work hard and always try their best.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality and consistency of homework between classes in the same year group.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The lack of progress at times by some of the less and more able pupils.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with most of the parents' comments. Homework is inconsistent, but the range of lunch time and after school clubs is good. There are times when pupils of all abilities throughout the school are not set work that suitably meets their needs and consequently their learning is slowed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Inspection evidence shows that standards are average by the time the pupils leave the school. In comparison with all other schools, the results of the 1999 test results were above average for seven-year-olds and average for eleven-year-olds. In comparison with similar schools, they were average in English and science and below average in mathematics. However, the school has worked hard this year to raise standards in mathematics and the results show appropriate improvement, increasing from 66 per cent to 73 percent attaining the expected level and above. The school sets realistic targets in English, mathematics and science, which were exceeded slightly this year and last. Taking English, mathematics and science together, the trend in results over time is improving broadly in line with the national trend.
2. Children enter school with attainment broadly the same as that found nationally. They make sound and sometimes good progress overall in the nursery and by the time they enter the reception class at statutory school age, most have attained the Desirable Learning Outcomes in personal and social, language and literacy, mathematical, and creative development. Their knowledge and understanding of the world are good and their physical skills are well developed. They write correctly formed letters, consistent in size and correctly positioned on the page. They enjoy reading and recognise some words on sight. They know the sounds of most letters and use their knowledge to read and write unknown words. They work confidently with numbers up to 20 and name shapes accurately. They understand that things grow and change over time and use the computer confidently.
3. In English, mathematics and science, standards are above average overall by the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly average by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Although progress could be better in Key Stage 2, it is, nevertheless, as good as could reasonably be expected. The percentage of pupils reaching the average level (Level 4) at the end of Year 6 is similar to the percentage attaining the higher-average level (Level 2B and above) at the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 1, a significantly large number of pupils reach above average levels because teachers' expectations are high and the work suitably challenges the brighter pupils. However, there are times when, because teachers do not adapt the work suitably to meet the needs of the less able, lower attaining pupils find the work too difficult and their learning is insecure and short lasting. This is further exacerbated because there is some confusion over the recording of levels achieved in Key Stage 1, with some teachers assessing pupils at Levels 2 and 3 when they have just started to work within those levels.
4. Although pupils learn appropriately in both key stages, pupils do, none-the-less, make better progress in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. This is because, although teachers in both key stages have insufficient regard to pupils' previous achievements when setting their work, it impacts more detrimentally on the progress of Key Stage 2 pupils because they are taught in mixed age groups. Teachers implement a two-year rolling curriculum programme, where one year, pupils in Years 5 and 6 for example, are taught from the Year 5 programme and the next from the Year 6 programme. This means that Year 6 pupils covered Year 6 work last year and Year 5 work this year. A similar arrangement occurs in Years 3 and 4. Because teachers do not use their assessments accurately to match work to attainment, pupils are too often taught an idea at an inappropriate level. In addition, there is a wider range of attainment represented in the Key Stage 2 sets. The less able pupils within each set generally learn at a slower rate than the more able.

Although pupils are sometimes moved to a different set, because of inconsistencies in implementing the work programmes, the teachers are unsure about the order in which these pupils have been taught the programmes and pupils' learning may consequently be interrupted.

5. Standards have risen in English over time, at broadly the same rate as those in other schools. Standards in reading are good and are above average by the end of both key stages. Pupils in both key stages have a good awareness of letter sounds and blends, but their spelling and grammatical skills are weak. By the end of Year 6, most pupils communicate their thoughts and ideas articulately. They are keen readers and enjoy selecting books from the library. Most pupils write well-constructed letters, poems and play scripts. They punctuate their writing correctly and use appropriately imaginative words to capture the interest of the reader.
6. In mathematics, standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and average by the time the pupils leave the school. Nevertheless, Key Stage 2 results have risen consistently over the last three years and the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds show further improvement. By the time they leave the school, most pupils use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division confidently to solve problems. They know their multiplication tables and use them to divide numbers. They calculate areas and perimeters of given shapes and measure angles accurately. Their mental calculation skills are sound, but not enough emphasis is given to these in lesson planning in Key Stage 2 and consequently, pupils' achievements are slowed unnecessarily.
7. Standards in science have risen steadily since 1996. More pupils reach the expected level and above than in most other schools at the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly the same number by the end of Key Stage 2. By the time the pupils leave the school, most carry out fair tests and investigations and select appropriate materials and equipment for their work. They make sensible predictions and record their findings accurately on tables, charts and graphs. They name the major organs of the body correctly and know their functions. They know that the food chain begins with plants and that forces can be measured.
8. By the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment in information technology is below the expected level for pupils of their age. Although they use the word processing program competently to change the font and colour of text, their limited access to the computers means that their information technology skills are under-developed and their control technology skills in particular are weak.
9. Standards in religious education broadly meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. By the time they leave the school, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of religion, but their learning is mainly knowledge based. Although they learn about the principles of equality and justice from, for example, their comparisons between the influence of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, their ability to learn from religion is under-developed. Pupils' attainment in all other subjects is broadly as expected for pupils of seven and eleven years of age. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use pencil and pastel to good effect in art and their mapping skills are well developed in geography.
10. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress overall. There is one gifted pupil in Year 1, who is being taught in a Year 2 class for English and mathematics, where his needs are being met appropriately.

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

11. Pupils have maintained their very good attitudes to school since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages enjoy their schoolwork and are very enthusiastic to learn. Because they have good relationships with their teachers, they are keen to please them and usually sustain good concentration during lessons. In a Year 1 religious education lesson, for example, the pupils were very involved when writing a prayer asking for God's help, based on the story of Paul's imprisonment in Philippi, and during a Year 3/4 art lesson, they worked hard to reproduce pictures of leaves accurately.
12. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Some of the classrooms are small, but despite this, the pupils move quickly and efficiently around and between the rooms and settle briskly to their tasks. When teaching is good and lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all, pupils behave well, such as in a Year 4 literacy lesson when the pupils' commitment to their own learning was very good. On the rare occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils lose concentration and this results in a slower pace of work and unsatisfactory learning, such as in a Year 6 music lesson when the teaching provided insufficient challenge and pupils became restless.
13. Pupils respond readily to the requests and instructions of teachers, classroom assistants, and dinner controllers. They are polite and courteous to each other, staff, and visitors. They show respect for property, treating the resources they use with care. There were two fixed-term and two permanent exclusions last year, all involving the same two pupils. This figure is high, but is not representative of the norm: there were no exclusions before these and there have been none since. The school did not use this sanction lightly and followed the agreed procedures appropriately.
14. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils form good relationships with their classmates and adults, built on tolerance and respect for the work, values and beliefs of others. They work well as individuals or in pairs or small groups. In a Year 2 music lesson, for example, the pupils co-operated well with each other when playing percussion instruments imitating the sounds of the weather. Pupils are kind to each other, take turns and help their classmates. There are too few opportunities for Year 6 pupils to take responsibility in the life of the school or for their own learning, however, although they act as librarians, set up the hall for assembly, and display a good capacity for personal study when using the library for research. Since he took up post in May, the deputy head teacher has set up a school council through which pupils can influence changes to the school's rules and routines. Pupils collect for charities including Red Nose Day. They hold Blue Peter bring-and-buy sales, and donate Harvest Festival gifts to local pensioners and a shelter for the homeless. Uptake of extra-curricular activities is good, particularly in the sporting events and dance clubs.
15. Good attendance rates have been maintained since the last inspection. They are above the national average. Pupils arrive at school on time. They move quickly during lesson changeover times and so lessons start promptly. However, there is an increasing number of families who take their children out of school for holidays. Parents are reminded in regular newsletters and the school prospectus of their responsibility for their children's punctuality and attendance but do not always ensure that their children's learning is uninterrupted by absence.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching standards have been maintained since the last inspection. They are good in the nursery and Key Stage 1, and sound in Key Stage 2.
17. The teaching of children under five is consistently good. The adults in the nursery have a good understanding about how young children learn through observation and exploration and provide a good balance of self-chosen and adult initiated activities. They work together well as a team and provide good role models on which children can base their own relationships with each other. Activities are varied and purposeful and interest the children well, such as the chrysalises turning into butterflies and released into the nursery garden. The organisation of five-year-olds grouped together and taught as a discrete group means that these children are well prepared for their work in Key Stage 1. Medium- and short-term planning is effective and gives lessons direction and activities clear purpose. There is effective intervention by the adults in children's learning because the teacher and nursery assistants are clear about what they want the children to learn. The atmosphere in the nursery is accepting and supportive and because of this, children feel secure and their learning is good. There is a good range of resources for indoor and outdoor learning and these are used well to support children in their work and play. Assessment is thorough and well detailed, but more effective use could be made of it to set different work for different attaining children. For example, some children are asked to copy under the teachers' writing before they can form letters correctly and some work with numbers up to 10 before they fully understand numbers up to five. On the other hand, sometimes the adults make good use of their assessment of children's achievements during activity sessions, for example, when one child struggled to form the letter 'e' correctly, the teacher talked him through the sequence of strokes until he could do it on his own.
18. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall and is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, teachers have high expectations about what pupils can achieve and set work that challenges the majority of pupils well. Consequently, many pupils achieve good results. However, the work is sometimes over-challenging for some of the less able pupils in the group because teachers do not always use what they know about pupils' previous learning to adapt the work within the teaching sets. Whilst the higher attaining pupils learn at a good rate, sometimes the lower attaining pupils do work which they do not fully understand and their learning is insecure. On transferring to Year 3, teachers in Key Stage 2 are given the overall 'best fit' level and not enough detail is passed to them about which aspects of, for example, Level 3 pupils have and have not grasped. Consequently, when these pupils move into Key Stage 2, assumptions are made about their level of understanding about, for example, melting in science, which may in some cases be incorrect. In addition to this, pupils in Years 3 and 4, and 5 and 6 are taught in mixed age groups. Teaching takes insufficient account of the rate at which the brighter younger pupils in the set learn in comparison with the lower attaining older pupils in the same set, and teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils' achievements to plan appropriate work for the different attaining pupils. Because of this, too often the work is either insufficiently challenging for the brighter pupils or over challenging for the less able pupils. Although the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 reach the expected level or above by the end of Year 6, there are fewer pupils at the higher level than at the end of Key Stage 1, depressing standards overall.
19. Teachers throughout the school manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour. Because of this, pupils behave very well in lessons, work hard and sustain good concentration. Teachers in Key Stage 1 in particular explain clearly to the pupils what they want them to do. They share with them their individual learning targets so that pupils are aware of what they are doing and why. This motivates them appropriately.

