

INSPECTION REPORT

Riverside Community Primary School
Birstall

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique Reference Number: 120092

Inspection Number: 190983

Acting Headteacher: Mrs. J. A. Downes

Reporting inspector: Mrs. C. A. Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707559

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wanlip Lane Birstall Leicester LE4 4JU
Telephone number:	0116 267 4100
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. David Bark
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. C. A. Field, Rgl		Attainment and progress
		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Teaching
Mrs. G. Smith, Lay Inspector		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
		Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr. D. R. Carrington	Mathematics	Leadership and management
	Information technology	The efficiency of the school
Mrs. S. Brown	English	Curriculum and assessment
	Physical education	
Mr. G. Warner	Science	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Music	
Mrs. M. Spark	Art	
	Design and technology	
	Areas of learning for children under five	
	Equality of opportunity	
Mrs. J. Dickins	Geography	
	History	
	Religious education	
	Special educational needs	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average.
- Pupils make good progress in religious education, art, design and technology and music during their time at the school.
- The overall progress of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, behaviour is good and a good climate is set for learning.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, although more consistently so at Key Stage 2, and there has been improvement in quality since the time of the previous inspection.
- Management is effective in giving very clear educational direction to the work of the school and to promoting a good ethos for learning.
- The school is a very efficient organisation in which financial planning and controls are very good, and resources are mostly used effectively to support both teaching and learning.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The pace of lessons is sometimes too slow, especially for higher attaining pupils and this results in not enough high level work being done.
- II. Assessment is not being used sufficiently well to plan the next stage in learning for the range of pupils.
- III. Monitoring and evaluation practices are not regular or systematic enough to ensure that all staff with management responsibilities, and governors, have a clear view of the quality of the curriculum and standards being achieved across the school.

The quality of education is good. Strengths far outweigh weaknesses but these will nevertheless form the basis of the governors' action plan that will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made sound progress in relation to improving those areas identified as key issues at the time of the previous inspection. Sufficient guidance is now in place to enable teachers to teach all subjects effectively. The quality of learning has improved in geography and history; pupils now make satisfactory progress in these subjects. Class management was a weakness and this is no longer the case. Teachers are consistent in the way they manage behaviour, and good standards result because of shared expectations. Although assessment has improved, there is still work to be done and it continues to be a key issue. There is no whole-school approach to using information gathered to inform planning the next steps in learning for the range of pupils. In some lessons at both key stages the pace of lessons is not brisk enough to ensure that pupils, especially high attainers, work hard enough and get a good amount of work done. Monitoring and evaluation practice remain as a key issue because there has been too little time or opportunity given to developing the skills needed to undertake this work. The school demonstrates its resolve to raise standards by the initiatives currently planned. The acting headteacher, governors and senior staff are united in their determination to make continuous and sustained improvements. It is the inspection team's view that the school has good capacity to do this.

· **Standards in subjects**

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key <i>well above average</i> <i>A</i> <i>above average</i>
English	A	C	
Mathematics	A	C	
Science	C	D	

Standards in the 1998 National tests at Key Stage 2 show well above average attainment in English and mathematics, and average attainment in science. When compared to similar type schools standards are average overall. Findings from inspection confirm that standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, although there is potential for more pupils to be working at higher levels. Trends in performance in the national tests over the past three years show above average standards at Key Stage 2, and confirm the findings from inspection. Standards in information technology and religious education are in line with those typically achieved by eleven year olds. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven, their overall attainment is above average. This reflects good progress over time, with accelerated learning at the end of Key Stage 2 due to very effective teaching.

· **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education		Good	Good
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

