

INSPECTION REPORT

CATSHILL FIRST SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116658

Headteacher: Linda Tamplin

Reporting inspector: Mr David Westall
2414

Dates of inspection: 28th February - 3rd March 2000

Inspection number: 190550

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gibb Lane Catshill Bromsgrove Worcestershire
Postcode:	B61 0JP
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Nicky Bradbury
Date of previous inspection:	18 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art Design and technology	Characteristics Results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? Overall effectiveness
Lizzie Forster	Lay inspector	Equal Opportunities	Care for pupils Partnership with Parents
Brian McCutcheon	Team inspector	Geography Information technology	Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils Personal development
Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English Religious education Special educational needs	Attitudes, values and personal development
Jill Head	Team inspector	Music Physical development Areas of learning for children under five	
Mike Watkins	Team inspector	Mathematics History	

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school admits children from the age of three in the nursery class, and pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. At present, there are 312 pupils altogether in the reception to Year 4 classes, and 60 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who receive free school meals is below the national average. However, the fact that hot meals are not provided and the free meals comprise a basic sandwich lunch, tends to deter some potential claimants. The percentage on the school's register of special educational needs is above the national average, and three pupils have statements of special educational needs. On entry to the nursery, and at the age of five, the overall attainment of most pupils is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school which has improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and pupils make mainly sound progress in their learning, often from a fairly low starting point when they enter the school. The headteacher has good leadership and management skills, promotes teamwork among staff and has a clear vision for the school. Good provision is made for pupils' personal development, and they demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, form constructive relationships with others and behave well. The strengths of the school outweigh its weaknesses, and it is in a good position to make further improvements. Overall, it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides good leadership, promotes teamwork and has made a significant and beneficial impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the school since her appointment in 1998.
- Mathematics teaching is good in Key Stage 2.
- The school is successful in encouraging pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning, to try hard in their lessons and to behave well.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is a caring community; relationships are based on respect and trust, and the contributions of all pupils are valued by the staff.
- Standards in music are a little above average in Years 3 and 4.
- The school has a good relationship with parents, and parents find it easy to discuss their children with the staff.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, by placing a greater emphasis on developing and consolidating pupils' skills in spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar.
- Standards in science, by ensuring that more able pupils do not coast through some lessons as a result of being set work which is too easy; and allocating additional time for the subject.
- Provision for children who are under five, by improving planning in the nursery and the quality of teaching in one reception class.
- The headteacher and subject co-ordinators need to analyse samples of pupils' work and the results of testing more rigorously, to identify and target areas for improvement.
- Standards in art and geography, by ensuring that key skills are taught more systematically.
- Procedures to ensure that teachers match pupils' standards accurately against National Curriculum levels of attainment.
- A formal annual general meeting for parents must be provided, in order to meet statutory requirements.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plans which will be sent to all parents and carers of children at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound progress in addressing most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection, in 1996, and is now a better school. Pupils are now making sound progress in most aspects of their learning, including in the development of their investigation and problem solving skills. The last inspection found that 40% of all lessons demonstrated unsatisfactory teaching, and this is reduced to 10% in the current inspection. The teaching of English has substantially improved since the last inspection; and the teaching in mathematics is now mainly good in Key Stage 2, in contrast to the unsatisfactory teaching in the subject in 1996. Initiatives are prioritised more effectively on the school development plan than they were in 1996; and the headteacher has improved the procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching, across the school. The roles of subject co-ordinators are now clearly defined, and co-ordinators are making a sound contribution to the leadership and management of their subjects. The last report identified weaknesses in the use of assessments and recording procedures to promote pupils' learning, and the school has only been partially successful in addressing this deficiency. While the day-to-day assessment made by teachers are generally satisfactory, insufficient use is made of the assessment of pupils' completed work, including through testing, to identify strengths and weaknesses and strategies to promote higher standards.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	A	A	E	D
Writing	B	A	E	D
Mathematics	A	A	E	D

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

The table shows a significant fall in the results achieved in 1999, compared to the two earlier years. This, in part, is due to the high proportion of pupils with special needs in the 1999 cohort. The school attributes the good results in 1997 and 1998 to the very high concentration on specific preparation for the statutory tests, and its deliberately reduced emphasis on practice for the tests in 1999. The 1999 results are a little less favourable than the standards currently demonstrated by Key Stage 1 pupils, but reflect the overall performance of the pupils more accurately than the earlier results.

Inspection findings show that pupils' current standards in reading and writing are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. During the literacy hour, pupils achieve higher standards in reading, in their knowledge about language and their understanding of the writing process than they are able to achieve in their independent work. The standards they achieve in independent work, across the school, and in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, tend to be lower for several reasons: in writing, weaknesses in handwriting mean that few have developed a fluent style and many are slow to record their ideas; pupils have poor spelling skills; and pupils frequently do not apply, when working on their own, the punctuation and grammatical skills they have been taught. These weaknesses in the 'secretarial' aspects of pupils' written work detract from the otherwise sound aspects of their work. For example, most pupils write interestingly for a wide range of purposes and can match their style to suit their audience.

In mathematics, inspection findings show that most pupils achieve the nationally expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1, but a significant minority do not reach this level. In Year 4, pupils' overall attainment in mathematics, including in numeracy, is average, and reflects the impact of good teaching in the subject in Key Stage 2. In science, the overall attainment of most pupils just reaches the average range at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. However, many do not reach this level and few exceed it.

Across the school, pupils achieve standards which are satisfactory for their ages in information technology, religious education, design and technology, history and physical education. Insufficient evidence was available to assess standards in music in Key Stage 1, but they are good in Key Stage 2. However, in art and geography, standards are generally below average in both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic, enjoy coming to school and are interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils generally behave well, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with teachers and with each other. They share equipment sensibly, listen with interest during discussions and respect the ideas and beliefs of others. Pupils respond well when given responsibility for a range of school duties.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	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.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory, or better, in 90% of all lessons; and was good, and occasionally very good, in 36% of all lessons. The most effective teaching was in Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 4, while the least effective lessons were usually in the nursery and reception. There are significant weaknesses in the planning for nursery children; and the teaching of under fives in reception is good in one class and unsatisfactory in the other. In English, the lessons observed were mainly satisfactory, although good or very good teaching was sometimes demonstrated. Overall, the literacy hour is being implemented well and is having a positive impact on pupils' knowledge about language, about reading and writing as processes, and on their vocabulary. However, some important aspects of the subject are not adequately addressed during the literacy hour and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' progress, particularly in writing. For example, teachers pay insufficient attention to the teaching of spelling; and they rarely require pupils to apply their spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammatical skills with sufficient rigour in their independent writing. In mathematics, the daily numeracy lesson is having a beneficial effect and the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In science, the teaching is broadly satisfactory in both key stages. It enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in the subject, although more able pupils are sometimes given work which is too easy and this restricts their learning. The quality of teaching is good in music, in Key Stage 2. Although few lessons were observed in art and geography, evidence from pupils' completed work shows that teachers do not plan adequately for the progressive development of pupils' key skills in these subjects, and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory, as a consequence. Across the school, teaching is characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, an orderly atmosphere in lessons, clear explanations of tasks and sound use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in both key stages, and enables them to make sound progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, and ample time is allocated for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, the time allocated for science is barely adequate; and planning for geography and art does not ensure that pupils make systematic and satisfactory progress in these subjects. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound. The provision for more able pupils is less secure, but is satisfactory overall.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual development is sound and the provision for their moral, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school places a high priority on pupils' welfare, and is a secure and caring community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has good leadership and management skills. She has a clear vision for the school, and provides a firm steer to its work. She promotes teamwork among staff and develops positive relationships with parents. Through regular classroom observations and careful feedback to the staff, she has made a significant and beneficial impact on the quality of teaching in the school since her appointment in 1998. However, she needs to give more emphasis to the analysis of the standards pupils achieve in the school, and she recognises this. Co-ordinators provide sound leadership and management of their subjects but, like the headteacher, need to study pupils' completed work more carefully to check their progress and standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a core of highly committed members, and makes a positive contribution to the life of the school. The governors with responsibility for literacy and numeracy are taking a keen interest in their subjects, and regularly observe teaching. Appropriate committees have been established, and all provide sound support for the management of the school. Statutory requirements are met except for the provision of a formal annual general meeting for parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Overall, this is a weakness in the school. While procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching and curriculum planning are sound, those for judging pupils' progress and standards are underdeveloped. Samples of pupils' work, and the results of the statutory tests, are not analysed with sufficient rigour. As a consequence, the school is in a weak position to identify and target specific areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed carefully by the headteacher and governors, and financial planning is appropriately linked to priorities identified in the school development plan. Overall, the school makes

	sound use of finance, staffing, accommodation and learning resources. As a consequence, pupils generally make sound progress in their learning and the school provides satisfactory value for money.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The staff being easy to talk to.• The school's expectations and positive values.• That their children enjoy coming to school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents would like more information from the school.• Some would like the school to work more closely with parents.• Some would like better behaviour in Key Stage 2.• Some would like a greater range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspection findings fully support parents' positive views about the school. There was no evidence to support the view expressed, by a minority of parents, about poor standards of behaviour or the lack of extra-curricular activities. Inspection judgements show that the school keeps parents well informed and provides a variety of opportunities for formal and informal contacts. However, the lack of an annual general meeting for parents is a weakness which needs to be addressed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. On entry to the school, children's overall attainment is mainly below average. In the nursery and in the reception classes, the under fives make mainly satisfactory progress in the development of early literacy skills but their standards in these, as well as in speaking, are still below average when they reach the age of five. In the nursery, pupils' progress in mathematics is spasmodic but in reception it is generally satisfactory, and their mathematical skills and understanding are just a little below average at the age of five. Children's scientific knowledge and skills are below average at the age of five.
2. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 statutory tests and teacher assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science were well below the national average and below the results achieved by similar schools. In 1997 and 1998, the school's Key Stage 1 SATs results in reading, writing and mathematics were mainly well above the national average, and were an improvement on the 1996 results. The 1999 results consequently show a significant reduction in the overall standards achieved. This, in part, is due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the 1999 cohort. The school attributes the good results in 1997 and 1998 to the very high concentration on specific preparation for the statutory tests, and its reduced emphasis on practice for the tests in 1999. The 1999 results tend to reflect the overall performance of the pupils, across the school, more accurately than the earlier results; for example, in the achievements of the current Year 2 pupils and those in Year 4. The standards currently demonstrated by the Year 4 pupils are not as high as might reasonably be expected, given their good results as Year 2 pupils in 1998. However, a careful scrutiny of their work over the last year shows they have made broadly satisfactory progress over that period, and supports the headteacher's view that the cohort's 1998 SATs may not have accurately reflected pupils' secure knowledge and understanding.
3. In English, inspection findings show that pupils' current attainment in reading and writing is below the nationally expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1. In Year 4, the standard of reading is below average, and the standard of pupils' writing is well below average. During the literacy hour, pupils generally make sound progress and achieve higher standards in reading, in their knowledge about language and their understanding of the writing process than they are able to achieve in their independent work. This results from the supportive framework of lesson planning, and effective instruction and guidance provided by their teachers. The standards they achieve in independent work, across the school, and in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, tend to be lower for several reasons: in writing, weaknesses in handwriting mean that few have developed a fluent concise style and are therefore slow to record their ideas; pupils have poor spelling skills and few have strategies to overcome this weakness; and pupils frequently do not apply, when working on their own, the knowledge and understanding of punctuation and grammar that they have been taught. These weaknesses in the 'secretarial' aspects of pupils' written work detracts considerably from the otherwise sound aspects of their work. For example, most pupils write interestingly for a wide range of purposes and match the language and style of their writing appropriately, according to their audience. In reading, most pupils make broadly satisfactory progress across the school. However, most pupils have too limited an acquaintance with the work of significant children's authors and too many of the lower attaining pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 do not apply appropriate word-attack skills when tackling unknown words.
4. In mathematics, inspection findings show that most pupils achieve the nationally expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1, but a significant minority do not reach this level. In Year 4, pupils' overall attainment in mathematics, including in the key skill of numeracy, is average. Standards have improved since the last inspection in 1996, and pupils are now making sound overall progress in their mathematics learning across the school, and their progress is sometimes good in Key Stage 2. The successful implementation of the daily numeracy lesson and improvements in the quality of teaching in the subject are having a beneficial effect on

standards.