Teachers in both key stages use learning resources well, such as a video about St Lucia in Key Stage 2 geography and words displayed to help pupils with their writing in Key Stage 1.

20. Planning is effective in structuring lessons and ensuring that teachers are well prepared for their lessons and build on learning during the session. However, although the teachers are clear about what they want the majority of pupils to do and learn, the work is not suitably planned to meet the needs of the different attaining pupils in the class or set. The intended learning is not always clear, with some plans listing what the pupils are to do, not what they are to learn. The medium-term curriculum plans are specific about what should be taught when, but because teachers in Key Stage 2 in particular do not implement the plans as intended, different teachers teach different things at the same time. Consequently, pupils who move attainment sets during the year have interrupted learning because they have not necessarily been taught the same as the other pupils in their new set.
21. Teaching methods are good. Questions are usually well-focused and probe the pupils' learning appropriately. However, sometimes, in both key stages, teachers do not allow pupils to extend their answers and instead some of the questions require only one word answers. Teachers too often reject valid answers because they are not the ones in their minds, narrowing pupils' thoughts. For example, one teacher in Key Stage 2 said "That is not what I was thinking about" and eventually answered the question herself. This limits pupils' personal development and ability to take the initiative or explore alternative solutions. It denies the pupils the freedom to think for themselves. Consequently, pupils in Year 6 are not sure how to organise their own learning in, for example, science and their personal development is suppressed.
22. Learning is good in Key Stage 1 and for children under five. It is sound in Key Stage 2. Teaching of children under five inspires children well and interests pupils successfully in Key Stage 1. Pupils throughout the school work well and produce a good amount of work in the time available. Sometimes, however, insufficient work is produced by some of the less able pupils in Key Stage 2, because the work is mismatched to their ability and they do not understand it.
23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils make good progress. Teachers have a good awareness of pupils' needs and use a good variety of methods, including the appropriate matching of tasks to pupils' abilities in lessons. Good use of learning support staff ensures the pupils stay on task and understand what they are doing. Teaching of pupils for who English is an additional language is good. Learning support assistants and teachers ensure that these pupils understand what they are doing and that they succeed.
24. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are good in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2. Teachers in both key stages have a secure knowledge of the national strategies in numeracy and literacy and implement both schemes of work effectively. Their lessons are usually sharply focused and well structured, with an appropriate introduction, activity session, and evaluation of the ideas taught and learnt. Teachers organise English and mathematics lessons well and use resources effectively. Computers are insufficiently used in both subjects, however, and, although the promotion of literacy and numeracy through work in other subjects occurs, it is unplanned and therefore too incidental. Teachers are not always sure about what they want pupils to learn from the work they give them and sometimes pupils are asked to do tasks that serve little purpose, such as draw pictures. Whilst this occupies pupils, it does not develop or extend their learning.
25. The teaching of all other subjects is sound, except in information technology where it is unsatisfactory. Pupils are taught around one computer and many of them cannot see what

is going on. Teachers' information technology subject knowledge is weak and often pupils are asked to write out instructions to fill in lesson time, rather than making good use of the resources available. Religious education lessons are usually managed well and religious artefacts are used very effectively to promote learning. Although teaching focuses on different religious facts, it does not ensure pupils learn from religion. Teaching in physical education does not allow sufficient opportunity for pupils to demonstrate their own and evaluate each other's work.

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

26. The school teaches a broad and balanced curriculum that includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. An appropriate allocation of time ensures religious education now meets the needs of the locally Agreed Syllabus in all year groups, including Year 6 - successfully addressing a weakness identified in the previous inspection. The school has satisfactory planning systems in place for all subjects except music, and adequate medium-term plans to guide teachers in their lesson planning. However, although the medium term plans meet the interests, aptitudes and needs of most pupils, teachers implement them inconsistently in both key stages, but more so in Key Stage 2. This interrupts the learning for pupils who move groups in English, mathematics and science, and adversely affects standards throughout this key stage. The music curriculum plan lacks appropriate detail and teachers implement it inconsistently. The school recognises the need for further improvement in curriculum planning and is reviewing the schemes of work for all subjects.
27. The teaching of the English, mathematics and science curriculum in attainment sets is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' progress. However, the lack of precision in planning work to match the different attainment levels within the sets, inhibits the learning of some pupils and not all pupils access the curriculum at a level appropriate to their assessed needs. The work planned is sometimes too challenging for less able pupils or under challenging for brighter pupils. In addition, a significant number of pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from lessons for individual or small group support. At these times, they miss important work in geography, music, information technology and other subjects. Although the school alternates the groups term-by-term to reduce the effects of this, it is too long a time span, since it still allows pupils to miss a whole term's work in one of the subjects.
28. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively. Teachers plan work using the national guidelines closely. However, they use plans from alternate years in Key Stage 2. For example, one year, all pupils in Years 5 and 6 experience English work from the Year 5 programme and the next year from the Year 6 programme. Because teachers do not adapt the ideas being taught suitably to meet the assessed needs of the pupils, some pupils in Year 6, for example, may not be sufficiently challenged and some in Year 5 may be over-challenged. However, the literacy and numeracy strategies have improved teachers' confidence and helped them become more focused. The guidelines provide better structure to lessons and are beginning to have a positive effect on the teaching and learning of English and mathematics throughout the school, and consequently standards are rising over time.
29. Learning opportunities for children under five are good. These children have a good range of interesting and exciting activities and experiences, which hold their interest well and influence good learning. They hatch butterflies from chrysalises, for example, and frogs from tadpoles. They grow flowers from seeds and listen to stories on tape. They sing and make music using a range of un-tuned instruments and take part in role-play in, for example, the class café. Their outdoor and indoor learning experiences are equally stimulating and they have good opportunity to develop intellectually, physically and



emotionally during their time in the nursery. Curriculum planning is good and staff in the nursery know what they want children to learn by the end of the sessions, giving teaching direction and activities purpose.

30. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Many of the pupils' individual learning targets are not, however, sufficiently precise and the period for achieving them is often too long to be effective. Appropriate special provision is made for one higher attaining pupil to work with a higher attaining set of pupils in the year above.
31. A good range of out-of-school activities contributes well to pupils' curricular opportunities. Sports clubs, such as dance, kwik cricket, football, netball, athletics and cross country running, enhance pupils' physical and social development well. These activities are well attended and opportunities to take part in inter-school matches builds pupils' confidence and extends their physical education skills well. Recorder and guitar groups make a good contribution to the music curriculum. A residential visit for Year 6, and similar activities for pupils unable to go, enrich the curriculum and extend pupils' learning further.
32. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is sound. Pupils learn about the need for a healthy lifestyle and the dangers of drug misuse in their physical education and science lessons. The exploration of personal and social issues and sex education is part of the Year 6 life skill programme, "As we see things". Pupils have opportunities to consider the social and emotional problems of changing schools and this prepares them well for their next stage of education.
33. Links with the community and partner institutions are good. There are strong links with local shops, which support the school by providing equipment and awards. Numerous visitors, such as the local clergy, police officers, fire fighters and members of various religions, come into school. Pupils visit local areas, such as South Hill Park and Swinley Forest to support learning in science and geography. Year 3 and 4 pupils have an Internet link with New Zealand. Many pupils take part in sport tournaments against other local schools, join them for Christmas concerts, and take part in the Bracknell Environmental Show, developing their sense of community awareness. Projects, such as designing and painting a wall mural in school, provide pupils with valuable opportunities to work with professional artists.
34. The school has maintained the standards identified in the previous inspection and makes good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Particular strengths lie in the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, whilst some aspects of their cultural understanding are under-developed. Good opportunities are planned for pupils to reflect on their learning in religious education, art, music and other lessons, where they are encouraged to express their feelings about particular works and compositions. In mathematics, there is a sense of awe and wonder, for example when a teacher unexpectedly produces a sphere from under a cloth and in science, when nursery children excitedly observe chrysalises hatching into butterflies. Daily acts of worship are well planned with a Christian emphasis. They provide further opportunities for reflection and support moral education effectively.
35. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. Themes of right and wrong, self-control and self-discipline are apparent in the daily life of the school. These are reinforced by the good examples set by staff and older pupils. Teachers respect the opinions of their pupils and praise them in their work and actions. There is a strong commitment to maintaining a high standard of behaviour and this has a positive effect on all aspects of school life.