Teaching quality has improved since the time of the previous inspection. During this inspection, 148 observations were made of teaching and learning, and of these 98 per cent were of satisfactory or better quality. Two per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory because pupils made insufficient progress during the course of the lesson. Nearly 60 per cent of lessons were of good or better quality, and 17 per cent were very good or better. Overall, the quality of teaching is good.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils are happy at school, know what standards of behaviour teachers expect and act accordingly.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of attendance is in line with that of most primary schools. Pupils are punctual to school.
Ethos*	Good. Relationships are supportive and these help pupils to feel confident to take full advantage of the wide ranging opportunities being provided. Attitudes to learning are positive, and most pupils try very hard to do their best work. A good climate for learning is created but the drive for high standards has not been forceful enough.
Leadership and management	Good. There is a strong sense of purpose and effective team work between senior staff and governors. The acting headteacher has already made improvements to communication systems and has re-instated a programme of staff appraisal. Staff are poised to take on the challenge which new roles and responsibilities have provided. Monitoring and evaluation work is at an early stage of development. The school has given renewed impetus this term to establishing procedures to facilitate a shared analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Its capacity for self-review and sustained improvements is good.
Curriculum	Good. The curriculum is rich and varied. Sound attention has been given to implementing literacy and numeracy strategies whilst successfully maintaining breadth and balance in all foundation subjects. Whilst secure in English, mathematics and science, assessment practice is unsatisfactory in information technology and religious education, and in most foundation subjects. There is inconsistent use of assessment to inform the planning of lessons.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils needs are well met, especially so in Key Stage 2. Assessment of special needs could usefully be undertaken earlier.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is attended to well. This is a marked improvement since the time of the previous inspection, especially in the provision for pupils' cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Sound. Increasing the number of support staff has had a positive impact on helping those with learning needs. Indications are that additional literacy teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' basic skills development. Accommodation is sufficient but poor arrangements of furniture in some classes and general clutter, restricts the free flow of adults and children. Resources are now adequate, recent additions are being shared and used effectively. Reception classes are still short of a secure outdoor play area, but plans are in hand to remedy this.
Value for money	Good overall.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
IV. The way the school encourages and involves parents as partners in education	IX. Inconsistent practice in the setting of
V. That pupils like school	X. That uniform is not well promoted
VI. The way in which positive values and attitudes are promoted	
VII. That pupils have made a good start to the new school year	
VIII. The introduction of a regular newsletter	

Twenty three parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector and twenty one per cent of parents responded to the questionnaire. The above comments reflect the views of these parents. The inspection team supports parents' positive views but disagree with the concerns about homework. The team judges homework to be well attended to in this school. The team agrees that uniform is not well promoted.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To build on, and share existing good practice, and to ensure that the rate of progress is the best it can be for all pupils, especially high attainers; school managers, governors and staff should:

◆. Improve the consistency of lesson planning by:

- i) ensuring that all lesson plans have clear and detailed objectives for learning for the full range of pupils in the class, and make sure that high attaining pupils do more work
- ii) reviewing the quality and impact of planning through regular and systematic monitoring

found in paragraphs: 13, 15, 25 - 27, 30, 31, 34, 98, 100, 122, 125, 139, 150, 166

◆) Improve the consistency and use of assessment across the school by:

- i) developing teachers' expertise in assessment through sharing the best practice
- ii) setting clear targets for pupils and clear outcomes for lessons based on accurate assessment of prior learning
- iii) ensuring that marking not only recognises effort but shows clearly how work may be improved
- iv) monitoring practice and its impact, particularly the pace of lessons

found in paragraphs: 14, 19, 25, 30, 31, 37, 38, 46, 62, 63, 98, 100, 108, 109, 125, 130, 134, 140, 146, 147, 151, 152, 156, 161, 167

◆) **Extend monitoring and evaluation work by:**

- i) ensuring that senior and middle managers have the necessary skills, time and opportunity to make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning so that there is a clear view of how standards can be further lifted
- ii) using information gathered and analyses of findings to check that projected school targets are on schedule to be met

found in paras: 7, 19, 61, 74, 100, 120, 126, 151, 156

Although not identified as separate key issues, in preparing their action plan, governors should also pay attention to the following:

-) Setting clear standards for the presentation of pupils' work
-) Re-organising some classrooms to make more efficient use of space, and remove unnecessary clutter
-) Monitoring the impact of time slippage caused by lessons running over due to the very tight time-tabling of a rich, but packed curriculum, and the movement of pupils to access specialist facilities.

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1. Riverside Community Primary School is located to the north-east of the city of Leicester and mainly serves the local community of Birstall an area of mostly privately owned with some council housing. The school is twice the size of most primary schools with 525 pupils on roll, 285 boys and 240 girls aged from four to eleven years. Admission arrangements currently follow the local education authority guidelines, this means that some pupils spend only one term in reception classes before moving into a year 1 class. Most of the children who start in the reception classes have experienced pre-school education. Standards on entry are broadly average and reflect a wide range of achievements. There were twenty four children under five at the time of the inspection split between two classes.