5. In science, pupils generally make adequate progress in their lessons, but more able pupils sometimes mark time. At the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, the overall attainment of most pupils just reaches the average range. However, a significant minority do not attain this level and few exceed it. The subject is allocated barely sufficient time, and this restricts the standards that are achieved. However, there is evidence of improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' progress in science was unsatisfactory in Years 2, 3 and 4. The introduction of a good scheme of work, and teachers' increased emphasis on teaching investigation skills, has contributed to this improvement.
6. In information technology, the school has also made improvements since the last inspection, when pupils' skills were found to be unsatisfactory. Pupils now make sound overall progress in their learning in the subject, and most achieve standards which are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4.
7. In religious education, standards have improved since the last inspection, and are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, reflecting the sound progress of pupils across the school. In design and technology, history and physical education, pupils also make sound progress in their learning, and achieve satisfactory standards for their ages in both key stages. In music, there was insufficient evidence available during the inspection to judge pupils' standards in Key Stage 1. However, in Key Stage 2, progress in the subject is good, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected and progress was judged to be slow. As a consequence, pupils currently demonstrate standards in performing and composing which are a little higher than average for their ages, in Years 3 and 4.
8. In art, pupils make uneven and mainly unsatisfactory progress in their learning, across the school, and their standards are generally below those expected for pupils of similar ages. This results from a lack of emphasis on the teaching of key skills in the subject in a systematic way, and insufficient attention being given to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject. In geography, pupils also make mainly unsatisfactory progress, and demonstrate standards which are below average. This results from pupils having insufficient opportunities to ask and answer geographical questions, to analyse evidence and to communicate their conclusions.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, achieving standards which are at mainly satisfactory, and sometimes better, when account is taken of their prior attainment and their individual learning needs. The more able pupils make generally sound progress in mathematics, but sometimes mark time in science, and are also capable of achieving higher standards than they do in some classes in certain aspects of their work in English. Overall, however, more able pupils make satisfactory progress.
10. The school appropriately recognises that procedures for assessing the standards that pupils achieve, including through the critical analysis of statutory and non-statutory testing, are currently underdeveloped. As a consequence, it is in a weak position to identify specific aspects of pupils' performance which need to be targeted to achieve higher standards. Some broad targets have been set in English and mathematics, but they are not securely based on thorough analysis of current standards, so have limited value. The school's progress towards these broad targets is satisfactory, overall.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils of all ages come to school happily and are keen to take part in the full range of opportunities provided. They are interested in their lessons and have good attitudes to learning. Within their capabilities, and in response to teachers' expectations of them, they try hard to answer questions, are confident enough to ask questions of their own or to pass comment on issues arising in lessons, and, where relevant, draw on previous learning or on their personal experience to illuminate discussions.

12. The vast majority of pupils of all ages behave well at all times and in all contexts, whether in class, in the playground or around the school. Very rarely, a few pupils, usually boys, are inclined to forget themselves and behave in an inappropriate way, either when the framework for learning lacks sufficient structure, as in a physical education lesson, or when a teacher's management of learning is not as rigorous as it might be. Such incidents are rare, however, and pupils are more likely to impress by their trustworthiness and by their sensible behaviour, for example when they work together in groups, or when they stay in their classrooms over lunch-time. Any instances of bullying are rare and short-lived. Pupils understand well what constitutes good and bad behaviour, as is evident in religious education lessons where they readily identify the moral principles underlying famous stories from the Bible and draw parallels with experiences in their own lives.
13. In lessons and elsewhere, pupils forge constructive relationships with one another, with their teachers, and with all other adults with whom they come into contact. They share equipment sensibly, listen with interest during discussions, taking turns without calling out, and build positively on others' ideas in collaborative work. Pupils organise themselves well, group leaders emerging naturally through the power or relevance of their ideas and the respect they earn from their peers, not through aggression. Boys and girls work together fairly and without fuss, and there is no evidence of racism.
14. In religious education lessons, in particular, pupils demonstrate their understanding of how one person's actions has an impact on others, and how every action, good or bad, has a natural consequence. They discuss, with unusual honesty, ways in which their own deeds have affected others, or ways in which they themselves have been affected, revealing sensitivity in their own feelings, and showing empathy for others. They are interested in, and show respect for, the beliefs and traditions specific to various Christian denominations, and to the other major world faiths they have studied.
15. When given the opportunity to take responsibility, pupils respond well. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy taking responsibility for registration, and pupils of all ages take their routine classroom duties, or whole-school duties, seriously. Shared reading, involving, for example, pupils from Year 1 and Year 4, works well. Pupils from both years take pride in 'helping' one another, and they co-operate effectively, to their mutual benefit. Pupils are eager to help the various charities supported by the school, and their responsibility as citizens is also evident in the letters they compose and send, for example, to national organisations concerned with various health issues. Teachers try hard, with varying degrees of success, to make sure pupils use their initiative and take some responsibility for their own learning. Where this is done well, as in a religious education lesson in Year 1, pupils grow in self-esteem and confidence as they solve problems and make decisions. Most pupils also take responsibility for the work they are given to do at home, sometimes with little support. In many lessons, however, they do not always remember to apply, in all their work, the 'secretarial' skills they have learned in other contexts: they do not always take care with their handwriting or apply the rules governing punctuation and spelling that they have been taught.
16. Attendance at the school is satisfactory, and the levels of unauthorised absence are broadly in line with the national average. The self registration and early access to classrooms encourages good punctuality. Registration procedures are correctly completed morning and afternoon and lessons start very promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching was sound, or better, in 90% of all lessons; and was good, and occasionally very good, in 36% of all lessons. The most effective teaching was in Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 4, while the least effective lessons were usually in the nursery and reception. Although 10% of all lessons were unsatisfactory, this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when 40% of all lessons demonstrated unsatisfactory teaching.

18. The quality of teaching in the nursery varied from sound to unsatisfactory; and was barely adequate, overall, during the inspection. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about the usual teaching for these children since they were being taught by a supply teacher, with no previous nursery experience, during the inspection. However, there are significant weaknesses in the planning for the nursery, undertaken by the permanent nursery teacher, which suggests a lack of clarity and focus in the teaching. The teaching of children who are under five in the reception classes ranges from good in one class to mainly unsatisfactory in the other. In the best lessons, the teacher has a clear understanding of how young children learn, activities build on previous learning; and instruction, guidance and praise are used effectively to promote children's understanding and skills. Unsatisfactory teaching is demonstrated in reception where the pace of learning is too slow and expectations are poorly matched to pupils' needs and capabilities. In the nursery, there is little evidence of assessment or monitoring of children's learning. As a consequence, the activities are not always sufficiently purposeful or clearly planned to meet the children's learning needs. Overall, although there is effective teaching in one reception class, weaknesses outweigh the strengths of teaching for the under fives.
19. In English, in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, the teaching is substantially better than when the school was last inspected. The lessons observed demonstrated mainly sound, but sometimes good or very good teaching. The literacy hour is well planned, teachers provide effective introductions to lessons, establish clear targets for learning, and use good questioning skills. Overall, the literacy hour is being implemented well and is having a particularly positive impact on pupils' knowledge about language, about reading and writing as processes, and on their general and subject-specific vocabulary. However, some important aspects of the subject are not adequately addressed in the literacy hour and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' progress, particularly in writing. For example, teachers pay insufficient attention to the teaching of spelling; and they rarely require pupils to apply their 'secretarial' writing skills in writing for real purposes in English or other subjects. They intervene too little to help pupils to develop and improve pieces of writing; and they give insufficient emphasis to constructive, critical evaluation when discussing pupils' work. There are also weaknesses in teachers' skills in assessing the standards of attainment required to achieve specific National Curriculum targets, particularly above Level 2. This weakness sometimes leads to work being set which is undemanding; and pupils' progress slows as a consequence.
20. In mathematics, the National Numeracy Strategy is having a beneficial effect, and the quality of teaching is sound in Key Stage 1 and is good in Key Stage 2. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, teachers' planning is generally thorough, and good teaching is sometimes demonstrated when teachers' expectations are high and their subject knowledge is good. Weaknesses, in some lessons, include slow pace, few opportunities for pupils to explain what they have learned, and low expectations of pupils' performance. In these lessons, pupils' achievements are restricted. Overall, however, the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in mathematics, including in the key skill of numeracy, in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, lessons are well structured. Oral sessions are brisk, but time is still found for pupils to explain their strategies for mental calculation. The good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning; and pupils concentrate well and enjoy their lessons. Teachers' assessments during lessons are satisfactory, across the school, but they do not analyse the results of statutory and non-statutory tests with enough precision to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance.
21. In science, the teaching is broadly satisfactory in both key stages and enables pupils to make adequate progress in the subject, although more able pupils sometimes mark time when given work which is too easy. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall, although weaknesses are evident in Year 2 when there is sometimes a lack of clarity about what pupils are to learn, and progress slows as a consequence. The last OFSTED inspection found that teachers provided pupils with insufficient opportunities to develop their investigation skills, but this is no longer the case.
22. In religious education and physical education, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, but very good teaching is sometimes demonstrated in religious education, and pupils sometimes benefit from good teaching in physical education. In design and technology, the teaching is

satisfactory overall. In geography, no teaching was observed in Key Stage 1, but the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 were mainly sound. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work completed during the last year, shows that teachers generally give insufficient attention to the development of pupils' geographical skills. As a consequence, pupils' progress in geography is unsatisfactory in both key stages. In information technology, history and art, insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. However, teachers are benefiting from in-service training in information technology, and their planning for the subject is satisfactory. In history, lessons are well planned, and teachers provide pupils with opportunities for active involvement in finding out, and experiencing through role play, what life was like in the past. In art, evidence from teachers' planning and pupils' completed work suggests that some teachers require in-service training to develop their knowledge and expertise in the subject; and pupils' progress in art is spasmodic and mainly unsatisfactory as a result. In music, insufficient lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 to judge the overall quality of the teaching, but the teaching is good in Key Stage 2, and results in pupils making good progress in developing their skills in performing and composing.