36. The provision for social development is good. Many opportunities are planned for pupils to work in social contexts, such as in pairs or groups in lessons and the well-attended after-school activities. Residential visits for Year 6 introduce pupils to another side of social living. Relationships in the school are good and pupils play well together in the playground. Pupils are given some responsibilities around the school and the introduction of the school council is developing these further. However, the strongest influences on social development are the caring community values such as tolerance, understanding and respect for others that permeate the life of the school.
37. Although the provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, the development of their understanding of Britain as an ethnically and culturally diverse society is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about their own culture through literacy, history, art and dance. Visits are made regularly to the local arts centre and art galleries, and visiting artists work with pupils on particular projects. Different religious and secular festivals are celebrated throughout the year and pupils gain a fair understanding of the variety of different cultures around the world through religious education and geography. Pupils study the European artist Mondrian and use the computer to generate images in his style. There are some opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures in British society through, for example, visits to the synagogue and a Jewish visitor to school. However, these experiences are rare, and do not leave the pupils with sufficient long lasting impression of how others believe different things and live differently to themselves.

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

38. The school successfully establishes an ethos of care and concern for the pupils. All staff make a significant contribution to pupil care. The school provides a safe and secure environment that effectively supports pupils' education. There are good relationships at all levels and, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, 93 per cent of parents say that their children like school. All staff work hard to maintain positive relationships. They know the pupils well and monitor their personal development informally and formally through written records, which are discussed with parents during consultation evenings.
39. The school has an effective health and safety policy. Appropriately recorded fire practices take place, and there are staff with the required first aid qualifications. The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for child protection. The head teacher is the named responsible person and is due to receive updated training at the end of the summer term. Staff are aware of the procedures in place.
40. The procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The secretary checks the attendance registers every day and promptly follows up any instances of unexplained absence. Registers are taken briskly at the start of morning sessions and this ensures a prompt start to lessons. Pupils receive certificates for uninterrupted attendance at the end of the year. The school is very well supported by monthly visits from the Educational Welfare Officer and has good procedures in place to ensure that the pupils attend school regularly and punctually.
41. There are good procedures for monitoring and encouraging good behaviour. The school has a consistently implemented behaviour policy, which includes rewards and sanctions, to ensure that pupils behave well. Praise and certificates of merit reward good behaviour and effort. The majority of parents agree that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible.
42. The arrangements and procedures for assessing and recording pupils' academic achievement and personal development are inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. This is a remaining issue from the previous inspection, which has not been successfully dealt

with. Pupils are assessed effectively on entry to the nursery and reception classes and good individual achievement records are kept on pupils as they move through nursery, reception and Years 1 and 2. The information is used appropriately to place pupils in ability sets for literacy and numeracy, so that teachers can focus on work at three different attainment levels. However, not enough regard is given to the different attaining pupils within these sets and they are all usually set the same work, regardless of their rate or stage of learning. This means that often the work is either too difficult for the brighter pupils in the set or too easy for the less able.

43. Although there are careful assessments made of pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy before pupils transfer from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, some of the important detail is lost because it is summarised onto a different record sheet. Individual's attainment in science is unclear, as there is a lack of consistent understanding of the symbols used to record achievement, knowledge and understanding. For example, some teachers think that '3J' means just attained Level 3, whilst others think it means, attained Level 2, just moving into Level 3. This gives confusing messages to the Key Stage 2 teachers and, although this information is used appropriately by the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator to place pupils in three attainment sets, because some of the transfer information is inaccurate some pupils are incorrectly placed.
44. To add to the problem, most sets in Key Stage 2 are made up of pupils from two age groups. Sometimes pupils transfer between the sets during the school year and this interrupts their learning because teachers implement the medium-term plans differently. In addition, as in Key Stage 1, pupils within the sets are usually given the same work, despite their differences in age and/or ability. This results, for example, in lower attaining Year 4 pupils being set the same work as high attaining Year 3 pupils. Whilst this might be appropriate at the beginning of the year, higher attaining pupils usually progress at a greater rate to lower attaining. As the gap between lower and higher attaining pupils widens, the work is less suitable for one or the other. There are exceptions, however, such as in one of the Year 4 literacy sets, where the teacher divides the pupils within her set into three ability groups. Each group has targets for improvement and every pupil has individual targets as well. Consequently, pupils understand what they were doing and why, and work at a suitable rate. The teacher monitors the pupils' progress towards their targets and modifies their work accordingly. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the key stage.
45. The information from the school's analysis of test results and pupils' individual answers to test questions in English, mathematics and science is used effectively to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning, such as poor spelling in English and a lack of understanding of the earth's rotation in science. However, this procedure is still in its infancy and the school, having identified areas for improvement, has yet to deal with them effectively by adapting curriculum planning accordingly.
46. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and given individual support as appropriate. The school has good relationships with a wide variety of specialist agencies, which enable these pupils to receive appropriate and timely support and guidance. Pupils' academic progress is regularly observed and recorded by teachers and support assistants, although the pupils' Individual Education Plans do not yet record details of pupils' movement toward precise targets. The school effectively meets the needs of those pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs.
47. The process of assessment and target setting in other subjects of the curriculum, including information technology, has yet to be established and is unsatisfactory. However, this is identified as an area for improvement in the current school development plan.

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

48. Overall, the school has a good partnership with parents, and parents and carers have positive views of the school. The school uses a number of effective ways to inform parents about the progress their children are making. There are three formal parent-teacher consultations during the year, and the head teacher and teachers are always willing to meet parents at other times. Pupils' annual progress reports keep parents informed about how well their children are achieving in English, mathematics, science, and other subjects and suggests ways in which they can improve their performance further. Suitable opportunities are provided for parents to discuss these reports with the teachers.
49. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about day-to-day events in school and the school web site provides further information. The school prospectus is informative and there is additional written information about the topics being taught each term. Information evenings are held for parents on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the provision for sex education, and the teaching of the danger of drug mis-use. Parents are invited to school productions, the book fair, and sports days. The school has a well-supported parent-teacher association, which organises social and fund raising events to buy additional equipment. There are good links between them and the governing body, which enhances communication with parents further.
50. Taken overall, the contribution that parents make to their children's learning at home and school is satisfactory. A significant minority of parents would like to see the range of extra curricular activities improved. However, the inspection team found the provision to be good, particularly in relation to sports and dance. A significant minority of parents are not satisfied with the work their children are expected to do at home. The inspection team agrees with the views of the parents that, although satisfactory overall, consistent amounts of homework are not set regularly to support the curriculum effectively or develop pupils' independent learning skills. Key Stage 1 pupils are only allowed to take their reading books home when they have finished them. Parents feel that this unnecessarily limits their involvement with their children's learning at home.

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

51. The leadership and management of the head teacher and key staff are good overall. The head teacher provides very good leadership. He has a very clear vision of what needs to be done to improve and secure high standards. He is pursuing, with skill and determination, a well thought out programme of staff development in order to achieve closer co-operation between the two key stages. During the last two years, since his appointment, he has managed major changes in both the culture and the composition of the school's personnel, with considerable insight and sensitivity. The newly appointed deputy head is very clear about his role and shares the head teacher's vision. He has established positive relationships with staff, making a good contribution to the open style of leadership and has already introduced initiatives, such as the school council for older pupils. The co-ordination of subjects is good for English, mathematics and information technology and sound for all other subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Staff responsibilities are clearly defined and understood, and subject leaders now make an effective contribution to the thorough and detailed school development plan, following an evaluation of their own subjects. The development plan is a comprehensive review of the work of the school and its plans for the next three years, and provides a good basis for future improvement. Highly praised by the last inspection team, the school's aims (outlined in the plan) do not represent a shared view agreed by current staff and governors. However, a commitment to high standards of work, relationships and behaviour is well established and most evident. These are reflected in the positive ethos, good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, and high standards of work presentation and display throughout the school.
52. The head teacher delegates well. He provides encouragement and increasing opportunities for teachers to share good practice and take on more responsibility as subject co-ordinators and year group team leaders. The composition of the senior

management team provides a sound structure for effective communication. Good teamwork and well established shared practice leads to impressive results in Key Stage 1. A lack of communication between the two key stages, however, leads to some misconceptions about standards. Because staff in Key Stage 2 do not plan and work together as such a cohesive team as their colleagues in Key Stage 1, there are inconsistent expectations and practice in different classes within the same year groups. Most staff recognise the need to develop more co-operative ways of working. However, the new staffing structure is beginning to take effect and there is increasing discussion about and progress towards a more cohesive approach across both key stages. Staff feel their views are heard and are well supported through both formal and informal channels of communication.

53. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties appropriately and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, recognising the challenges it faces. Through its increasingly effective committee structure and governors' lesson observations, regular visits to the school, and good relationships with staff, the governing body works closely with the head teacher and staff to perform the valuable function of critical friend. It does not, however, analyse the effects of its decisions sufficiently to assess their impact on pupils' academic and personal attainment. Governors are currently evaluating their own performance and beginning to take a more strategic role in providing a sense of direction for the work of the school. There is a willingness to ask questions and make an active contribution. Literacy and numeracy governors, for example, are well informed and show interest and enthusiasm. They occasionally attend staff meetings, following progress outlined in the school development plan. Governors have established clear procedures for the appraisal of the work of the head teacher, in line with government guidelines and have set performance targets. They have the knowledge and skill to carry out their role effectively.
54. The school has good systems for the monitoring and evaluation of its performance and has accurately identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching. A well-established appraisal system is in place for the professional development of teachers, with targets for improvement included in job descriptions. Co-ordinators are beginning to carry out useful classroom observations in English, mathematics, science and information technology. Although some analysis of data takes place, the head teacher and management team have not used this information to form firm conclusions about the slowing down of progress in Key Stage 2. There are still weaknesses in planning in Key Stage 2, for example, that have not been sufficiently dealt with. Target setting is in a very early stage and is not yet based on secure assessment procedures. The school has not yet taken effective action through its leadership to secure sufficient improvement in assessment and information technology following the last inspection.
55. Educational priorities outlined in the school development plan are supported well through careful and prudent financial planning. Governors plan systematically for improvements, such as more classroom space, with the needs of the pupils and teachers currently in school, clearly in mind. Pupils benefit significantly from wise spending decisions. The head teacher allocates responsibilities very well, making good use of staffing resources. He has faced up squarely to the management problems facing the school and is empowering his staff to fulfil their leadership potential. The planned appointment of a teaching and learning co-ordinator across both key stages and the new special needs co-ordinator shows an astute recognition of staff strengths and expertise. The school makes the best use of the grants available and targets its resources effectively. Additional literacy support, for example, has been effective in raising standards in English in Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
56. The school's systems for financial administration are good and the school acted appropriately upon the minor recommendations of the last auditor's report. The secretary and finance officer work together well to provide efficient support to both the management

and teaching staff. Their roles are clearly defined and they make competent use of the school's new technology. The school uses the principles of best value appropriately by comparing their own results and costs with those of other schools and seeking the fairest price for supplies and maintenance.