2. Eighty-one pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and this is average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need in place and receive specific support. The school is providing additional support for sixty-five pupils, mostly boys, who have been identified as needing help with improving basic skills. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is high. No extra provision is made for these pupils as the school's assessments shows all have sufficient English to access the full curriculum. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Parents show a keen interest in the work of the school and many give valued support to its daily life.

3. The school aims to develop the potential of each child in all aspects of the curriculum by helping them to develop a full range of learning skills. Within an interesting, stimulating and caring community pupils will be encouraged to show respect, tolerance and understanding for the needs and aspirations of others. The school recognises that learning is for life and should be a pleasurable experience.

4.Recent targets have been to:

- respond to the key issues raised in the 1996 inspection report;
- review the impact of the literacy hour;
- review most subjects in terms of the quality of teaching and learning;
- implement staff training and improve resources in information technology;
- review approaches to behaviour management;
- continue a rolling programme of building refurbishment and site upgrade.

1.This term the focus is on:

- introducing the numeracy hour successfully;
- improving communications with parents;
- extending monitoring and evaluation practice;
- re-instating appraisal;
- establishing a Home/School agreement;
- appointing a new headteacher.

1.Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	44	27	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	32	37	39
	Girls	26	28	28
	Total	58	65	67
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82 (82)	92 (70)	94 (86)
	National	80 (80)	81 (80)	85 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	35	36	40
	Girls	26	27	28
	Total	61	63	68
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (81)	89 (90)	96 (95)
	National	81 (80)	85 (83)	86 (85)

Attainment at Key Stage 2

2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	45	36	81

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	34	35	33
	Girls	32	27	27
	Total	66	62	60
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	84 (76)	78 (75)	76 (94)
	National	65 (63)	58 (62)	69 (68)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	26	34	36
	Girls	25	26	29
	Total	51	60	65
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	65 (73)	76 (73)	82 (84)
	National	62 (63)	65 (64)	69 (69)

Attendance

Percentage of half days
(sessions)
missed through absence for the
latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorise d Absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory
school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	17
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

6. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

6. Attainment and progress

2. At the time of the previous inspection (1996) standards at Key Stage 1 were judged to be average in English, mathematics and science and above average at Key Stage 2. Standards today are at the same levels as then. The school has sustained a good quality of education for most pupils, who make good progress during their time at the school. Rates of progress are uneven, however, and there is potential, especially at the end of Key Stage 1 for pupils to be given more challenging work to do, and to get more work done. This is the case in other classes within lower Key Stage 2 as well. Accelerated progress is evident at the end of Key Stage 2 because of particularly effective teaching, but still too few pupils are achieving the higher levels of which they are capable in National Curriculum tests. Within the school there is good practice in all of the areas that the team has identified as key issues for action. These are having a direct impact on the rates of progress pupils make, and the standards they achieve. The school has yet to share and exchange the best of what it does and to evaluate what it needs to do next in order to raise standards.

3. Children enter school with broadly average attainment levels and are given a sound start to education. Although they make steady progress in learning, and reach expected levels in the six areas of learning for children of this age, some potentially could learn at a faster rate. These children had only been in school for a few weeks when the inspection took place and the focus was very much on encouraging them to settle well, and leave parent/carers without undue anxiety. The team of staff was very successful in helping children ease into school life, and in reassuring parents. The layout of the reception classes however, is not sufficiently well designed to enable pupils to have free access to a range of activities, and this has an adverse impact on the pace at which personal and social skills are developed. Learning resources for children under five are unsatisfactory. Many are old and inaccessible to the children. There is little equipment for physical development such as climbing or balancing, or wheeled toys for the children to control and this too limits the potential achievement of some. The governors are aware of limitations in outdoor play space for children under five and have put this as a top priority in future playground enhancement proposals.

4. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1, pupils achieved overall standards in English that were below the national average. Although the percentage of pupils gaining level 2 was in line with the national average, the percentage gaining higher level 3 was significantly below. Standards in mathematics were in line with the national average. Standards in science, were assessed by teachers to be average overall. Over the last three years, the standards pupils have achieved in English, mathematics and science have been close to the national average. The attainments of both boys and girls mirrors the national picture, with the standards girls achieve being higher than the boys. Results overall are average when compared to similar type schools, although reading skills show up as being well below average.

5. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2, pupils achieved well above average standards in English and mathematics, and average standards in science. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Over the last three years, the standards pupils have achieved in English, mathematics and science have been above the national average. Overall, across all three subjects, pupils' performance was close to the average for schools with pupils' from similar backgrounds. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven, their overall attainment is above average. This reflects good progress over time, with accelerated learning at the end of Key Stage 2 due to very effective teaching. Preliminary analysis of the results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests suggest that

standards are being maintained in line with the school's projected targets.

6. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Good quality support for pupils in Key Stage 2 through both in-class additional help with literacy, and withdrawal to work in small groups with a specialist teacher, enables pupils to work very effectively towards the individual targets set for them. In Key Stage 1, teachers give additional help to pupils on the early stages of the special needs register, and this enables them to make progress commensurate with their peers. There were no pupils assessed as having special educational needs in reception classes at the time of the inspection. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress in line with that of their peers.

7. Current standards are judged to be average at the end of Key Stage 1 in English and science, and above average in mathematics. Standards are above average in these subjects at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in information technology are average at the end of both key stages. Standards in religious education are in line with those set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils of the same age. Through the provision of worthwhile experiences pupils make good progress in art, design and technology and music. The school strives to provide quality and breadth in its curriculum whilst enabling pupils to make good progress in most of the ten National Curriculum subjects and religious education by the age of eleven years. In lessons, there is no significant variation between the achievements of boys and girls, both enjoy learning with equal enthusiasm in all subjects.

8. The literacy hour has been effectively introduced throughout the school, and is making a useful contribution to developing pupils' language and literacy skills. In some lessons, however, the pace of work lessens in group activities because too little is expected in terms of the amount and quality of work to be produced. Pupils at the end of both key stages achieve average standards in speaking and listening. Pupils speak with confidence, acquire an improving vocabulary that they use well in expressing their ideas and answering questions. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to present ideas orally, for example, to follow lines of enquiry in public debate. Most pupils are interested listeners and are attentive to their teachers and class-mates. Attainment in reading is average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. Pupils find pleasure in books, as they get older they develop good skills in de-coding new words, and read a wide range of literature with accuracy and understanding. The school has been successful in training a veritable "army of volunteers" to hear pupils read; their help has had a positive impact on skills development.

9. Attainment in writing is below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. Writing at Key Stage 1 lacks depth, and pupils are not being sufficiently encouraged to show originality and flair in what they produce. To some extent there is an over-reliance on worksheets. Handwriting and presentation standards are barely adequate. Some teachers expect work to be neat, legible and tidy, whilst others are too accepting of shoddy work. The rate of progress in writing skills is greater in Year 6 than in other years. Expectations of pupils in this year group are high, and they meet this challenge by producing an impressive quantity of good quality work. In one literacy hour for example, pupils in Year 6 studied "Charlotte's Web" to find out about dialogue and made good progress in both their understanding, and use, of punctuation to define speech. Good understanding of character and plot developed, whilst many extended their vocabulary with words they used later in personal writing. Through skilful questioning the teacher both challenged and extended pupils' knowledge of authors, styles of writing and capitalised on every opportunity to promote the cultural aspects of similarities and differences between English and American writing.

10. The school has made a good start with introducing the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils' numeracy skills are sharp and good progress is being made by most in working accurately and with growing speed. At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils show a good understanding of number calculations and a growing understanding of the place value of tens and units. Higher attaining pupils use their knowledge of number to solve simple problems and work with larger numbers. They know the mathematical names for two and three dimensional shapes and can recognise right angles within shapes and name some of their properties. In

some lessons, however these pupils were observed to relax too early in their learning because work was insufficiently demanding and failed to motivate them to get tasks done quickly. Pupils are able to suggest sensible ways of collecting data and recording results. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have good knowledge and understanding when working with big numbers. They undertake investigative work competently, and show confidence working with space, shape and measurement. They have satisfactory skills in handling data. Pupils make good progress overall in both key stages.