23. Overall, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. For the most part, teachers set suitable work for these pupils, taking account of the National Curriculum requirements and of the targets set in pupils' individual education plans. They make every effort to ensure that all pupils contribute to discussions. Learning support assistants are well briefed about the learning objectives in lessons and about pupils' individual targets, and they make a significant contribution to the progress these pupils make during lessons.
24. Across the school, teaching is characterised by good relationships between pupils and teachers, an orderly atmosphere in lessons, clear explanations of tasks and sound use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding. The learning intentions of lessons are usually defined clearly, and teachers have secure knowledge in most subjects. As a consequence, pupils respond well during lessons, listening attentively to their teachers and concentrating and persevering with their tasks.

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

25. The curriculum for children who are under five years old appropriately takes account of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's 'Desirable Learning Outcomes'; and a broadly satisfactory range of learning opportunities are provided in the nursery and reception classes. However, while planning for the reception classes is sound, overall, the implementation is uneven between the two classes and ranges from good to unsatisfactory. In the nursery, there are deficiencies in long and medium term planning which have a significant impact on provision. The organisation and management of day-to-day activities does not benefit from a clear overview of progression in childrens' learning across the key areas identified in the national guidelines.
26. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced, and statutory requirements are met, including for the provision of religious education. The school allocates ample time for the development of literacy and numeracy, and uses sound strategies for teaching these basic skills. However, the time currently allocated to science is only just adequate to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
27. The last OFSTED inspection found that the curriculum was broadly appropriate and largely in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the inspection judged that some work in English and mathematics was not sufficiently related to the National Curriculum; and that in history and geography, national requirements were not well met. The report also identified the need to promote more practical, problem solving and creative applications of pupils' skills and knowledge. The school has successfully introduced the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and work in English and mathematics appropriately follows the recommended structure. A sound Curriculum Planning Policy has been formulated, and implemented, and an appropriate system of long, medium and short term planning has been established. Teachers now plan collaboratively, and effectively, in key stages and in year group teams; and good use

has been made of helpful guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to improve medium term planning. As a consequence, the school is now giving more emphasis to providing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge; and the teaching of history has improved. However, the QCA scheme for geography has only recently been introduced and has yet to have a significant impact on teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1. There is a lack of coherence in the progressive development of key skills in this subject and in art, across the school.

28. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy full access to the school curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Where necessary or relevant, they receive support in the form of special apparatus or resources, as well as additional adult help. Teachers' short-term planning clearly indicates teachers' intentions for differentiated work and, overall, provision is usually sound and is sometimes good. The provision for more able pupils is satisfactory, overall, although work in science and English sometimes provides them with insufficient challenge.
29. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities available for the pupils has been improved since the last inspection, and is good. Pupils in the lower school have access to clubs for recorders, computers, country dancing and a sports project; while the provision for older pupils includes a sports club, recorders, football, country dancing, netball, computers and a reading partnership. These are led, in the main, by the conscientious teaching staff and are popular with pupils, who gain from this curriculum enrichment. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to extra curricular activities. The school pays particular attention to ensuring that no pupils are excluded from residential trips or visits on grounds of cost. It is increasing pupils' awareness of the multicultural diversity of society mainly through its planning of topic work. The school has a positive commitment to equal opportunities and values the contributions of all pupils. The school's policy for equal opportunities is still in draft form but will cover awareness of broader issues such as ethnic background and age, as well as gender.
30. The school ensures that health education is effectively addressed in the curriculum and healthy eating is also appropriately covered as part of pupils' work in science. The governors have recently adopted a new and appropriate sex education policy; and the school has organised a three-day programme of drug education, to be taught by visiting specialists.
31. The school makes good use of local resources, visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. The planning of topics to cover many aspects of the curriculum includes arranging visits and talks to give first hand experience; for example, the topic on growth entailed a visit to the local nursery and garden centre and the transport topic involved the fire service. This approach also provides pupils with opportunities to learn about aspects such as citizenship, healthy living and personal safety. The school has close links with local churches, using them for Christmas celebrations, and works closely with providers of after school care in nearby venues.
32. The school has sound links with the middle school; subject and special needs co-ordinators are beginning to work more closely together to ensure curriculum continuity. Pupils with physical disabilities from a nearby special school come each week to join in lessons with pupils in Year 1. Pupils at the school enjoy this opportunity to mix with others of their own age and it has a beneficial effect on their personal development. The school welcomes secondary pupils and students on work experience.
33. The personal and social development of children who are under five is satisfactory, overall. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual development and good provision for their social, moral and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered by planned acts of worship that comply with statutory requirements. Religious education lessons make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development, and they are successfully encouraged to appreciate the wonder of the world through work in science and music.
34. Pupils' social and moral development is strongly promoted in the school. The pupils enjoy warm relationships with adults in the school. They are valued for their efforts and their positive attitudes to work and play, and teachers strongly promote pupils' self confidence. The staff

encourage pupils to develop positive relationships and to care for each other; they teach them to behave responsibly, to take turns and share resources. Through assemblies and stories and events in their daily lives, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to think of those less fortunate than themselves when they raise money for charities and they learn about the wider social and moral issues through religious education, history and geography.

35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They are offered a range of sporting and music clubs and older pupils take part in dancing and sporting events. The school provides a particularly rich range of cultural experiences through the many visitors who come, during music and arts week and at other times, to perform poetry or music. These include performers from other cultures, for example, from Brazil. The pupils' cultural development also benefits from visits they make to museums and other places of interest. These experiences broaden the pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Catshill is a community where the care and well being of pupils is sensitively and thoughtfully managed. All teachers and support staff know the pupils well and the organisation of lunchtime supervisors ensures that there is continuity of care outside lessons. The headteacher and staff promote good communication with parents so that pupils' pastoral needs are shared. Sound use is made of outside experts to support pupils with particular medical or behavioural problems.
37. Relationships in the school are based on respect and trust, and the contributions of all pupils are valued. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for their actions by, for example, self registering and choosing where to spend their lunchtimes. This fosters a sense of confidence about school life which has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning.
38. The staff with responsibility for child protection are well trained and there is a planned programme to update the awareness training of all adults and to review the child protection policy. Care is taken to ensure that adults in the school are properly vetted and that pupils are reminded about issues of personal safety. Parents or carers are expected to deliver and collect their children from the classrooms at the start and end of the school day.
39. The school has no agreed behaviour policy at present, and no agreed procedures for recording incidents. Nevertheless, adults are promoting high standards of behaviour and pupils in both Key Stages understand what is expected of them. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils are confident to tell adults of their worries so that they can be addressed quickly. The school promotes the importance of regular and punctual school attendance and is setting improvement targets for the few pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern.
40. The staff and governors pay good attention to matters relating to health and safety. The school is participating in the safe schools initiative and has well defined targets to improve the security and safety of the site. Particular attention is paid to safety routines in the supervision of pupils at lunchtimes, both in classrooms and on the playgrounds. Safe practice is promoted in lessons and pupils have regular opportunities to learn about personal safety issues such as road safety as they are included in the planning of topics. There are sound procedures for accidents, emergencies and fire drills. The school maintains appropriate documentation of pupils' particular medical needs and of minor accidents. The buildings are clean and the grounds are regularly monitored for potential hazards created by occasional intruders.
41. The last OFSTED inspection found that the use of on-going assessment was a weakness; and a key issue for the school was to make better use of assessment and recording procedures. A subsequent OFSTED visit, in 1998, described short term planning as weak with teachers often failing to identify specific learning targets in their planning, or methods to be used in assessing pupils' progress and attainment. The 1996 report also found that marking was generally unsatisfactory.
42. The school has made broadly satisfactory progress in addressing most of these weaknesses, but there is still considerable scope for improving elements of current practice in assessment. A

satisfactory assessment policy has been formulated and common assessment procedures are used which are generally sound and have a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. However, there is a lack of rigour in implementing these procedures in the nursery where the use of assessment to inform planning is not well established. Overall, assessment is now more closely linked to planning; and teachers usually identify the learning intentions of their lessons clearly, which helps them to assess whether targets have been met in their lessons. Teachers know their pupils well and, in the best lessons, make effective use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to judge their learning requirements. However, they sometimes underestimate the potential of the more able pupils in their classes, and this results in these pupils marking time in some lessons, particularly in science.

43. The school makes sound use of local authority assessments to inform early planning for the reception children and to set a baseline for their future achievements; and some teachers are using end of unit testing, for example in mathematics, to inform their planning. However, the school recognises that target setting is at an early stage of development and that, overall, its strategies for using assessments to set and monitor focused learning goals, to improve planning and raise standards, needs further development. A start has been made in analysing the annual SATs results, and the non-statutory tests used in Key Stage 2, but this currently lacks the rigour necessary to identify the areas which require further improvement. In English, mathematics and science, subject co-ordinators make insufficient use of work sampling to assess pupils' standards and progress in their learning.
44. Teachers appropriately keep pertinent notes about the significant achievements and needs of pupils and individual Records of Achievement provide a useful record of their progress. The school has also started to collect evidence of the areas of the curriculum covered by each year group. However, staff are not sufficiently aware of the standards which pupils achieve and how these relate to national expectations. There is a need to provide opportunities for teachers to discuss examples of pupils' work, in order to agree the standards that have been achieved, and to promote consistency in assessment. The school recognises this and intends to establish a system of agreement trialling both within the school and with other schools.
45. The marking of pupils' work is conscientiously undertaken and is satisfactory, overall. In the best practice, teachers target individual pupils, or groups of pupils, and indicate areas for improvement as they work alongside them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to build up a successful partnership with parents and this is a strength of the school. The school welcomes parents into the classrooms and encourages them to work with the school in educating their children. Parents find the school very approachable and are happy to discuss any concerns with the staff. These good relations are underpinned by well presented documentation about the school activities and what is taught.
47. As well as regular newsletters the school gives parents information about topics to be studied and runs workshops to explain initiatives such as the national literacy strategy. Parents are invited to see the outcomes of this work in presentations, assemblies and open days. Governors make themselves available to discuss their annual report to parents. Whilst parents are consequently given the opportunity to ask governors questions about the school, the absence of a proper annual meeting does not meet statutory requirements.
48. Teachers are present well before school starts and this good practice enables parents to discuss any matters of concerns informally. Parents also have the opportunity each term to review their children's progress and discuss targets for improvement with the teacher. Annual reports give a sound indication of pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
49. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed of their children's progress and are involved appropriately in reviews. They are made aware of strengths and weaknesses in their children's performance and, where relevant, are involved in setting new targets.