57. The school has a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff who have sufficient knowledge to teach children under five, religious education and all the subjects of the National Curriculum, except information technology where teachers' subject knowledge is weak. The school has a dedicated team of hard working learning support assistants, who are used effectively and make a good contribution to the progress of lower attaining and special educational need pupils in particular. All staff have clear job descriptions. Procedures for staff appraisal are good and the school is taking the necessary steps to put in place the government's new arrangements for the performance management of teachers. There is good support for teachers new to the school and good induction procedures in place for newly qualified teachers. New teachers are allocated an induction tutor and are given support for all activities – inside and outside the classroom – as well as time to follow courses outside school. They also receive good support from other members of their year teams.
58. The accommodation is satisfactory. It is attractive and well organised and all available space is used efficiently. Classrooms are small, but there are shared areas for pupils to use and work with support assistants. As at the time of the last inspection, the inspection team has a concern about noise levels between some of the adjoining classes. However, the governing body is addressing this issue through a well-planned building programme. The nursery accommodation is good, with a variety of floor coverings to allow for a range of clean and messy activities and a secure outdoor play area. The buildings and grounds are maintained and cleaned to a high standard. There are good displays around the school that celebrate the work of the pupils. The large field is well used for physical education and to support other curriculum areas.
59. The overall quality and range of resources to support and enhance teaching and pupils' learning across the curriculum is satisfactory. There is an inadequate number of books for religious education but a sufficient range of artefacts. The school does not have sufficient aerial photographs to support learning in geography, and the atlases are out of date. Resources to support pupils with special educational needs are very good. The library is easily accessible to all pupils. It has a good stock of good quality books that are well used by the pupils. The nursery has a very good range of outdoor equipment and indoor learning resources.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The school should :

- (1) Improve the arrangements and procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements by ensuring teachers:
  - i) assess accurately what pupils know, understand and can do against agreed criteria;
  - ii) use the information to identify what pupils need to learn next;
  - iii) identify clearly in their daily lessons plans what different groups of pupils are to learn by the end of lessons;
  - iv) pass to the pupils' next teachers sufficiently detailed information to enable them to meet the needs of their pupils effectively;(Paragraphs 3, 4, 17, 18, 20, 22, 27, 42, 43, 47, 64, 72, 75, 83, 86, 91, 96, 101, 104, 110, 114, 115, 120)
- (2) Ensure that the planned curriculum is implemented consistently in Key Stage 2 so that pupils moving between attainment sets have been taught the same ideas previously and their learning is not interrupted;  
(Paragraphs 4, 20, 26, 28, 44, 52, 73, 75, 83)
- (3) Raise standards in information technology by:
  - i) improving teachers' subject knowledge and understanding;
  - ii) improving the organisation of lessons so that all pupils can see the computer screen;
  - iii) improving the arrangements for assessment so that teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn next;
  - iv) improving pupils' access to and use of the computers to support work in literacy and numeracy in particular, but also in other subjects, including data-handling in science;
  - v) giving pupils more opportunities to develop their control technology skills;
  - vi) ensuring that the skills pupils acquire in lessons are used to support work in other subjects;(Paragraphs 8, 24, 25, 74, 79, 101, 104, 105-108, 110, 125)
- (4) Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures represented in British society (paragraph 37).

The school should consider the other following matters, which are identified as weaknesses in the report, but are not included in issues for action:

1. Pupils' spelling skills are weak (paragraphs 5, 70, 71).
2. Opportunities for the oldest pupils to take responsibility in the life of the school and in their own learning are limited (paragraphs 14, 85, 86).
3. Some pupils with special educational needs miss important learning opportunities in some subjects such as music, physical education and information technology when they are withdrawn for additional support (paragraph 27).
4. There are inconsistencies in the setting of homework and its relevance to what pupils are doing in school (paragraph 50).
5. There is a lack of communication between the key stages and a lack of cohesion within Key Stage 2, particularly affecting the planning (paragraphs 52, 73).
6. Literacy and numeracy is insufficiently promoted in other subjects (paragraphs 24, 74, 79, 101, 125).
7. Teachers do not allow pupils to explore different solutions to their challenges and some of the questions teachers ask require only one-word answers (paragraphs 21, 68).
8. Pupils' progress over time in history and geography is limited (paragraphs 98, 102).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	98
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	56

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9%	42%	41%	8%	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)	26	494
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	76

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	39	36	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	36	37
	Girls	34	33	33
	Total	72	69	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (95)	92 (97)	93 (95)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	37	38	38
	Girls	34	34	34
	Total	71	72	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (93)	96 (96)	96 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	38	27	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	23	28
	Girls	23	20	25
	Total	49	43	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (72)	66 (59)	82 (68)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	25	26
	Girls	21	23	22
	Total	44	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (70)	74 (77)	74 (88)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	482
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*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	2	2
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)	21.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	27.4

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	268

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.6
--------------------------------	-----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	853737
Total expenditure	833539
Expenditure per pupil	1648
Balance brought forward from previous year	27448
Balance carried forward to next year	47646

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	520
Number of questionnaires returned	137

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	48	10	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	51	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	57	6	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	52	20	5	2
The teaching is good.	42	53	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	47	16	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	38	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	45	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	31	51	14	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	46	43	4	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	49	6	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	36	23	5	16

## **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**

61. The teaching and learning of children under five are good. Children attend the nursery part-time from the age of four, transferring to the reception class the term after which they are five. Because of the very effective teaching, by the time they move to the reception class at statutory school age, most children have exceeded the Desirable Learning Outcomes in their physical development. Their personal and social, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development is sound and their knowledge and understanding of the world are very secure.
62. The teaching of children's personal and social skills is good. During their time in the nursery, children develop into confident youngsters because of the secure learning environment and the good promotion by staff of children's self-esteem and confidence. The adults ensure that children have good opportunity to talk to others and share their news. They encourage children, for example, to bring things from home to talk about, and they ask well-focused questions about the objects that they bring in order to extend their learning. For example, the teacher probed children's observation and understanding well when she asked what a comb and a coat hanger had in common. After careful thought, the children decided that they were both made from plastic. Staff develop children's skills of independence well by encouraging them to choose for themselves from the planned experiences. When appropriate though, they guide individual children to particular activities, depending on their assessed needs. They provide sharing activities to develop children's skills of co-operation and lay down rules for children to follow, such as making sure no-one else is on the climbing frame ladder before they go on it. By the time they are five, most children explore the activities confidently and invite visitors to the nursery to play with them – helping them to hide 'snakes' in the sand, for example. They take turns sensibly and share the equipment well. They talk about their families and pets and the town in which they live. They are sensitive to living things, such as the butterflies they have hatched from chrysalises. They talk about their pets with affection and most are courteous to one another.
63. Children's language and literacy development is secure and the teaching is sound. The teacher and nursery assistants encourage speaking and listening well. They talk with children at work and play, joining in, for example, their role-play in the café and their 'fishing' game in the water. They, and the adult helpers in particular, use headphones to listen to taped stories alongside the children, setting a good example on which the children can model their own practice. They ask questions about letter sounds when working with the older children and encourage them to form letters correctly. The oldest children in the nursery are prepared well for the reception class. They practice sitting for longer periods of time and concentrating on more formal recording of their observations and experiences, such as their news. Most of the time, the adults effectively measure children's achievements and use the knowledge appropriately to adapt the work. For example, the nursery nurse noticed that one child was not forming the letter 'e' using the correct sequence of strokes. She showed him how to do it and spent time with him getting it right. Children confidently explain what is happening when the butterflies emerge from their cocoons and read books along with the teacher. By the time they are statutory school age, most children enjoy reading. They know most of the letter sounds and talk excitedly about books. They understand the structure of a book and know about its title, author and illustrator. They write their own names and most copy under the teachers' writing legibly. They match letter sounds to pictures beginning with the same sound and blend letters to read and write simple words. Their books are beautifully neat and they take pride in how they present their work.