11. Standards in science are average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. Most teaching is confident and well informed and this enables good progress in learning to be made. Pupils enjoy science, not least because of the good opportunities provided to “learn by doing”. Children in reception classes experiment through water-play, how well various objects float or sink. By Year 2, pupils write appropriately about their experimentation work and plan their investigations carefully and in good detail. In a lesson where floating and sinking was revisited, pupils learnt that items, such as paper clips sink even though they are light, whilst larger objects made of plastic actually float. Pupils in years 3 and 4 complete detailed studies of plant growth. They have good basic knowledge of these aspects and their investigation skills are good. Recording is of good quality. In years 5 and 6, pupils look at light sources and reflection. They make accurate predictions, evaluating why certain results are likely to occur, for example, if mirror height and angle is adjusted. Their vocabulary of the subject is good. The application and development of numeracy is also good in science, pupils compile some complex line graphs to show relationships between the height of the light source and the size of the shadow, for example.

12. Standards in information technology are just about average at the end of both key stages and progress is satisfactory. Information technology has improved since the last inspection but the subject continues to receive priority development, especially in respect of boosting staff confidence, and its use across the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to practice their information technology skills at home make a positive contribution to the progress of some pupils. Pupils develop the necessary skills and knowledge in the use of computers to communicate information, text and pictures. The youngest pupils show good skills with the track ball and mouse, and can make informed choices to load a program with confidence. Older pupils continue to develop skills in word processing, they also know that computers can be used to control machines and processes. Pupils are competent to operate multi-media facilities to find out facts and information.

13. Pupils’ attainments in religious education at seven and eleven are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils of the same age. Progress is good overall throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their lessons in religious education and respond well to questions and the invitation to use evidence to solve problems. In Key Stage 1 they re-enact stories which they know are to be found in the Bible. They discover facts about the beliefs of Hindus, and discuss the moral issues raised in the story of Rama and Sita, and are developing a good set of principles by which to make decisions about right and wrong. By the age of eleven they have a good knowledge and understanding of key aspects of major world faiths which also aids significantly their cultural awareness. Pupils demonstrate tolerant and reflective attitudes and treat one another and adults with courtesy and respect.

14. The school has set realistic targets for overall attainment levels in the National Curriculum tests for the next few years. It is well on course to achieve these targets and has begun to monitor the trend by examining the findings from assessment data. The tracking of pupils’ individual progress is at an early stage of development. To date, insufficient attention has been paid to assessing how well pupils are learning, and whether standards are high enough. Senior managers are aware of the need to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of work in classrooms, and have already drawn up a timetable of staff-release to do this.

19. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

15.The school promotes family values, is well ordered and caring. Relationships are supportive and pupils respond well to the positive ethos promoted; standards of behaviour are good and pupils are confident to take full advantage of the good quality of education provided. Parents comment very positively about the happy way in which their children come to school. Pupils get on well together at Riverside and actually enjoy one another's company. Strengths in this aspect of the school's work identified at the time of the previous inspection have been successfully maintained.

16.Children start school at four years of age and quickly settle into the routines so that by the time that they are five they move about the classroom with confidence and are able to share, take turns and co-operate with one another well. Pupils respond well to the code of conduct and teachers' consistently high expectations for good behaviour; consequently standards of behaviour throughout the school are good. There has been one exclusion within the past twelve months. In some classes, pupils are encouraged to set themselves "personal challenges" which might involve trying to improve academic work, but also involve targets to improve behaviour for example. This focus on personal study skills is very beneficial to aiding rates of progress in learning. In one class in Year 5, pupils give stars to one another in recognition of personal endeavour. Pupils throughout the school show kindness and consideration to one another and staff, and by the time they are ready to move to secondary school they are well on their way to becoming responsible future citizens.

17.Pupils have positive attitudes to study and in most lessons work with sustained concentration and apply themselves well. In one or two lessons, the behaviour of a few pupils was fussy as the tasks they had been set failed to provide sufficient challenge, and motivation to work hard suffered as a result. Pupils with special needs are willing to learn and are succeeding well in meeting the individual learning targets set for them. They show confidence in talking about what they are doing and have good self-esteem. Most pupils generally listen well to instructions and are very willing to give answers to questions raised in discussion. They voice opinions openly and honestly and without fear of ridicule from others. When given the opportunity pupils show good levels of independence in learning, and are able to follow their own lines of enquiry, but such opportunities are inconsistently provided. In other respects pupils' personal growth is well attended to. For example a group of Year 6 pupils were involved in interviewing candidates for the post of new headteacher. Others have been involved in developing plans for the proposed playground enhancements. Relationships in the school are mutually respectful and are fostering tolerant and good understanding for the needs of others.