50. The school provides useful guidance on how parents can support their children's learning at home, and particularly promotes the importance of hearing children read regularly. However, the absence of a homework policy means that some parents are unclear about the school's expectations. The school has already recognised this deficiency, and the policy will be in place by the end of the summer term 2000.
51. Parents are encouraged to help in school and many do so regularly by accompanying visits, running extra curricular clubs or helping in classes. The school is participating in an LEA initiative to train parents to hear children read in school and this is having a beneficial impact on pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. Parents also support the school through the school association which organises fundraising activities to provide additional resources and equipment for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The governing body has a core of highly committed members, and makes a positive contribution to the life of the school. Appropriate committees are established and all provide sound support for school management. The governors with responsibility for literacy and numeracy are well informed. They have attended training and have observed literacy and numeracy lessons, in both key stages, to monitor the school's response to recent government initiatives. The governor with responsibility for information technology is taking a keen interest in the subject, particularly in relation to resource provision and staff training. There are plans to establish links between individual governors and other subjects when these subjects become a major focus on the school development plan. However, it would be sensible for these links to be initiated at an earlier stage to broaden the governing body's awareness of curriculum provision. The school development plan is debated with sufficient rigour by the governors, but most need to develop a more detailed awareness of pupils' standards through the analysis of the results of testing. Overall, however, the governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Statutory requirements are met except for the provision of a formal annual general meeting for parents.
53. The governors have agreed satisfactory plans to address the weaknesses identified in the last OFSTED inspection, in 1996, and these have resulted in school improvement. Pupils are now making sound progress in most aspects of their learning, including in the development of their investigation and problem-solving skills. The last inspection found that 40% of all lessons demonstrated unsatisfactory teaching, and this is reduced to 10% in the current inspection. In 1996, pupils made mainly unsatisfactory progress in mathematics, while their current gains are sound, overall, across the school. Initiatives are prioritised more effectively on the school development plan than they were in 1996; and the recently appointed headteacher has improved the procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching by regularly observing lessons and providing pertinent feedback to staff. The role of subject co-ordinators is now clearly defined, and most co-ordinators are currently making a sound contribution to the leadership and management of their subjects. The last report identified weaknesses in the use of assessment and recording procedures to promote pupils' learning, and the school has only been partially successful in rectifying this deficiency. While the day-to-day assessments made by teachers are generally satisfactory, insufficient use is made of the assessment of pupils' completed work, including through testing, to identify strengths and weaknesses, and strategies to promote higher standards.
54. The headteacher took up her appointment in 1998, and has a clear vision for the school. She has good leadership and management skills and motivates staff and pupils well by conveying her enthusiasm and commitment. She promotes teamwork among staff and develops positive relationships with parents. She was quick to identify the need to improve aspects of the school's

performance, following her appointment, and her analysis was readily supported by the governors. Through regular lesson observations, careful feedback and professional discussions with staff, she has fostered good practice and addressed weaknesses in teaching. As a consequence, she has made a significant and beneficial impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the school, in a relatively short time. The headteacher appropriately recognises that she needs to give more emphasis to the analysis of pupils' attainments through studying samples of pupils' work, and by more rigorous analysis of the results of statutory and non-statutory tests. At present, procedures for judging pupils' progress and standards are not well established, and the school is in a weak position to set targets for pupils' performance, as a consequence.

55. The school development plan has been formulated through effective leadership by the headteacher, with appropriate staff and governor involvement. Detailed action plans identify those responsible for individual initiatives, and how the initiatives will be undertaken and resourced. While methods for evaluating initiatives are identified in the plan, insufficient attention is generally given to assessing the success of completed initiatives, and implications for future, related work. Overall, the school development plan identifies relevant priorities and makes a valuable contribution to school improvement.
56. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics observe lessons in their subjects, across the school, and provide relevant feedback to individual staff. The evaluations made by the mathematics co-ordinator often provide particularly useful suggestions to improve aspects of the teaching in the daily numeracy lesson. However, the observations made by these co-ordinators generally focus on lesson organisation and aspects of teaching and do not provide an analysis of the standards achieved in lessons, or the progress that is being made by the pupils. All subject co-ordinators analyse planning for their subjects, and nearly all have written useful reviews of the areas that are being covered by individual year groups. They provide useful advice to their colleagues and generally organise resources for their subjects efficiently. However, all co-ordinators give insufficient attention to the analysis of samples of pupils' work to help them to assess the standards that are being achieved, the progress that is being made, and the aspects which require improvement. While the co-ordinators for English and mathematics have a satisfactory overview of the results of statutory testing, their analysis needs to be more rigorous; and the science co-ordinator has an inadequate awareness of the details of recent results.
57. The day-to-day management of the school is good, and benefits from efficient secretarial support. Routines are well organised and help to promote an orderly atmosphere in the school.
58. The three special educational needs (S.E.N.) co-ordinators collaborate well as a team to ensure smooth-running in the day-to-day management of the school's S.E.N. provision. Common systems and procedures are in place in each of the key stages, and a new special needs policy is to be drawn up in accordance with a staged programme of development which also sets ambitious targets for the provision of support staff by 2003. The special needs governor is relatively new, and has not yet been able to develop the monitoring function of the role.
59. The administration of the budget is carried out efficiently by the headteacher and school secretaries. Spending is also carefully monitored by the finance committee of the governors. The most recent auditor's report, in 1997, found the general management of the school's finances to be sound. The finance committee of the governors provides satisfactory support for the management of the school. There are regular meetings, and the budget is analysed with particular care during the spring term. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan; and sound use is made of funding to support pupils with special educational needs. Staffing costs are rigorously debated, taking appropriate account of value for money criteria; and the school takes care to make effective use of its funds to purchase educational materials and equipment. Overall, the school makes sound use of finance, staffing, accommodation and learning resources. As a consequence, pupils generally make sound progress in their learning, and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The last OFSTED inspection found the school to be providing unsatisfactory value, and the improvement reflects the sound progress the school has made in addressing the weaknesses

identified in the 1996 report, particularly in relation to standards of teaching.

60. The school has sufficient teachers, and they are appropriately qualified. Overall, the staff have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. However, there are weaknesses in some teachers' understanding of the needs of the youngest children in the school, and teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge and expertise in art and geography. There is currently no permanent deputy headteacher, but the acting deputy is providing satisfactory support for the headteacher. The governors intend to make a permanent appointment when a staff vacancy arises, and this is a sensible strategy. There are co-ordinators for all subjects, except for music. Learning support assistants are well briefed by teachers, develop positive relationships with pupils and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
61. Procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff are sound and the governors are appropriately involved in making appointments, using job and person specifications. The staff willingly attend a range of in-service training courses, and the headteacher has twice yearly professional development interviews with all teachers. These have a beneficial effect on teachers' practice.
62. The school building is in sound condition, although there are some areas which require redecoration. Classrooms are of at least satisfactory size, and there is a well proportioned hall. Outside play space is satisfactory, and the school has access to a large grassed area. Teachers take care to create interesting displays of pupils' work which enrich the environment; and the school is kept in clean condition by the caretaking staff. Learning resources are satisfactory in all subjects, except in science and geography, where they require improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve pupils' standards and achievements, and to meet statutory requirements, the school should include in its post-inspection plan the following issues for action:

- **Raise standards in writing by:**

- (i) teaching pupils a range of strategies for spelling;
- (ii) ensuring that pupils apply, in their writing in English and in other subjects, the 'secretarial' skills (spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar) that they have been taught.

(see paragraphs 3, 19, 74, 80)

- **Raise standards in science** by ensuring that more able pupils are given work with sufficient challenge, and by increasing the time given to science in both key stages.

(see paragraphs 5, 26, 93)

- **Improve the monitoring of standards, and target setting, by:**

- (i) ensuring that the headteacher and co-ordinators analyse samples of pupils' work, and the results of testing, more rigorously to identify and target areas for improvement.
- (ii) providing opportunities for teachers to develop their assessment skills by discussing examples of pupils' work to agree standards against National Curriculum criteria, and by creating a portfolio of assessed work in English, mathematics and science.

(see paragraphs 44, 52, 53, 54)

- **Improve provision for children who are under five by:**

- (i) ensuring that planning for nursery children is more rigorous, and provides a more secure

foundation for the progressive development of children's learning.

- (ii) addressing weaknesses in teaching in one reception class, including teacher expectations and the pace of learning.

(see paragraphs 18 and 25)

- **Ensure that the governors provide a formal annual general meeting for parents.**

(see paragraphs 47 and 52)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should consider the following areas for inclusion in the action plan:

- improve standards in art and geography by:
 - (i) providing in-service training to increase teachers' knowledge and expertise in these subjects;
 - (ii) ensuring that teachers plan and implement work which secures the systematic development of pupils' key skills in both subjects.

(see paragraphs 8, 22, 27, 99, 102, 109 and 112)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2%	13%	19%	57%	10%	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	Y1 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	312
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	70

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
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	24	43	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	17
	Girls	37	37	39
	Total	52	52	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (88)	78 (90)	84 (92)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	20	19
	Girls	37	39	38
	Total	21	59	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (90)	88 (92)	85 (89)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	211
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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: Y1 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28 : 1
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: Y1 – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52.75

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30 : 1

Total number of education support staff	1.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10 : 1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	527,977
Total expenditure	535,122
Expenditure per pupil	1,588
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,226
Balance carried forward to next year	-919

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	243
Number of questionnaires returned	73

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	32	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	45	4	4	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	53	10	3	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	51	11	0	12
The teaching is good.	40	46	8	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	37	18	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	31	4	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	44	36	14	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	51	33	10	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	51	3	4	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	36	11	1	19

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

63. There are 60 three and four year olds who attend the nursery part time and twenty-three children under five in the two reception classes. Twelve children in the nursery have been identified as having special educational needs. The nursery teacher was absent for the week of the inspection and a supply teacher, who did not have nursery experience, taught the children.

Personal and social development

64. There is insufficient planning to support the provision for the personal and social development of children under five, across the three classes. As a consequence, the quality of provision is dependent on the staff awareness of the personal and social needs of young children and is therefore variable. In one reception class it is mainly good, but has some weaknesses in the second reception class although it is broadly satisfactory. In the nursery it is sound, but there is scope for improvement.
65. All adults value the contributions of the children, encourage their independence and build their confidence. In all three classes, children are generally settled and happy at school and their behaviour is mainly good. The children know the difference between right and wrong and respond well to praise. Most children take turns and share equipment amicably. The nursery children, including those identified as having special educational needs, responded well to a different teacher, who was careful to reassure them and to provide a stable routine. Over the few days of the inspection, the children developed a good relationship with her and benefited from the added stability provided by the nursery nurse and classroom assistants, who they know well. They are learning good habits of working with each other, using equipment and toys sensibly and co-operating when tidying up. They are generally self reliant and confident when choosing from the range of activities provided. Children in one reception class concentrate well on their tasks during the literacy hour, independent of adult support. They help each other and patiently wait their turn, for example when working in pairs at the computer. However, in the other reception class, children occasionally find it difficult to take turns. This behaviour can cause distress for others and is not always effectively addressed by the teacher. In this class and in the nursery the younger and less mature children begin to lose concentration when they are expected to sit for too long listening to the teacher talking in whole class or group sessions.