64. The teaching of mathematics is sound and children's learning is secure. The older children in the nursery work confidently with numbers up to 10. Teaching challenges children well through well-focused questions, such as "Show me six a different way". It builds children's learning systematically, but does not always take sufficient notice of children's previous achievements. For example, all of the children in the older group were working with numbers up to 10, yet their records showed that some of them did not fully understand numbers up to 5. Because of the teacher's determination and eagerness to prepare these children for their work in the reception class, her expectations are sometimes too high for some of the children some of the time. Nevertheless, by the time they are statutory school age, most children order numbers up to 20. They add and take away and work confidently with money. They understand symmetry through their observations of butterflies, and compile class graphs to show the different eye colours of children in the nursery. They understand the sequence of days of the week through listening to the 'hungry caterpillar' story and some of the brighter children tell the time correctly.
65. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Children are taught well and given a very good range of learning experiences to build their knowledge and understanding of science, technology, geography and history appropriately through exploration and observation. There is a wide range of practical experiences planned throughout the year, such as growing tadpoles into frogs and planting seeds. Children grow potatoes in the nursery garden and make fruit salads to eat. Visitors extend their learning further, talking to them about, for example, the postal service and the work of the fire brigade. Because of these valuable experiences, by the time they are five, most children understand that tadpoles turn into frogs and that plants need water to grow and survive. They label parts of a flower correctly and recognise things that are made from different materials, such as a comb and clothes hanger made from plastic. They know that cotton is used to sew things together and that other people are here to help them, such as the fire brigade and police. They work confidently on the computer, for example, labelling parts of the body correctly. They sequence changes over time correctly, such as a boat hollowed out from a tree trunk, up to a luxury cruise liner. They understand that things are pushed and/or pulled to make them move and that different things, such as the wind, can propel objects.
66. Children's creative skills are satisfactory; teaching and learning are sound. Their physical development is good. Children in the nursery are given an appropriate range of activities to develop and extend their creative skills, such as painting butterflies and making models out of modelling dough. They create music together and make models of butterflies from cardboard boxes. The range of physical activities is good. By the time they are statutory school age, most children fit construction equipment together confidently. They dress and undress themselves with good co-ordination and hold pencils and other small equipment correctly. They throw and kick balls and are developing their catching skills appropriately. The outdoor learning area is ideal for developing children's physical skills. Adults show the children how to skip, for example, and put out a good range of equipment to develop and extend their skills well, such as push and pull toys and climbing apparatus.

## **ENGLISH**

67. Standards in speaking, listening, and writing are average by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. They are above average in reading. The majority of pupils, by the end of Key Stage 1, reach standards that are in line with national expectations in speaking and listening and above in reading and writing. The subject co-ordination is good and effective monitoring of teaching and learning has led to improvements in Key Stage 1 standards since the last inspection. The school sets realistic and appropriate targets for their Key Stage 2 results, which were exceeded slightly this year and last.

68. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average by the end of both key stages and teaching is sound overall. Teachers make good role models by speaking clearly, with expression and carefully chosen vocabulary so that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively and with interest to well-told stories, instructions and information. There is a high standard of listening throughout the school because teachers have high expectations and insist on pupils' full attention. Pupils respond appropriately to teachers' questions and directions with a suitable command of spoken English. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening in Key Stage 2 where they communicate their thoughts and ideas appropriately and participate confidently in discussions. In the best lessons, teachers use good questioning skills, listening carefully to pupils' responses, valuing contributions in order to develop pupils' confidence. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, made thoughtful contributions during a debate about St. Lucia. The most able pupils are articulate, confident speakers using accurate grammatical sentences. For example, they took part successfully in a very high quality group discussion about the writing of Roald Dahl in a mixed Year 5 and 6 lesson. Most pupils adapt their speech appropriately for a suitable range of audiences when reading their work aloud and use a good range of vocabulary when talking about books they have read. Good organisation and classroom management ensure that in most cases, pupils of all abilities are included in discussions and given suitable opportunities to practise their skills. In a minority of lessons at the end of Key Stage 2, the less able pupils are given too little opportunity to contribute to the lessons, such as in one seen on persuasive writing, and show a lack of confidence. In both key stages, opportunities are sometimes limited for pupils to speak in full or extended sentences and teachers too readily accept one word answers to their questions.
69. Reading is of a high standard throughout the school. It is above average by the end of both key stages. Pupils of all ages show familiarity with books and a love of literature. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good awareness of sounds and a high level of word recognition. They attempt new words confidently, using their knowledge of sounds to break words into syllables. The more able re-read a passage if the sense is lost to them, showing good contextual knowledge. Pupils have a good understanding of the structure of books and discuss their preferences for information books or stories with interest. They re-tell stories confidently and talk about character and plot with good levels of recall. Their mechanical skills, however, are at a level beyond their level of understanding and pupils are less confident in talking about the meanings of words or explaining motives or messages. Attitudes towards reading are good. Pupils are confident with the well-established routines and during planned library sessions, even the youngest pupils enjoy choosing new books to take home from a wide and interesting range of fiction and non-fiction texts. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are independent readers, enjoying a wide range of stories and poems, including some lengthy novels. The most able read accurately and fluently, with good levels of understanding beyond the literal. They read with sensitivity and good expression, taking good account of punctuation. Many are avid readers, speaking of being "unable to put a book down". They use suitable independent research skills using the library's colour coding system with ease and familiarity when they look for information books. Their ability to scan text to find information is less well developed, however, and they do not always understand the vocabulary they manage to read.
70. The teaching of reading is good overall. Teachers hear pupils read frequently both in groups and as individuals. They have a good understanding of pupils' capabilities and as a result, match books well to pupils' levels of understanding and interest. Teachers effectively encourage a love of literature through lively and enthusiastic presentations of well-chosen texts. As a result, pupils enjoy the language used and eagerly read books for pleasure and information. Parents are involved in their children's reading to a limited extent, however, because pupils only take home reading books when they have finished them. Reading diaries record the range of books read and the dates completed. They do

not report on difficulties or successes encountered, and there is little evidence of any useful dialogue between teachers and parents to encourage the less enthusiastic readers. Teachers take frequent opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary, but make insufficient use of dictionaries during lessons to develop pupils' independent research skills and reinforce knowledge and understanding of spellings. In most cases, teachers make good use of the library to develop pupils' research skills. However, opportunities are sometimes missed during the library exchange periods to develop pupils' book understanding and extend their reading ability and little or no teaching of skills takes place at times. Consequently, some pupils learn very little during the experience.

71. The standard of writing is above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 enjoy writing both imaginative and factual accounts, and their story writing skills are well developed. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class produced some lively and interesting story endings, encouraged to use a wide range of interesting vocabulary by the use of 'brave' words suspended from the ceiling. Pupils use well-structured sentences and a high level of descriptive detail, incorporating a wide range of punctuation. A minority of pupils do not however, write in logical sentences and frequently confuse tenses. Pupils make confident attempts at unfamiliar words, showing an awareness of spelling patterns and rules. However, they make frequent mistakes and standards of spelling are below average. Pupils make too little use of dictionaries to check their spellings and do not reinforce their learning of grammatical structure sufficiently during lessons. Teachers have not yet used the literacy strategy effectively enough to establish a coherent, systematic approach to the teaching of spelling patterns and grammatical skills to provide a firm foundation for pupils' work in Key Stage 2. Consequently, whilst an impressive number of pupils attain the expected levels, too few pupils reach the higher levels. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils write for an increasing range of purposes and in a variety of styles when writing, for example, letters, book reviews, poetry and play scripts. They develop a good understanding of story structure and add to the richness of their vocabulary when finding, for example, alternative words for 'said'. They show suitable understanding of speech and paragraphs in their stories. The content of their writing is of an imaginative quality, such as when they create poetry based on Lewis Carroll's 'Jabberwocky' in Years 5 and 6. Handwriting is of a good standard overall. It is mostly neat, legible and joined, with letters accurately formed. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, meeting teachers' high expectations of neatness.
72. The teaching of writing in Key Stage 1 is good. The high standards at the end of the key stage are as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and skilful teaching. Teachers have very well organised classrooms and make good use of resources and displays to reinforce pupils' learning of vocabulary and sounds. They model good standards of writing through labels and notices. They make good use of learning support assistants to provide effective support for those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers manage pupils well. They give very clear instructions so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them and work hard to please. Pupils are, however, rather dependent on adult direction and do not always have a secure enough understanding of what they are learning to move on to the next stage. There is too little use made of assessment to establish pupils' level of understanding and tasks are not sufficiently matched to these. Extension activities are appropriately planned for when pupils complete their work, but these often lack challenge or purpose for the more able pupils. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and not effectively used to improve standards or correct habitual mistakes.
73. The teaching of writing in Key Stage 2 is sound overall. In the best lessons, teachers challenge the more able pupils well and extend their learning. They plan their lessons well to provide tasks for pupils' different abilities. In a mixed Year 3 and 4 lesson on homophones and homographs, for example, the teacher used good questioning skills to establish understanding and involved pupils effectively. Pupils showed commitment and

involvement in their learning when they identified and wrote explanations for words that sounded and looked alike. Teachers have established good relationships with pupils. They have mostly high expectations of both work and behaviour which are made explicit to pupils at all times. This leads to a calm and purposeful atmosphere within their classrooms. As a result, pupils concentrate well and behaviour is good. There is a lack of cohesive planning in Key Stage 2, however, which leads to inconsistent learning, particularly for those pupils who change sets during the year. Because teachers do not implement the curriculum plans in the same order, teaching does not always build pupils' learning in the same way in classes within the same year group. Where teachers plan interesting activities matched closely to pupils' abilities, for example in one average-ability class in Year 3/4, teaching develops pupils' writing skills well. For the most part, however, pupils, although in ability groups, all complete the same tasks, not matched to their assessed prior attainment and teaching does not build appropriately on what pupils have already learnt. The standard of presentation in most pupils' books is good. Teachers' approaches to marking are inconsistent, however. In the best examples at the end of the key stage, marking is positive and encouraging, with clear suggestions to the most able pupils for improvement. Corrections are expected and pupils make good progress as a result. In other classes in the same year group, however, basic errors are often not corrected and expectations of pupils' work are too low.