Language and literacy

66. On entry to the nursery, the language and literacy development of the children is largely below that expected, and a significant minority of children have speech and language difficulties. At the age of five, their listening skills are broadly average, but their speech and literacy skills remain below average. Planning in the nursery takes insufficient account of the differences in age and attainment of the children so that although, their progress in speaking and listening is sound for most; the older and brighter children do not achieve as well as they should. Those identified as having specific speech and language delay are well supported by an outside agency and, overall, they make satisfactory progress. In the nursery and reception classes, children's vocabulary understanding is extended when they listen to rhymes and stories and when their teachers draw attention to word and sentence structure, or encourage them to listen for words that rhyme. However, this is generally not reflected in their speech. Many of the nursery children respond in single utterances. For example, when the teacher, wearing daffodils for St David's Day, points to them and asks a group what is special about her, there is a minute or two's silence before one child says 'flars' and no other child in the group elaborates on this. The level of conversation between children during their work and play is also not well developed. Most children, both in the nursery and reception classes, appear to listen to their teachers during

whole class or group sessions. However, only a few more confident children volunteer to answer questions.

67. Children in the nursery and reception classes make sound progress in the development of early reading skills. They hear stories and nursery rhymes and, through these, gain a sound understanding of rhyme and story structure. They listen to taped stories and sometimes have the tapes story in book form to follow. Children in one reception class can explain how an information book differs from a story book and can think of appropriate captions to accompany photographs. In this class, the children make good progress in their writing. Letter formation is well taught and reinforced through a range of appropriate activities. They are sufficiently confident to use their knowledge of sounds to help them spell, and are well supported by words printed and available around the classroom. In the nursery, children benefit from a writing area where they can experiment with their early writing. Most nursery children recognise their name and most children in reception can write their names with guidance. They learn to recognise the letters of the alphabet and associated sounds.

Mathematics

68. In the nursery class, the lessons seen provided pupils with broadly appropriate tasks. However, there is a lack of evidence to show that mathematical experiences are planned in a structured way so that children build their understanding in well ordered steps. Children are familiar with songs which reinforce concepts such as shape, some recognise, count and use numbers to at least 5. They explore pattern, shape and number in practical situations such as using playdough or playing together in the 'transport café'. They recognise and can name simple shapes such as circle and triangle. In the reception classes, mathematics is planned to build step by step on children's previous experiences, so that under-five children in these classes make satisfactory progress and are attaining standards which are a little below average by the time they start work on the National Curriculum. Many know numbers to 10, counting confidently using everyday objects. They use counting skills in the context of buying 'goods', and are learning to write the numbers involved.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Children make satisfactory progress in developing an understanding of the wider world in which they live, and learn to use simple geographical terms, during visits made around the school and its grounds. They also walk around the village of Catshill, for example to look at differences in buildings; and learn about the world of work when visiting a local fire station, and through role play. Observations they are encouraged to make also enable them to develop an understanding of change, for example, in the weather and the seasons. In the nursery, children require more opportunities to develop their observation skills in order to develop their scientific understanding; and under fives in one reception class make slow progress when conducting simple investigations, due to weaknesses in the teaching.

Physical

70. Children handle pencils, scissors, paint brushes and small objects with increasing control and their manipulative skills meet the desirable outcomes by the time they are five. They demonstrate good control when they manoeuvre toy cars round the road map and when using the mouse to control their drawing on the computer. When using the school hall to learn about road safety, the nursery children show a satisfactory awareness of space by pretending to drive round hoops and stopping at the pedestrian crossing. It is not possible to make a judgement about children's skills of climbing or balancing as these aspects of their physical development are catered for only through physical education lessons. Other aspects of the children's physical development are satisfactorily catered for during outdoor play, and they manage wheeled toys with confidence.

Creative

71. Children in the nursery learn a range of songs and nursery rhymes and have access to untuned

instruments with which to experiment. No music was seen in the reception classes. In the nursery, children achieve satisfactory standards when making simple prints; and make sound progress when painting pictures of their favourite toys and of the recent visit by the fire brigade. In reception, children create bold self portraits and paint vibrant pictures of hot air balloons, which represent satisfactory standards

ENGLISH

72. Although the listening skills of pupils entering Key Stage 1 at the age of five are broadly average for their age, their speech and their skills as communicators are less well developed and, overall, are below average.
73. The school's results in the national tests (SATs) in 1999 were well below the national average in both reading and writing, and below average for schools nationally, with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. Although the 1999 results showed a sharp decline from the results of the previous two years, this can be attributed, at least in part, to the very high proportion of pupils in the year group who had special educational needs, and who are currently within the Year 3 cohort. However, significant and persistent weaknesses in some important aspects of pupils' reading and writing also played a part, as the school is aware from its own monitoring procedures.
74. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in reading and writing is below the nationally expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. For example, within the supportive framework of the literacy hour, pupils benefit from the structure offered by teachers' guidance and by sharply focused questioning. As a result, during these lessons, then demonstrate higher attainment in reading comprehension, in knowledge about language and in their understanding of the writing process than they are able to achieve in their independent work, or, for that matter, under test conditions such as those associated with SATs. During lessons, pupils in both key stages make mainly sound and sometimes better progress in direct relation to the specific learning objectives targeted by their teachers. The standards they attain in independent work and in national tests tend to be lower for several reasons: in writing, long-standing weaknesses in handwriting mean that few have developed a fluent cursive style and are therefore slow to record their ideas; pupils have poor spelling skills and few strategies to overcome this weakness; and pupils frequently do not apply, when working on their own, the knowledge and understanding of punctuation and grammar that they have been taught in another context. Too often, therefore, their written work in English, and in other subjects, reinforces inaccuracies. This is a pity, since such weaknesses in the 'secretarial' aspects of pupils' written work detracts considerably from the otherwise sound aspects of their work. For example, most pupils write interestingly for a wide range of purposes in English and in other subjects; they match the language and style of their writing appropriately to its intended purpose and audience; and they often apply, in their own writing, many of the techniques used for effect by authors whose work they have studied, or, when appropriate, the characteristics of the non-fiction texts they have read.
75. Attainment in reading is below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. The introduction of the literacy hour is helping the younger pupils in Key Stage 1, in particular, to acquire a suitably broad range of reading strategies. Over time, pupils also develop those higher order reading skills necessary for research. For example, the work produced by pupils in history and in religious education testifies to their developing skills in reading for information and in note-making: there are many good examples of written work which has been produced independently by pupils in relation to topics they have read about, and recorded in their own words. Weaknesses in reading are of a different kind. Most pupils have too limited an acquaintance with the work of significant children's authors and poets; and, too many of the lower attaining pupils, from Years 2, 3 and 4, do not apply their phonic knowledge or other word-attack skills appropriately when tackling unknown words. As a result, their reading sometimes lacks fluency and speed, even when their understanding of what they read may be considerably more advanced.
76. Pupils' skills in listening develop satisfactorily throughout their time in the school and are broadly in line with the standards expected for their age by the time pupils leave the school in Year 4. Although there are, in each year group in the school, many individual pupils who are both

articulate and fluent in their speech, overall attainment is slightly below average. A growing strength lies in pupils' eagerness to contribute to discussions and to express their ideas. In mathematics, in particular, there are good examples of pupils giving clear explanations of the mathematical strategies they have used in their calculations. In some other subjects, including English itself, many pupils making valiant attempts to communicate their ideas in speech experience difficulties organising language so as to make their meaning absolutely clear, and to make their spoken sentences logically and grammatically consistent.

77. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from their teachers and from support assistants and other adult helpers. They continue to build on their prior attainment, working steadily towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They make sound progress and attain standards which broadly reflect their capabilities, especially when account is taken of their prior attainment and their individual learning needs.
78. The school is aware of weaknesses in pupils' attainment in various aspects of English. Since the arrival of the new headteacher two years ago, many initiatives have been introduced, and measures put in place, to bring about genuine improvements both in standards of attainment and in the quality of pupils' learning experiences. Most of the issues raised in the last Ofsted report have been, or are being, addressed: The English curriculum is now suitably broad, covering the full range of the statutory programmes of study and matching the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. The Literacy Hour is being implemented well in most lessons and is beginning to have a positive impact on standards of speaking, listening, reading, writing and knowledge about language in both key stages. The Additional Literacy Strategy and a reading partnership involving trained parents are both helping lower attaining pupils to improve their performance, while improvements in the organisation of provision for pupils with special educational needs is leading to more focused work which addresses specific targets in their learning. Pupils in reception and Year 1, in particular, demonstrate growing confidence in their ability to use phonic knowledge as an aid to both reading and spelling, and are able to use a suitably wide range of cueing strategies when reading. Older pupils, in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, have learned about story structure and can devise simple plans when writing their own stories, skills they were said to lack at the time of the last inspection. Higher order reading skills are being taught, and are learned, and pupils of all ages are accustomed to discussing both fiction and non-fiction texts.
79. The quality of teaching has shown a substantial improvement since the time of the last Ofsted inspection. The teaching is mainly sound, occasionally good, and sometimes very good in both key stages, with unsatisfactory teaching evident in only one of the lessons seen. Strengths of the teaching include : trusting relationships which encourage pupils to express their ideas and which help them to develop the confidence to take risks in their use of language, however unsure they might feel; good planning, with tasks suitably differentiated for pupils at different stages in their development and activities which progressively deepen pupils' understanding; effective introductions to lessons, establishing clear targets for learning and setting each activity in a meaningful context for the pupils; questioning used to good effect to assess, and to build on, pupils' previous attainment; and constructive, well-planned support for pupils with special educational needs from trained and untrained support staff and adult helpers. Overall, the Literacy Hour is being implemented well and is having a particularly positive impact on pupils' knowledge about language, about reading and writing as processes, and on their general and subject-specific vocabulary.
80. Occasional weaknesses of the teaching in lessons relate to a lack of pace, and, more rarely, inappropriate noise levels when pupils work independently. More generally : teachers pay insufficient attention to the teaching of spelling; they rarely require pupils to apply, (while writing for real purposes in English or other subjects), the 'secretarial' writing skills they have already learned; they intervene too little to help pupils to develop and improve pieces of writing; and, they give too little emphasis to constructive, critical evaluation when discussing pupils' work. In relation to both speech and writing, teachers involve pupils themselves too little in refining first attempts and mastering complex constructions. They do not always show pupils how they can help themselves, for instance, by checking spellings using a dictionary, and the 'best guess' approach to spelling, if unchecked, runs the danger of establishing inaccurate patterns, as is already evident in the work of many pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.

81. The co-ordinator and the headteacher have invested valuable time and effort in enabling staff to understand and implement the National Literacy strategy, and useful monitoring of planning and teaching, with relevant feedback to staff, is ensuring coherence and progression, overall, in pupils' learning and in teaching. However, there remain weaknesses in assessment, and there is some uncertainty amongst staff about the standards of attainment required to achieve specific National Curriculum levels, particularly above level 2. This weakness sometimes leads to work being set which is too undemanding, particularly for the more able pupils, and sometimes to a lack of certainty in the direction of the teaching. Resources purchased to support the National Literacy strategy are adequate and of good quality, and sound use is made of information and communication technology.

MATHEMATICS

82. On entry to Key Stage 1, the mathematical attainment of most pupils is a little below average. In the 1999 SATs, the number of pupils attaining the expected level in mathematics was well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. There were also fewer pupils attaining a higher than expected level in mathematics than in most schools nationally. Observation of lessons, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of books, shows that the attainment of the majority of pupils now matches the nationally expected standard; but that a significant minority have yet to reach this level. The school has made good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to structure the teaching of mathematics, so that all Key Stage 1 pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now making sound overall progress in the subject, and standards are rising.
83. The majority of pupils, at the end of Key Stage 1, are able to order two and three digit numbers, showing some understanding of the place value of each digit in a number. All pupils are familiar with number sequences, including odd and even numbers, and can calculate and fill in missing numbers from a sequence. Average and above achievers have begun to use simple strategies for adding numbers with at least two digits, and use knowledge of number facts to at least 10 when solving simple problems, including those which involve the use of money. They use these skills in everyday contexts, as when undertaking topics during which they consider house numbers in sequences, or work out the cost of making and selling cakes or biscuits and giving change. Most pupils can identify and use halves and quarters, such as half or quarter of a rectangle, and use halving as well as doubling numbers as a mental calculation strategy. At the end of the key stage, the great majority of pupils are using mathematical symbols and simple diagrams to record their work, for example, when using tally charts to record favourite meals and sandwiches and then producing block graphs of their findings, or when using a chart to record magnetic and non-magnetic materials in science. Most are developing sound mental strategies in number work and becoming confident in explaining how they have arrived at a particular answer. However, work of this sort is hampered for many by slowness in using known number facts, and some still have difficulty with explaining in appropriate mathematical language how they have carried out their work.
84. Attainment in the mathematical component covering shape, space and measures is average. Much of the work is put into practical real-life contexts so that, for example, pupils look at shapes in buildings and the wider environment and use measuring skills to measure ingredients for cakes or distances around the school building. Most are able to give the mathematical names of common 3D and 2D shapes, and discuss them in terms of their properties, including number of sides and corners. They explore turn as movement clockwise and anticlockwise, and some recognise right angles in turns. They have begun to use everyday non-standard and standard units to measure length, mass, capacity and time, often estimating before checking by using measuring instruments. Pupils show sound knowledge and understanding of how to collect and record information, and then put it into block graphs and diagrams to record their results. They sometimes use information technology to help with this, for example, when producing graphs of types of houses in which they live.
85. In Key Stage 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make mainly satisfactory, but sometimes good, progress, and most achieve average standards in numeracy in Year 4. Almost all pupils show knowledge of number facts to 20 and use these effectively, as when solving problems connected with organising a Christmas party. Many competently use

recall of multiplication tables to find fractional parts of numbers, such as one third of 27, but recall in mental activities is not as quick as might be expected. Where calculations involve numbers with several digits, as when investigating Pascal's triangle, pupils use calculators effectively. Many pupils are secure with mental strategies such as doubling, halving and partitioning numbers to simplify adding and subtracting numbers with at least two digits. They have begun to use decimal notation in the context of money, and recognise negative numbers in the context of reading temperature. Exploring and describing number patterns are developed in a range of ways so that many pupils understand multiples and relationships such as inverses (which they describe as 'opposites'). Higher, and some average achievers, search for a pattern by trying out ideas, for example, when looking for a 'rule' when investigating Pascal's triangle or the area of squares and rectangles. They apply mathematics effectively in practical contexts such as using a bank account, calculating best value for money when making a journey or working out a restaurant bill. They are beginning to use and interpret co-ordinates in the first quadrant.

86. Attainment is also average in the components of shape, space and measures, and data handling, in Year 4. Pupils show knowledge of an increasing range of 2D and 3D shapes, developing some understanding of reflective symmetry in relation to shape. They find areas of simple shapes by counting squares. All use measures in practical contexts, for example, when preparing a personal daily timetable or, with higher achievers, reading a 24-hour timetable to work out journey times. They are beginning to think about choosing appropriate measures for length, for example when working on personal body measurements in the 'Ourselves' project. Most pupils can successfully extract information presented in simple tables and lists, and construct bar charts where the symbol represents a group of units, for example, when investigating use of different toothpastes or popular selling lines at a garden centre.
87. Standards in mathematics have improved in both key stages since the 1996 inspection report was issued, though this is not confirmed by the Key Stage 1 SATs results in 1999. This might be explained by the fact that pupils have yet to develop speed in using their skills; weaknesses in language, including knowledge and use of mathematical language, restrict pupils' ability and quickness in deciding what it is they are being asked to do; and statistically the 1999 cohort of pupils included a much higher than average number of pupils with identified special educational needs. The school has made good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to bring about improvements in curriculum content, lesson structure and teaching and learning strategies. This is having the result of raising standards of attainment. Within the supportive framework of mathematics lessons, where explanation and prompting are readily available, pupils progress and achieve satisfactorily.
88. In most classes, at both key stages, the great majority of pupils show interest in and enjoyment of mathematics. Almost all listen well to both adults and other pupils, responding to questions and explaining the strategies which they and others have used in solving problems. Most sustain concentration and effort and, particularly in Key Stage 2, show perseverance even when finding work challenging. When asked to work together in pairs or groups, they do so sensibly. The great majority of pupils respond well to their lessons.
89. The quality teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. In a few classes, there are good or very good features. Planning for lessons takes full account of the National Numeracy Strategy. It is generally thorough and shows well planned differentiation to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. Where this planning is used effectively, it is combined with well focused questions which get pupils to explain their thinking; good subject knowledge and awareness of the need for careful and clear input and explanation; high expectations and demanding activities. For example, in a reception class pupils came to a good understanding of the concept of 'lighter' and 'heavier' and 'balanced' through undertaking practical activities involving using balances and, most importantly, by being supported through careful questioning and prompting which helped them to clarify and explain their ideas. Weakness in some lessons in this key stage include slow pace, for example, the mental arithmetic session taking longer than planned so that the remainder of the lesson is somewhat hurried; too few opportunities for pupils to ask questions or show that they have understood during the main introduction to activities; insecure control, with small numbers of pupils disrupting work or not focusing on an activity unless the

teacher is giving constant attention; and low expectations of what pupils can do, so that activities do not provide sufficient challenge. Where these weaknesses are seen, pupils' achievements are below what might be expected.

90. In the Key Stage 2 classes, teaching is good overall. This represents a significant improvement since the 1996 inspection when teaching at this key stage was found to be unsatisfactory. Teachers no longer show over-dependence on a published scheme, and they are using problem solving and investigative work effectively to develop positive attitudes to mathematics amongst their pupils. Teachers take full account of the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning is thorough and lessons are well structured. Oral sessions are brisk and well paced, but time is still found for pupils to explain strategies for mental calculation. In all parts of lessons, attention is paid to improving language and accuracy of meaning, for example, by asking pupils to rephrase their own or others' answers to make meaning clear. Care is taken when planning activities to match them to pupils' needs and to make sure that they do help pupils to achieve the intended goals. On some occasions, the work set for higher achievers does not sufficiently challenge their thinking. The good quality teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The great majority use the opportunities for activity, problem solving and investigative work well, showing concentration and enjoyment as they look for patterns and 'rules'.
91. Arrangements for day-to-day assessment in mathematics are satisfactory, and findings are used by teachers when planning their work together in year groups. Some teachers use periodic end of unit assessments of particular aspects of mathematics, but this is not a consistent feature of assessment in the subject. Overall, this level of assessment has improved since the previous inspection in 1996. Statutory assessments are carried out appropriately at the end of Key Stage 1, and non-statutory assessments are carried out in other classes. The results of these assessments are now being analysed, but the school has not yet used the information to identify and address specific weaknesses. This weakness in using assessment was identified in the 1996 report and has not yet been adequately addressed. Mathematics is currently a high priority for development, which is an improvement on 1996 since the inspection report found the opposite to be the case. There is an effective co-ordinator who has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and is now planning further improvements to raise attainment in mathematics. Planning is checked to ensure full coverage of the curriculum and to help achieve well ordered steps in pupils' learning. The co-ordinator has observed colleagues teaching and has produced written feedback which identifies strengths and makes sensible suggestions for improvement. The weakness of this work has been a lack of judgements about standards. This is an area which needs to be developed alongside using assessments more effectively to plan developments in mathematics. The co-ordinator for mathematics makes an effective and valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and to the raising of standards in the subject. This is an improvement on the 1996 inspection report which noted 'the co-ordinator has aspirations for improvement but is not leading by personal example'.
92. Part of the co-ordinator's work has been to match resources to the teaching requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. There are sufficient resources for the teaching of all aspects of mathematics. These are sensibly distributed around the school so that teachers and pupils can get to them with reasonable ease.

SCIENCE

93. At the age of five, the scientific knowledge and understanding of most pupils is below average. In both key stages, pupils generally make adequate progress in their lessons, although more able pupils sometimes mark time. At the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, the overall attainment of most pupils just reaches the average range. However, a significant minority do not attain this level and few exceed the expected standard. This is reflected in the 1999 statutory teacher assessments, in Key Stage 1, when the results were below the national average and those achieved by similar schools. The subject is allocated barely sufficient time, in both key stages, and this restricts the standards that are achieved. However, there is evidence of improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' progress in science was unsatisfactory in Years 2, 3 and 4. The recent introduction of a good scheme of work, and teachers' increased emphasis on

teaching investigation skills, has contributed to this improvement.