74. Information technology is not used effectively to promote pupils' English skills and literacy is not promoted sufficiently through work in other subjects. Although there are examples of pupils reading in history and writing about their experiments in science, these experiences are unplanned and incidental.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. Standards are good by the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly average by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 is broadly average, and although it is the same on leaving at the end of Year 6, pupils make better progress in Key Stage 1 than they do in Key Stage 2. This is because, in both key stages, pupils are taught in sets based on their previous achievements and assessed mathematical ability. In Key Stage 1, good use is made of assessment information to set pupils into ability groups and to identify those pupils with special educational needs. The work within the sets is not usually adapted, however, to suit the needs of those pupils who learn at a slower or faster rate than the majority. However, it is generally planned to build on previous learning because the teachers implement the curriculum plans consistently, ensuring pupils within the same year group are taught the same mathematical idea whichever set they are in. The gap between the lower and higher attaining pupils is not so great in Key Stage 1 because all of the pupils in each set are of the same age. However, in Key Stage 2, although good use is made of the Key Stage 1 test results, other tests and teacher assessments, to determine pupil groupings, the sets are mostly mixed-age, combining the higher attaining pupils of one year with the lower attaining pupils from the subsequent year. Within the sets, the work provided is the same for all pupils. The higher ability pupils, however, learn more quickly, and the gap between the two grows greater as the year progresses. Although pupils transfer between sets as their achievements progress at different rates, their learning is interrupted because teachers implement the medium-term plans inconsistently between the mixed age groups and consequently, pupils in the same year group do not follow the same curriculum simultaneously.
76. The school recognised that a number of pupils under-achieved last year in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 and have worked hard to improve the results this year. Consequently, many more pupils attained the expected level and above in this year's tests, showing improvement in standards overall. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make good progress.



77. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good grasp of number concepts. They add and subtract numbers up to 100 and know the two, five and 10 times tables. Higher attaining pupils determine patterns in the nine times table and recognise that the inverse of multiplication is division. Pupils successfully apply their understanding of addition and subtraction when working with money; they calculate costs and change from £1.50, and convert pence into pounds. Pupils accurately name common two- and three-dimensional shapes and are aware of their properties. They collect data about, for example, the length of arms of pupils in the class, and record it in graphical form using the computer. All aspects of mathematics are taught appropriately, including investigative work, which is an improvement since the last inspection.
78. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils confidently apply the four rules of calculation to solve problems and add and subtract up to four-digit numbers. They apply their knowledge of the three, four, six, eight and nine times tables and use these to divide four-digit numbers - with remainders. They have a basic understanding of ratio and improper fractions and can reduce an improper fraction to its simplest form by cancelling common factors. They plot points on graphs using plus and minus numbers, and higher attaining pupils construct and interpret graphs and convert pints into litres and vice versa. Most pupils use a protractor confidently to measure acute and obtuse angles and calculate the perimeter and area of regular two-dimensional shapes correctly.
79. The quality of teaching is sound overall. It is good in Key Stage 1 where a quarter of the lessons seen were very good. Teachers in both key stages implement the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. Pupils, more particularly those in Key Stage 1, are responding keenly to lively lessons in which they are expected to juggle with numbers and talk about the way they come up with the answer. In a Year 1 class for example, pupils' quick response to addition sums up to 20, and their ability to apply their understanding of plus and minus to problems, showed good development of mental arithmetic. This sort of successful teaching was also seen, but to a lesser degree, in Key Stage 2 where pupils used a game to practise rapid recall of operations and beat their time record. Sometimes though, pupils are not offered the opportunity to enhance their mental mathematical abilities because this element is not given sufficient emphasis in lesson planning. Teachers in both key stages have secure subject knowledge and manage pupils well. They use praise well to reward success, encourage pupils to try hard, and build confidence. Teachers in both key stages make insufficient use of the computer to reinforce pupils' learning in mathematics. Mathematics is rarely used or promoted in other subjects. However, the use of timelines in history lessons help to ensure that pupils have a firm understanding of chronology. Explanations to pupils regarding the cubic measurement of water in a science lesson added practical experience to their understanding of cubic measurement. These experiences, however, are unplanned and incidental.
80. The school has identified standards in mathematics as an area for improvement throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 2. A specialist mathematics teacher has been employed for the last two terms to teach the higher attaining pupils in Year 6. This has had a positive effect on building pupils' confidence and ensuring better standards for the more able pupils. Lessons are more focused since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and this is contributing to more effective teaching and learning in both key stages. Although the school has exceeded the targets set in agreement with the local authority, individual pupil targets that would help pupils strive to do better, are not set.
81. The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, but the school has not recognised and dealt with why pupils do better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Currently, the school is without a permanent co-ordinator and two teachers, one from each of the key stages work together well, leading and managing the subject effectively. They have produced an action plan, which identifies relevant weaknesses in

the subject, including the inconsistent recording and assessment of pupils' work, particularly at Key Stage 2. An experienced, permanent co-ordinator has been appointed from the beginning of next term, who plans to analyse results and monitor teaching and learning in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Consequently, the school is well placed to make further improvements to the subject.

## SCIENCE

82. Standards in science are average on entry and by the time the pupils leave the school in Year 6. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn particularly well and more reach the expected level and above by the end of Key Stage 1 than nationally.
83. Although most pupils make the expected progress as they move through the school, a significant number do not. Teachers in Key Stage 1 have high expectations of their pupils, and brighter pupils learn well, but the work is sometimes too challenging for the lower attaining. These pupils do not fully understand the work and their learning is insecure. Teachers throughout the school record insufficient detail of pupils' achievements. Consequently, when pupils move into Key Stage 2 and from class to class, assumptions have to be made about pupils' attainment. This is a particular problem when pupils move between the key stages. Some pupils are awarded a Level 3, for example, when they have only just begun work within that level. Teachers in Key Stage 2 do not have information about which aspects of this level pupils have not grasped and consequently, are unable to plan work to accurately meet their needs. Their assessments of pupils' achievements during lessons are inconsistent. Most teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils' achievements to plan appropriate work for pupils of different abilities. As a result, work is sometimes too challenging for less able pupils or too easy for higher attaining pupils. In addition, pupils are taught in mixed-age sets in Key Stage 2. Teachers take too little account of the rate at which the brighter younger pupils learn compared to lower attaining older pupils in the same set. The scheme of work and medium-term plans provide adequate guidance for teachers. However, because they are often implemented in a different order throughout the year, pupils moving from set to set may not have covered the same work. This interrupts the learning for these pupils and affects their progress.
84. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils carry out investigations with some help, and recognise and explain fair tests when, for example, they test whether sugar, salt or tea leaves dissolve in water. They accurately describe what happened and use simple tables to record their findings. Lower attaining pupils generally work with pupils of higher ability so that they do not always have the opportunity to make suggestions of their own. Pupils understand that exercise keeps people healthy, and that plants need light and water for growth. They group materials according to their rigidity or flexibility. They build simple electrical circuits and more able pupils understand that a bulb needs a complete circuit to work. By the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils select appropriate equipment for their investigations, such as Newton meters when testing the strength of paper. They predict what may happen during investigations and record their findings accurately on tables and graphs; higher attaining pupils use line graphs and pie charts. However, some average and lower attaining pupils generally follow the methods suggested by their teachers and have little opportunity to select their own resources and equipment or record by their own methods. Pupils name major organs in the body and begin to understand their functions. They explain photosynthesis and recognise that most food chains begin with plants. They describe the forces of magnetism and gravity, and higher attaining pupils understand the balance of force.
85. Teaching is satisfactory overall in both key stages. Teachers now have secure subject knowledge, which enables them to present scientific ideas clearly. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Probing questions extend pupils' scientific vocabulary well and deepen their understanding of scientific ideas. For example, when preparing for a visit

to South Hill Park they ask, "What sort of things might spoil the environment?" and "Why do you think that?" Pupils make good suggestions and discuss their ideas sensibly. Learning support assistants support pupils with special educational needs well and encourage them to become fully involved in their lessons. Good relationships with pupils and firm classroom control when necessary, ensure pupils listen attentively, respond appropriately and behave very well. Teachers base much of their teaching on experimental and investigative science. However, some teachers limit pupils' methods of recording work, restricting independence. When a Year 1 teacher encouraged pupils to record in their own way, however, pupils responded confidently using pictures and words. Teachers make good links with other subjects. For example, a Year 3/4 teacher extended pupils' understanding of cubic centimetres well when discussing the quantity of water given to plants. During investigations and other group activities, teachers interact very effectively with pupils to support and extend learning. This maintains pupils' enthusiasm for science and encourages them to work hard and apply intellectual effort to their tasks.

86. Teachers are not always sure exactly what they want pupils to learn by the end of lessons. Day-to-day assessment is inconsistent and teachers have too little information about pupils' achievements. For example, in a Year 6 class, all pupils had the same materials and equipment to carry out an investigation. Brighter pupils in that set did not have opportunities to plan and carry out the investigation for themselves.
87. The co-ordinator supports colleagues effectively through monitoring their teaching and providing training to improve their subject knowledge. However, although strengths and weaknesses in standards are monitored, they are not evaluated and there is insufficient information about strengths and weaknesses to raise standards further.

## **ART**

88. Pupils' progress and achievements in art are good in Key Stage 1 and standards are appropriate for their age by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to record their ideas, feelings and observations in a variety of imaginative ways using pencils, pastels and paint, or three-dimensional materials such as textiles and clay. They look at the work of other artists, paint enthusiastically in a similar style, and add to their cultural experience well when they visit art galleries or work with visiting artists. A good example of this is the mural completed in the style of Henri Rousseau by Year 6 pupils and linked to their work on the 'Jungle Book'.
89. The youngest pupils record their ideas and feelings confidently and the displays of fish and boat drawings linked to science show a good start to the development of pupils' artistic skills and techniques. Teachers build on these appropriately in Years 1 and 2, where there are very good examples of imaginative portrait paintings in, for example, the 'Gruesome Gallery of Pirates' in Year 1 and the 'Garstley the Great Pig' gallery in Year 2. These are not only well painted, but also contain good use of sequins, fabric wool and buttons to add artistic effect to the pictures. Work in the style of Bridget Riley shows pupils mix colour well to imitate her approach to art. The attractive displays in Key Stage 1 add to the learning ethos, and this is particularly so in the displays of 'the Grinlings'.
90. In Key Stage 2, pupils' sketchbooks contain artwork incorporating a good range of artistic skills and experiences. Pupils' observational drawings are of good quality, as in, for example, the 'toys' work from Year 4 where shading is used well, and the drawings of fruits where pastels are used sensitively. In Year 5, pupils explore design and patterns when listening to music by Vivaldi, and they produce effective observational drawings following their visit to a local church. Pupils in Year 6 produce interesting abstract designs in the style of Mondrian. There are some satisfactory examples of three-dimensional work in the fabric frogs in the lower key stage, and good work in the imaginative creatures in

Year 4. The school has a kiln, and photographs and displays show that work in clay is often of a good standard in Key Stage 2.