94. Five year olds in reception make satisfactory progress when learning to name their main body parts, and when noticing and recording the different eye colours of their peers. However, they make slow progress when they are left to carry out tasks with insufficient interventions from their teacher to move their learning forward. In Year 1, pupils know about a range of properties, such as texture or appearance, and can describe materials they observe in terms of these properties. They make sound progress when learning about their senses; and make satisfactory gains when conducting simple investigations to discover the safest shoes to wear on a wet surface. They can name the main external parts of plants, and make satisfactory progress when learning how plants grow from seeds. In Year 2, pupils make satisfactory progress when deciding the best materials to use to cover the lighthouse keeper's lunch basket; and know that humans need water, food and air to survive. However, they derive little benefit when given inappropriate technical information, for example, definitions of cells and pollen, which is poorly matched to their learning needs.
95. In Year 3, pupils make satisfactory progress when discovering which materials are magnetic; and understand the need for healthy eating and dental care. They complete simple worksheets to identify forces which push or pull, but these represent limited challenge for more able pupils. In Year 4, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of simple electrical circuits; and make sound progress when learning about the functions of muscles. More able pupils mark time when labelling their simple diagrams of the human body, but all pupils make sound gains when learning about the circulatory system. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make adequate progress in recording the results of their experiments, but demonstrate limited skills in evaluating their findings.
96. In both key stages, pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They listen attentively to their teachers and generally concentrate on their tasks. In all science lessons observed, pupils' behaviour was good.
97. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory in both key stages. Lessons are soundly planned, and teachers generally explain tasks clearly. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall, although weaknesses are evident in Year 2 when there is sometimes a lack of clarity about what pupils are to learn, and progress slows, as a consequence. In the most effective lessons, the teaching strongly motivates the pupils, and teachers use good questioning skills to probe their understanding. The last OFSTED inspection found that teachers provided pupils with insufficient opportunities to develop their investigation skills, and the school has made sound progress in rectifying that weakness. However, when teacher's subject knowledge is not fully secure, their lessons sometimes need to be more precisely focused on the development of specific enquiry skills. The very recently introduced scheme of work, provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, is beginning to have a beneficial effect on the teaching, and is improving the progressive development of pupils' learning in the subject. However, the time allocated for science is barely adequate and requires review.
98. The co-ordinator has undertaken a useful audit of teachers' planning but recognises that her strategies for monitoring pupils' standards in the subject are underdeveloped. The results of the statutory teacher assessments are not analysed with sufficient rigour, and samples of pupils' work, from across the school, are not systematically assessed to identify strengths and weaknesses. There is no portfolio of assessed work to aid consistency in teachers' assessments, and no meetings when teachers discuss science work to agree the levels which are demonstrated. This lack of emphasis on the analysis of standards means the school is in a weak position to identify realistic targets for pupils' future attainments, and to devise strategies to address weaknesses. Resources for science require improvement, and this is recognised by the co-ordinator. Science is shortly to become a major area of focus as part of the school development plan, and this is opportune.

ART

99. Pupils make uneven and mainly unsatisfactory progress in art, across the school. Although some examples of sound work are evident, pupils' standards in art are generally below those expected for pupils of similar ages, in both key stages. This results from a lack of emphasis on the teaching of key skills in a systematic way, across the school, and insufficient attention being given to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding about the subject.
100. In Year 1, pupils create satisfactory pictures of boats, linked with the whole school topic theme of transport, but their collage pictures of hot air balloons demonstrate limited creative or technical demands. They achieve sound standards, however, when drawing self portraits, using pastels. In Year 2, pupils' art work is based on the transport theme, and comprises illustrations of cars and shading exercises linked to photocopied images of cars. Pupils have made limited progress through this work. In Year 3, pupils have illustrated their history topic about the Vikings, but their work demonstrates drawing and painting skills which are a little below average. In Year 4, pupils develop their awareness of a range of printing techniques, but their skills are not yet well enough established for pupils to produce work of appropriate quality. Pupils take considerable care when mixing different black and white paint tones but are able to demonstrate little personal interpretation when painting these within a teacher provided outline of a car, linked to the transport topic.
101. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe one art lesson in Key Stages 1 and 2. In this lesson, pupils behaved well and worked enthusiastically, demonstrating positive attitudes to the subject.
102. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, evidence from teachers' planning and pupils' completed work suggests that some teachers require in-service training to develop their knowledge and expertise in the subject. Insufficient emphasis is given to the sequential development of important skills in drawing and painting; and pupils need to be introduced to the work of artists, and appropriate technical vocabulary, in a more coherent manner. At present, there is very little evidence of pupils working from direct observation of the natural and made world, and too much work serves to illustrate topic work and does little to develop pupils' skills or knowledge in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. In both key stages, pupils generally achieve standards which are satisfactory for their ages in design and technology. Their progress is mainly satisfactory but pupils sometimes mark time when their work provides them with insufficient challenge.
104. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate sound making skills when creating model vehicles, using recycled materials. They also construct cardboard garages for their vehicles, and make good progress when investigating a range of methods for hinging the garage door. In Year 2, pupils also create simple model vehicles, using paper and card, and these represent little improvement on those made in Year 1. However, during the inspection, they made satisfactory progress in learning how to create simple axles to facilitate movement in their future models. Year 2 pupils achieve satisfactory standards when designing and making finger puppets, and demonstrate sound skills in cutting and stitching materials. They make limited gains, however, when making very simple model boats which are all of the same prescribed design, and present them with little opportunity to develop their designing and making skills.
105. In Year 3, pupils make broadly satisfactory progress when deciding on the ingredients and utensils required to make sandwiches, and when making their sandwiches. They are beginning to learn the basic principles of pneumatics with the intention of incorporating their ideas into designs for models. In year 4, pupils' designs for money carriers are broadly satisfactory, but would benefit from increased reference to the materials which are to be used and the methods for joining them. They make sound progress when incorporating a simple electrical circuit to facilitate lights on a model vehicle. However, their vehicles are all identical, being formed by the use of templates provided by the teacher, and the making skills that are demonstrated are consequently below those expected for pupils of similar ages.

106. Pupils clearly enjoy design and technology lessons, and have positive attitudes to the subject. They work enthusiastically and persevere well. Their behaviour is good, and they share resources amicably.
107. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in Year 1 when the teacher provided very effective instruction to enable pupils to investigate a range of methods for creating hinges. However, there are weaknesses in planning for the progressive development of pupils' key skills in the subject, and this is reflected in the spasmodic progress made by the pupils. The recently introduced scheme of work, provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, is beginning to have a positive impact, but is not yet securely established in the school. The incorporation of design and technology opportunities into whole school topic themes sometimes inhibits the planning for skills progression; and some teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their confidence and expertise in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

108. As a result of timetabling arrangements, no geography lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Judgements are made on the evidence of a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, from discussions with staff and pupils, and from lessons seen in Key Stage 2.
109. Throughout the school, pupils make gains in their geographical knowledge and understanding through the study of topics, which are undertaken by all classes. However, the progressive development of pupils' geographical skills is uneven, across the school, and is mainly unsatisfactory. This result from pupils being given insufficient opportunities to ask and answer geographical questions, to analyse evidence, and to communicate their conclusions through the study of a suitable range of places and through fieldwork. Across the school, the standards achieved by the majority of pupils are below those expected for their ages.
110. In Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in extending their knowledge of the school, its grounds and the immediate area. Reception pupils visit the local shops as part of their study of buildings and make simple 3D maps to record their observations. In Year 1, pupils consolidate these mapping skills when drawing plans for improvements that they would like to make to the school courtyard, following a visit to a local garden centre. However, they make slow progress in developing a satisfactory understanding of their own locality. Year 2 pupils can draw reasonable plans of the location of the main attractions, following a visit to Legoland; and increase their general knowledge of places when considering some of the differences between towns, the country and coastal locations. However, they do not undertake sufficient fieldwork to enable them to develop essential enquiry skills.
111. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 make sound progress through their studies of different buildings in their village, and of land use and employment. However, their learning about a contrasting locality in Great Britain is unsatisfactory due to a lack of appropriate resources. They make sound progress in developing an understanding about weather conditions around the world, and the relationships between weather and tourism, when studying a unit of work drawn from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) scheme. This scheme also promotes a good response from pupils in Year 4 who, as a consequence, make sound progress in their study of settlements. These older pupils extend their general knowledge of the world through cross-curricular work, for example, focused on China or Africa but they have few opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own region and of contrasting localities.
112. No teaching of geography was observed in Key Stage 1. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was mainly sound and sometimes good. This is in contrast to the previous inspection, when most of the teaching in Key Stage 2 was judged to be unsatisfactory, with an over-reliance on publishers' worksheets. The lessons observed were appropriately based on helpful guidance from QCA which has recently been introduced and is beginning to have a positive impact on planning and classroom practice. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work completed last year indicates that, in most of the topics undertaken by all year groups, the

geographical focus is not well defined or given sufficient emphasis. This evidence also suggests that, although some fieldwork activities take place in the school's locality, it is currently underused to support the study of geographical features in the landscape, or to promote the development of pupils' geographical skills. Evidence suggests that teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their confidence and knowledge in the subject.

113. The co-ordinator has recently assumed responsibility for geography and is currently absent, through illness. The monitoring of teaching, and of the standards achieved by pupils, lacks rigour and should be improved. The school recognises that resources for geography are poor and need to be improved to support the introduction of the QCA scheme of work.

HISTORY

114. Only a small number of lessons were observed in history. However, observation of lessons, of part of a role-play day for Year 3 pupils, analysis of pupils' work and classroom displays, and scrutiny of teachers' planning show that pupils make sound progress in both key stages and achieve overall standards which are satisfactory for their ages. This is an improvement on attainment in the 1996 inspection report when, although attainment was sound in Key Stage 1, it was unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2.
115. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop an understanding that changes occur as time passes by looking at changes in themselves and their own lives. They begin to acquire words and phrases which relate to the passing of time, such as 'new', 'old' and 'before'. They make distinctions between their own lives and those of people in times past. For example, they compare modern kitchen features with those of times past, and compare how the celebration of birthdays has changed since the childhood days of their grandparents. They use simple observations to see how things have changed. A visit to Avoncroft museum enabled them to see differences in buildings and consider how building methods had changed. They listen to and ask questions of visitors to find out how schooling, toys, books and writing have changed. By the end of Key Stage 1, many have acquired knowledge and some understanding of people and events beyond living memory.
116. By the end of Year 4, most of the pupils in Key Stage 2 show a good awareness that the past can be divided up into different periods of time, and have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the characteristic features of some eras. Most pupils know how to use different sources of information to gather evidence about a historical period or character, and write up the results of their research as letters and descriptions, using drawings if appropriate. For example, pupils drew artefacts which archaeologists might find if they could examine a newly discovered Viking longship. They are beginning to develop their historical knowledge, understanding and skills by researching features of the past in increasing detail. For example, pupils in Year 3 find out about Viking shipbuilding, religion, food, clothing and weapons, and in Year 4 they look at the impact of events such as the Second World War on people's lives, considering features such as rationing the evacuation of children.
117. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in history. However, the 1996 inspection report found planning to be inadequate, and it is clear that this has been much improved. History lessons are well planned by teachers to take full account of National Curriculum requirements and to provide pupils with opportunities for active involvement in finding out, and experiencing through role-play, what life was like in the past. Pupils respond to this approach with enthusiasm and interest; asking pertinent questions of visitors, listening and observing carefully, and showing that they understand that finding out takes care and patience, as when conducting their own simulated archaeological 'dig'. Appropriate visits are organised and visitors invited to improve pupils' learning opportunities and understanding of times past. There are some weaknesses in the current provisions. In Key Stage 1 pupils need more experience of making simple notes so that they can benefit more fully from handling artefacts, watching appropriate video film, and listening to visitors. In Key Stage 2, work on comparisons between historic periods needs to be extended beyond making simple sequences of, for example, boats or houses through the ages, so that pupils can compare similarities and differences in a few key features. History is making a good contribution to

overall development in literacy, but improvement can be made to the overall quality of work and presentation by paying more attention to handwriting and to the use of basic skills of spelling and punctuation.