91. The teaching is good in Key Stage 1, where teachers plan very well. They teach a very well organised carousel of work incorporating observational drawing, printing, and clay work at the same time. Good resources are readily available. Pupils are taught appropriate artistic skills well. Teachers are confidently in control and there is always a quiet working atmosphere as a result. Classrooms are carefully arranged for each lesson, and the good displays create an attractive working environment. Only a small amount of teaching was seen in Key Stage 2, which was satisfactory overall. Teachers plan together well to ensure pupils have a good range of activities. Resources are readily available. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and maintain good discipline. As a result, pupils respond well, concentrate, and try hard. They have good attitudes towards their work in art. They use resources carefully and are proud of their achievements. However, in the mixed age classes, pupils experience the same activities and the assessment of pupils' artistic skills is not in place to enable teachers to focus on different learning objectives for pupils of different abilities and age. As a result, progress is barely satisfactory. However, the work on aboriginal art is good and there are good links through this to stories and folk tales in literacy.
92. The school has made satisfactory progress in art since the last inspection, apart from the lack of development of assessment in the subject to inform curriculum planning. The co-ordinator is aware of this and it is included in the current development plan as an area requiring improvement.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. During the inspection, no design and technology lessons were seen. An examination of some previous work, displays, photographs and teachers' plans show that design and technology is taught appropriately and that pupils achieve satisfactorily for their age by the end of both key stages. There is evidence of good planned progression in Key Stage 1, and in the early part of Key Stage 2, but it is less well developed at the end of the key stage, particularly in the production of step-by-step plans.
94. The youngest pupils design and make mobiles. They talk readily about what they have made and explain their ideas clearly. In Year 1, pupils draw their design, list the resources they are going to use, and make, for example, a model with a moving part, such as individually designed cats. By the end of the key stage, pupils' designs are more appropriately detailed and pupils move onto completing a simple evaluation sheet. Pupils suggest good ideas for making improvements to their work. For example, pupils in Year 2 have designed and made model chairs and tables out of wood, fabric and card, most of which are of a satisfactory standard, and some of which are colourful, well assembled, and imaginative. During the inspection, a small group of below average pupils worked well with a learning support assistant, making the chairs or tables from their original designs. They worked carefully, behaved well, and used saws safely to cut wood. Although the results were below those of most pupils of their age, the work was matched to their abilities and they were learning well.
95. In the early stages of Key Stage 2, all pupils have neatly presented design and technology books. Pupils' progress in designing and making is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good achievement and progress, particularly by the end of Year 4. The creature designs in pupils' books from this year group are very carefully drawn, labelled, and thoughtfully evaluated, using a well-designed evaluation sheet. Pupils used fabric, wire, card, paint and adhesives well in the making of the creatures. In other year groups, however, although designs are thoughtful and alternative designs shown, these are often not labelled. Nor are resources listed or evaluations recorded. As a result, progress in

design is underdeveloped. The making of products is better, however. Teacher records show systematic planning to make a cam as part of a working machine. Although pupils had taken almost all of the finished machines home, there was clear evidence from those that remained that the machines were constructed well and they worked. Progress is satisfactory in this aspect of design and technology.

96. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in this subject since the last inspection, particularly in the development of pupils' skills in research, investigation and design. However, it has yet to establish an assessment process to monitor pupils' progress and influence curriculum planning. The co-ordinator has already identified ways to develop the subject and is well placed to make further improvements to the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97. By the time the pupils leave the school, their attainment in geography is broadly as expected for pupils of their age. Progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. Provision for geography is much the same as found in the previous inspection. The same scheme of work guides teachers' planning of a comprehensive programme of skills and content to enable pupils to achieve above the expected standards by the end of Year 2. Map work is particularly well developed from the reception class to the end of the key stage, and the simple plans and routes displayed in the reception classes develop into more complex maps of the school and its locality, complete with keys, by Year 2. The programme is wide ranging, enabling pupils to learn about land use, and to make comparisons between rural and urban communities.
98. In Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory overall. During the lessons observed, progress was often good. Progress over time, seen in pupils' books, is not sustained, however, as a limited programme of work is taught. Some key geographical skills, such as mapping and compass work, are not developed fully. For instance, the two-figure grid references which pupils have learned by Year 2 are not extended. Many Year 4 pupils are uncertain about compass points, and a few placed Scotland in the South of England. The limited enquiry work noted in the previous inspection has not been increased, but the opportunities to explore environmental issues have improved, particularly for the older pupils. Whilst overall expectations of what Key Stage 2 pupils can and should achieve are insufficiently high, in recent lessons, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have been challenged appropriately to improve their understanding of geographical issues. For example, in their study of the economy and tourist facilities in St. Lucia and the impact these have on the environment.
99. Teaching in both key stages is satisfactory overall, but examples of good and very good teaching were seen in both key stages, which promoted good progress during lessons. In Key Stage 1, teachers made particularly good use of resources, which enabled pupils to compare the large scale English Channel area with the smaller scale versions in their atlases. The use of the overhead projector to display questions allowed all pupils to see their task clearly, and lively teaching heightened pupils' interest and encouraged them to think independently. Overall, resources for geography are inadequate, with pupils using atlases that are out of date, and being unable to study aerial photographs to make comparisons between different areas. In the stronger lessons in Key Stage 2, the teachers used a good range of methods to stimulate interest. For instance, older pupils increased their understanding of the issues related to tourism by role-playing the various interested parties.
100. Pupils enjoy their work in geography and usually respond well with good behaviour and positive attitudes, particularly those with special educational needs. These pupils are well supported in lessons, enabling them to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and sound progress in Key Stage 2.

101. Literacy and numeracy are not formally planned into geography lessons. However, attention is paid to expanding pupils' technical vocabulary, and many lessons open by introducing pupils to appropriate word lists. Information technology is not used sufficiently to enhance pupils' learning. The co-ordinator's action plan indicates how an updated scheme of work is to bring a greater cohesion to planning and teaching throughout the school. The absence of whole school assessment procedures means that teachers are not fully aware of the limitations in progress through the mixed-age classes.

## **HISTORY**

102. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. From discussions with pupils, and from the work seen in their books, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Although pupils in Key Stage 2 made satisfactory progress in the lessons observed, the work in their books indicates insufficient progress over time in the acquisition of important historical skills. In this respect, the subject is weaker than at the time of the previous inspection. Older pupils acquire factual knowledge readily but are not as confident in knowing the reasons why historical figures acted as they did, nor do they fully understand the nature of the sources from which they get evidence. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and get more chance than their peers to discuss with learning support assistants what they hear. This clarifies their thinking and they often make good progress as a result.
103. Teaching was observed in only a few lessons in Key Stage 2, and was satisfactory. In a well planned visit to St. Michael's Church, pupils were given a comprehensive list of the features to look for, which limited the opportunity for them to research for themselves the things they might expect to find. Whilst teachers put in a lot of effort to ensure pupils had first hand experience of the artefacts in and around the Church, the recording in pupils' books suggests that little earlier work involved hands-on observation of historical items. The books contain only limited reference to the chronology of events, and many pupils are not confident in answering questions such as "How long ago did that happen?" As in the previous inspection, insufficient attention is given to interpreting historical information.
104. The co-ordinator, by selecting a whole school scheme of work based on the national guidelines, has ensured that more cohesive whole school planning builds appropriately on pupils' previous learning. However, the absence of a curriculum map, or procedure for dealing with the mixed-age classes, means that the learning of skills proceeds in large steps rather than smooth increments. Although a portfolio of pupils' work across the school gives an indication of standards in general, the lack of consistent assessment procedures means that the co-ordinator does not obtain a clear picture of pupils' achievement, or of trends within the subject. Literacy is an important element in history as pupils use their reading skills to take information from the board, and use their writing skills to record their views. Teachers encourage a variety of styles, so that pupils may be writing, for instance, a newspaper account, a letter format, or a diary as one of the participants in an event. Information technology, however, is not having a sufficiently strong impact on history work.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

105. Pupils in both key stages are not reaching the standards expected nationally and learning in the subject is unsatisfactory. They have deteriorated since the last inspection.
106. Children are introduced to computers in the nursery and Key Stage 1. They become more familiar with computers and other information technology equipment as they move into Year 2. They use the mouse and keyboard for word processing short texts. They use upper and lower case letters appropriately, enter spaces, and correct simple text, but are not yet familiar with the keyboard layout and the process is slow. With the help of support

staff, they become familiar with 'drag and drop', closing the text box, and 'binning' unwanted text. However, too many pupils lack the knowledge and skills to 'log on', find a program, save their work, or escape from the program. There is evidence that pupils know that data can sometimes be represented graphically, but this is limited. In Year 2, pupils have the opportunity to use a digital camera and, with help, scan photographs of themselves into the computer and add a line of simple text.

107. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build on the word-processing skills learnt in Key Stage 1 and can change the font, size, and colour of text. Some can input data and create a bar chart or pie diagram from the information obtained. During art lessons, pupils use graphical modelling to assemble coloured shapes in the style of Mondrian and Matisse. However, they have insufficient, sustained access to the computers. Consequently, their skills in many areas of the curriculum are weak. Their experiences do not sufficiently include control technology.
108. Although the lessons seen were sound overall, discussions with pupils and teachers show that teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge, skills and confidence to teach the whole of the information technology curriculum effectively and meet the needs of all pupils. In some lessons, when whole classes are grouped around one computer during a demonstration, some pupils cannot see and therefore, have difficulty grasping the skill being taught.
109. Pupils' attitudes towards the care and use of information technology equipment are good. Pupils of all ages respond with interest and enthusiasm to opportunities to use computers, are eager to learn new aspects of their work and this has some impact on the quality of their learning.
110. Currently there is no system in place for assessing pupils' achievements as they move through the school. A significant minority of pupils have access to a computer at home and many of their skills have been learnt there. Curriculum planning tends to be based on providing relevant experiences in a variety of applications of information technology, rather than systematically extending pupil's skills. However, the school recognises the current shortcomings in all aspects of provision. Staff are committed to raising standards and are appropriately targeting its efforts to this end. Since the last inspection, teachers have endeavoured to improve their own knowledge of information technology. Since the installation of the computer network, improvements continue to be made. The current temporary co-ordinator does not have an official role until next term, but she has already shown good leadership skills and identified many areas for improvement. Resources have been updated and improved and are now easily accessible. It is intended that funds will be made available to purchase some basic computers for word processing so that pupils, including those with special needs, can have more on-going access and first-hand experience. Plans include up-dating existing class computers and ensuring all classrooms have new printers. Pupil self-assessment and teacher assessment sheets for all pupils are included and will be put into use from September 2000. In-service training courses are planned for the autumn term, both school based and through the 'New Opportunities Fund' training scheme.

## **MUSIC**

111. Pupils' progress and achievements in music are as expected for the pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time the pupils leave the school. Attainment and progress remain the same as at the time of the last inspection. There is more evidence of composition work in Years 5 and 6, so overall progress since the last inspection report is satisfactory.

112. The younger pupils in Key Stage 1 enthusiastically sing songs from memory. They add actions or clap rhythms to familiar tunes such as 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor'. They add their own words to a tune and suggest phrases such as 'smack your bottom' or 'wink your eye' to create a unison song. Pupils enjoy listening to music. They contribute interesting interpretations, and identify some musical instruments correctly, such as the flute or violin, when listening to an excerpt from 'Swan Lake'. By the end of the key stage, pupils use their voices, tuned and un-tuned percussion, and clapped rhythms satisfactorily to create a rhythmic atmospheric accompaniment to the story of Cinderella.
113. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 give satisfactory responses when they listen and respond to music. They recognise more instruments, such as the cello or bass, building on the work from Key Stage 1, and are beginning to recognise works such as 'Peter and the Wolf'. They sing with enthusiastic enjoyment, which they did when all of the lower school sang 'Boom Chica Boom' and 'Moses I know you're the Man' during a lively singing session in the school hall. The teacher introduced two-part harmony successfully, but there was insufficient time to focus on improving diction and breathing. Progress and achievement at the end of the key stage are uneven, and sometimes teachers are uncertain of the level at which to aim their lessons. For example, in one lesson seen, pupils responded well when listening to music and wrote satisfactory graphic scores. However, in other lessons pupils wrote graphic scores for their own compositions that were too simple and pupils became restless.
114. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is good overall. Teachers plan their lessons well. They teach with enthusiasm and at a lively pace, so that pupils enjoy the activities. The activities are often well known to the pupils and matched to their interests so they approach lessons confidently. The instruments are chosen well from a good range of resources, which are stored in the studio - a very good area for music. Relationships are very good, and empathetic, so all pupils feel secure. All teachers have good subject knowledge. However, sometimes the more able pupils are not challenged fully as all pupils are usually taught the same and set the same task.
115. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. Lesson planning is satisfactory throughout the key stage. The teachers have sound subject knowledge. They choose resources to match the activities well when, for example, pupils compose their own music. Relationships are good, and even when some pupils are difficult, teachers remain calm and positive in their approach. They use time effectively during lessons to maintain progress through the planned activities to achieve the lesson's objectives. Questions and explanations are used to involve all pupils suitably, and pupils' work is discussed and shared with the class well. However, all teachers in Key Stage 2 have still to develop consistent and effective assessment procedures when teaching mixed age and mixed ability classes. As a result, some pupils are not extended in some lessons.
116. Pupils have good attitudes toward learning. They try hard throughout the lesson and contribute willingly to all activities. Overall, their behaviour is good, and they share resources and ideas when working in groups sensibly and well.
117. A number of pupils receive instrumental tuition. These lessons and the extra-curricular recorder and guitar clubs contribute significantly to pupils' interest and achievements in music. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post, and at present she is reviewing the school's schemes of work. The head teacher recognises the need to establish effective assessment procedures for the subject to influence curriculum planning and raise standards, and this is part of the school development plan. The school is well placed to make further improvements in this subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**



118. By the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time the pupils leave the school, their attainment is broadly as expected for pupils of their age. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has provided staff training with the support of the local authority's 'Active Sports Officer'. This ensures teachers are clear about health and safety issues and improves their subject expertise. A good range of extra curricular activities, such as football, netball, volleyball, cricket, rugby, athletics and cross country running, develops pupils' physical skills well. A number of pupils take part in tournaments with other local schools, adding to their interest and enthusiasm for the subject.
119. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good understanding of the effects of exercise, and Year 2 pupils know and explain the reasons for warming up. They understand the rules of games and improve their racing skills when, for example, Year 2 pupils race, in groups, whilst bouncing balls or balancing quoits. In Key Stage 2, pupils devise their own warming up exercises when they are unable to have an outdoor lesson because of the rain. They understand the importance of warming up their muscles before exercise and cooling down at the end. They pay appropriate attention to health and safety issues and develop satisfactory skills of gymnastics, games, swimming, and dance. In a Year 6 cricket lesson, for example, they improved their hand and eye co-ordination through practising bowling and batting. By the time they leave the school, nearly all of the pupils swim at least 25 metres. They confidently practise and improve skills and try to apply their understanding of other people's performance to their own.
120. The quality of teaching overall is sound. Teachers explain pupils' activities clearly so that pupils know what is expected of them and are interested and enthusiastic about their lessons. Good questioning, such as, "Why is rolling the ball so important?" encourages pupils to understand the skills of cricket. Pupils are keen to share their ideas and answer eagerly. Teachers pay good regard to safety so that pupils handle equipment sensibly and move around the hall safely. The use of pupil demonstrations to enable others to improve is variable. When teachers use them successfully and encourage pupil tutoring, such as in a Year 6 cricket lesson, pupils try hard to improve their skills and learning is good. When teachers do not use them, such as in a Year 3 and 4 English country-dance lesson, pupils become confused and make little progress. Teachers make insufficient use of pupil evaluation of their own or other's performance. This limits pupils' opportunity to be aware of their own learning or to help others to improve. Assessment of pupils' achievements is unsatisfactory so teachers plan lessons based on the scheme of work rather than on pupils' previous attainments. Consequently, some pupils do not reach the high standards of which they are capable.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

121. Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Year 2 pupils have a thoughtful and caring attitude, and absorb many of the ideas in a simple form, conveying their knowledge clearly in speech or writing. Most Key Stage 1 pupils are good at recalling their previous learning about Christianity and Judaism. They have a clear idea of special places and events. Year 6 pupils have a good content knowledge, adding details about the Muslim and Sikh religions and making accurate comparisons between these major faiths.
122. Sound teaching throughout the school contributes to satisfactory progress. Teaching overall has improved since the previous inspection because teachers' knowledge and expertise in religious topics have increased. Teachers plan sequences of lessons so that there is better continuity of learning than found in the previous inspection, with a more effective linkage of reflection and celebration. The co-ordinator has acquired a good range of artefacts since 1996. These enable teachers to incorporate a more practical element into their lessons and provide pupils with stronger learning conditions, getting hands on

experience of, for instance, the Jewish Kippah or the Sikh chauri. Teachers plan visits to centres of worship, and invite experts into school to extend pupils' learning experiences further. Pupils increasing knowledge is recorded in their books with great care, extending the complexity of ideas and comparisons. By Year 6, pupils are learning abstract principles of equality and justice in their comparisons of the influence of Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

123. In those lessons where pupils get the opportunity to suggest and discuss their own ideas, the learning is stronger because pupils develop greater understanding. Because the school's resource of books is limited, pupils have limited opportunities to develop their own ideas or approaches, mostly taking on board those of the teachers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants, who enable them to put sometimes difficult ideas clearly into words, help them with recording, and enable them to make good progress.
124. The balance of time for Year 6 to study religion has increased appropriately since the previous inspection, in order to allow the pupils to complete the syllabus. The planning of lessons does not always take account of the mixed age organisation of the classes, however. When it does, and teachers match tasks appropriately to the age and ability of pupils, as in a Year 2 lesson on synagogues, learning is particularly effective and pupils are more alert and more confident in their recording. Lesson planning overall tends to focus on learning about religion, with less attention paid to learning from religion.
125. Literacy skills play an important part in religious education lessons, for instance to read the vocabulary lists which most teachers prepare, or writing their accounts. Numeracy skills and the use of information technology are less prominent. Teachers do not compile formal assessments of pupils' attainment, but the co-ordinator's action plan indicates the timetable for incorporating the new Agreed Syllabus with assessment based on defined levels. At present a comprehensive annotated portfolio of work charts pupils' progress.