118. History is led by an effective co-ordinator whose own enthusiasm generates confidence and interest amongst colleagues. The co-ordinator has reviewed what is being taught, and has put together a two-year plan to cover National Curriculum requirements and to ensure that history is effectively represented in topic work. The subject is currently monitored informally through the co-ordinator looking at displays of current history work. History is a focus for development in the next academic year when classroom observation will be part of the monitoring strategy. At the time of the last inspection report, resources were judged to be inadequate. Currently, the resources for some historical periods are more plentiful than for others, but resources overall are sufficient to support work in the periods being studied. Resources for history are well organised and stored effectively to support easy access.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

119. The school has made improvements in information technology since the last inspection when pupils' skills were judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils now make broadly satisfactory progress across the school. However, there is some variation in provision, from class to class, and the progress which pupils make is therefore uneven. When given the opportunity to use computers, most pupils demonstrate sound mouse and keyboard skills. Overall, the standards that they reach are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4.
120. In Key Stage 1, pupils use word processing and drawing programs to help them generate and communicate their ideas; and simple data bases to enter, store and retrieve information. Reception pupils make satisfactory progress when drawing and printing pictures of a steam train to support their work in history; and when writing their names, or drawing letter shapes, on a computer screen during the literacy hour. Year 1 pupils also make sound progress when drawing self-portraits as part of the topic 'Ourselves'; and they demonstrate satisfactory mouse skills when selecting and moving items on the screen to draw pictures of different buildings. More able Year 1 pupils can also use a computer wordbank to write labels and captions. In Year 2, pupils have more regular opportunities to use information technology across a wider range of subjects and, as a consequence, they make better progress in extending their information technology skills. They make effective use of computer drawn pictures and texts to enhance their efforts, for example, in a book about 'feelings' and in their work about transport. In addition, they make sound progress in control technology when working with the school's floor robots; and can use a simple database to analyse data they have collected, for example, about holiday destinations.
121. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 make sound progress when combining 'clip art' and text to design posters to advertise the value of exercise, and to make Christmas cards. They effectively use information technology to support their work in history, for example, when studying the Vikings, and in geography, by using information from a CD-ROM to make drawings of famous buildings around the world, or to enhance their work on the weather. Year 3 pupils can also present information from a database to inform studies such as the current topic on transport; and in Year 4, pupils produce interesting bar graphs and pie charts based on surveys of favourite games or food. Older pupils also consolidate their word processing and drawing skills. They effectively use different styles and colours of font and incorporate graphics to enhance their work, for example, when writing poems, making signs or designing book covers.
122. Pupils enjoy using computers and other information technology equipment. They show an enthusiasm for the subject, concentrate well and their behaviour is good. Many demonstrate a confident approach when handling equipment and even the youngest pupils can operate listening centres independently.
123. Insufficient teaching took place during the inspection to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. Staff are extending their confidence and expertise by using the equipment in the school's new computer room, and are beginning to benefit from well targeted training. The subject is well promoted in the school through the use of computer-generated labels and texts in classrooms and through attractive displays of pupils' work. Planning for the subject is appropriately based on helpful guidance, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and is satisfactory. However, the school recognises that most teachers need to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their information technology skills across a greater range of subjects
124. The co-ordinator is well informed and enthusiastic about the subject. She conscientiously monitors teachers' planning, provides useful termly reports on the breadth and balance of provision across the school, and efficiently organises training for other members of staff. The co-ordinator also organises a lunchtime computer club for Year 1 and another for Year 4 pupils, after school.
125. Resources for information technology are satisfactory. Good use has been made of National Grid for Learning funding and the new and attractive computer room provides impetus for the

subject. The school is aware that some classroom computers require updating, particularly in Key Stage 1. Good use is made of the linked middle school's computer suite to extend the resources available for older pupils.

MUSIC

126. Due to time-tabling arrangements, insufficient music lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 an overall make a judgement about pupils' progress or standards. However, pupils sing enthusiastically and with evident enjoyment, across the school. The last OFSTED report found that pupils made slow progress in Key Stage 2 but they are currently making good progress in the subject. Findings from lessons observed show that pupils are now achieving standards in performing and composing that are a little higher than average for their ages. Pupils in Year 3 are able to recognise and name untuned instruments from listening to the sounds they make. They find imaginative ways of playing these instruments to achieve different pitch and timbre. They can follow signs and symbols on a graphic score and can perform showing good control and awareness of the overall effect of their music making. They find imaginative ways of obtaining the best quality sound from their instruments. Pupils in Year 4 build successfully on this work and can improvise rhythmic patterns using untuned instruments, over a set number of beats. When listening carefully to taped music, they can distinguish between a regular and a syncopated beat.
127. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is mainly good. Teachers usually introduce lessons well, giving pupils a clear idea of what they will be learning. They plan thoroughly for lessons, with appropriate resources well prepared. They encourage pupils to value the performance of others and, in doing so, build up an ethos of confidence and trust and this has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. They ask searching questions that extend pupils' thinking, and generate some imaginative and creative responses, as a result.
128. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to experience music from visiting musicians and to perform to audiences, including their families and the wider community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. During the inspection, dance, swimming, gymnastics and games skills were observed. Overall, in both key stages, pupils make sound progress and achieve broadly average standards. These findings are broadly in line with those of the previous inspection.
130. Pupils in Key Stage 1 demonstrate average skills in throwing and catching or aiming at a goal. However, their skills of evaluating their performance are generally under-developed and so they seldom think of ways to improve. Year 2 pupils are confident in using space well when dancing and girls generally perform a simple dance varying the speed and level of their bodies according to the theme and music. They respond well to their teacher's enthusiasm and encouragement and this helps them improve their performance. A significant majority of Year 2 boys, however, are very self-conscious when dancing. This is not effectively addressed and consequently their performance is generally poor. Pupils in Year 3 make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in swimming. However, they attain standards which are lower than expected for their ages because a very high proportion of pupils are beginner swimmers who have had very little experience prior to having lessons in school. This is at variance to the previous report when nearly all pupils were judged to swim independently. However, at that time, Year 4 pupils had swimming lessons, whereas under the present arrangements it is Year 3 pupils who go swimming. Pupils in Year 4 attain average standards in gymnastics and achieve well when working in pairs to create a sequence of movements involving different body shapes.
131. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound but good teaching is sometimes demonstrated. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and give good instruction in games. However, they are less confident when teaching dance. In the best lessons, planning carefully ensures that pupils' learning is structured through the progression of skills. Lessons move at a brisk pace and teaching points are clearly demonstrated. Throughout the school, pupils are given too few opportunities to engage in planning and evaluating their performance. Occasionally, teachers

divide the class and encourage half to watch the performance of the other group. This is good practice, but should be further developed to encourage pupils to be more analytical and have greater awareness of the features they are looking for. As a consequence, they are not learning as well as they should from observing the performance of others, nor do they have a clear understanding as to how their own performance could be improved.

132. Overall, the subject has sufficient breadth and balance, although the younger pupils would benefit from having more than one lesson a week. Sufficient time is devoted to swimming. Athletics and out door and adventure activities are appropriately catered for in the summer term. The co-ordinator has provided teachers with some useful guidance to support their planning, but the lack of a scheme of work is a weakness and means that it is more difficult for teachers to ensure they plan for the continuity and progression of skills across the school. The school is aware of this and the subject is currently under review, with plans to adopt the QCA scheme of work.
133. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is provided by teachers and outside agencies for pupils in both key stages and these are well attended by pupils. Older pupils take part in district sports events, a dancing festival and inter-school athletics.
134. Resources are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has recently replaced old and worn stock with new gymnastic and games equipment. The school has a good sized playing field and a generously proportioned hall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Evidence from the lessons observed and from the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils attain standards that are average for their ages both at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 3. They make sound progress in their learning and meet the required standards identified in the agreed syllabus. Owing to the timing of the inspection, no lessons were observed in Year 4, and there was too little evidence available on which to base a secure judgement about the attainment of pupils in this particular year group.
136. Pupils in the reception class demonstrate a particular strength and sensitivity when considering ways in which hands can show care towards others, while pupils in a Year 1 class show a good level of understanding for their age while considering the moral principles and the differing viewpoints embedded in the story of Joseph and his coat of many colours. They understand how Jacob's behaviour towards Joseph shows both the natural love of a father and, in the eyes of Joseph's brothers, a degree of preferential treatment. Most pupils are able to understand the meaning of jealousy in the context of this story, and all can relate examples of events that have inspired similar feelings in their own lives. Pupils in a parallel class clearly understand the difference between good and bad actions in the same story, and, from this, are able to comment in more general terms on the difference between right and wrong. Pupils in Year 2 recall the key events in the story of Noah, drawing from it the importance of co-operation and collaborative effort, a principle which they then apply to situations in their own lives. Pupils in year 3 acquire satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the nature and function of the various books of the New Testament.
137. Further evidence from pupils' written work shows that pupils in Year 2 can draw simple but relevant comparisons between Christianity and Judaism. They understand the importance of churches and synagogues to Christians and Jews, know the names and the religious significance of symbols such as the cross and the Star of David, and write with an appropriate degree of knowledge and insight for their age about festivals such as Christmas and Hanukah. Pupils in Year 4 contribute individual pieces of work about the lives and work of the Apostles to a class book.
138. The school has responded constructively to criticisms about religious education made in the last Ofsted report. Attainment is not now below average, as it was then, and pupils are now given regular opportunities, as indicated above, to reflect and to develop the 'attitudes associated with

religious education.' Indeed, 'sensitivity, empathy and appreciation', qualities they were said to lack, are now strongly promoted in the majority of lessons, and are reflected in pupils' interaction with others throughout the school. Plans and work samples now testify to increased attention to the study of other major world faiths as well as Christianity, and teachers' planning is monitored regularly by the co-ordinator to ensure that all the 'strands' of the agreed syllabus are appropriately covered.

139. All available evidence shows that teaching is sound overall in both key stages, and sometimes very good. In the best lessons seen, in a reception class and in a Year 1 class, pupils were encouraged to think for themselves, take responsibility for their learning, and draw their own conclusions about the moral principles behind the story or the lesson content. The active involvement of pupils, in role as in the story of Joseph, or as members of a chain of caring hands in the reception class, not only brings the subject 'to life' and but also ensures that it makes a strong contribution to pupils' social and moral development. In very effective lessons such as these, teaching also draws upon pupils' previous knowledge, serves to develop their language skills, and makes meaningful links to other areas of the curriculum such as drama and English. Other lessons are planned thoroughly and are generally sound, but teachers are not all confident in their knowledge and understanding of the subject, and this sometimes results in a lack of pace in the teaching, the planning of activities which make artificial rather than relevant links with other subjects, for instance, in art, or fairly superficial treatment of the subject matter or theme.
140. The co-ordinator for religious education monitors and supports work in the subject satisfactorily in accordance with the school's stated intentions, as set out in the school development plan. Resources are adequate, with a suitable collection of artefacts to underpin the teaching of Christianity and other major world faiths.