22. **Attendance**

18.Attendance at this school is satisfactory. The overall level is in line with the national average and the number of unauthorised absences is very low. When pupils are absent, it is usually because they have been ill or have been taken on a family holiday. There is no evidence of lack of regular attendance by pupils with special educational needs.

19.The majority of pupils arrive at school in good time and registration procedures are quickly completed. This time is used constructively and the morning session gets off to a very prompt start. The previous inspection raised no concerns about attendance and this continues to be the case.

24. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

20. Teaching is of satisfactory or better quality in 98 per cent of lessons. In two per cent of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory because pupils, especially high attainers do not make sufficient progress. Teaching quality is good in nearly 57 per cent of all lessons, and of very good or better quality in 17 per cent. Occasionally teaching is outstanding. The quality of teaching is good overall. This is significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection when fifteen per cent of lessons, mostly in Key Stage 1 were judged to be of unsatisfactory quality. An effective programme of staff development is in place and has already made a positive impact on raising staff confidence to teach the full range of National Curriculum subjects to a sound, and often good, standard. Issues raised about inconsistent levels of challenge still exist to some extent, particularly in those lessons where expectations about the quality and quantity of work to be completed are undemanding. Teaching is successful in meeting the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and their progress is good. Average attainers are enabled to make generally good progress over time, and the above average standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2, are testament to this. The use of time, and pace set within lessons is the weakest feature of teaching practice throughout the school, and is unsatisfactory. This was very evident in too many literacy hours where well timed introductions that both engaged and stimulated good responses from pupils, were not capitalised upon in group work activities. In these lessons, the teachers' planning and practice was insufficiently focused on what different pupils would be able to know, understand and do by the end of the session.

21. The most consistently good or better quality teaching is in upper Key Stage 2 and this is why standards lift. Nevertheless, rates of progress are uneven in this key stage too, and potentially more pupils could be achieving higher levels if the very best features of teaching practice was shared and exchanged, and used more widely by teachers to enable more consistent progress for all pupils. Parents, governors and friends of the school are giving good support in spending time hearing children read regularly.

22. Teaching of children under five is sound in all areas of learning. Staff work well together as a team and are successful in both nurturing, and developing children's academic and personal growth. However, limitations in the arrangements of the classes gives rise to an approach which tends to lead pupils learning rather than enabling them to find things out through guided investigations. This means that the rates of progress of some children, especially potentially high attainers are curtailed.

23. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Since the time of the previous inspection the number of support staff has increased substantially, and the quality of support to both teaching and learning is good. High quality support is given to those Key Stage 2 pupils with special educational needs when withdrawn from their class to work in small groups on individual programmes. Extra support for literacy using module 1 of the Additional Literacy Strategy materials in lower Key Stage 2, is extremely well organised, it involves sixty-five pupils who displayed high levels of motivation in lessons, due to the well-structured and careful approach adopted. Early indications are that it is having a beneficial impact on the literacy skills of those involved.

24. Effective features of teaching demonstrated throughout the school, by most teachers, include their secure knowledge, quality of planning, good management of pupils. Most teachers use good methods and organisation to provide stimulating and interesting lessons that elicit positive responses from pupils, and enables them to make appropriate gains in learning. Teachers' setting of homework makes a very positive contribution the quality of learning, and is a particularly positive feature in Key Stage 2 where pupils are given independent research tasks to do. In the most successful lessons. pupils are given

challenging work, encouraged to tackle some things for themselves and are clear about what they need to do next to improve. This was well demonstrated in a Literacy Hour when Year 1 pupils firstly looked at the Big Book "Ham and Jam" with the teacher, and then discussed the text showing a very good understanding of character and storyline, and accurately identifying rhyming words. The teacher used questions very skilfully to draw out personal responses of the parts especially enjoyed, and to consolidate initial sounds recognition, for example the "ch" sound in "hot chocky" chosen by the author to rhyme with "planet ocky". In independent group work, high attaining pupils used a "word-slider" to find three letter rhyming words such as "cat, mat, sat" and then used these successfully in writing well constructed sentences, which they then read to one another with amusement and good understanding of rhyme. Throughout the lesson a very good pace was maintained with the teacher making regular checks to encourage and stimulate very good progress from all pupils. At the end of the lesson the teacher recapped on what had been achieved, and left pupils thinking about what they needed to do next time.

25. Some aspects of teaching, although sound, could be refined to improve overall quality. In some lessons teachers state class objectives for learning but do not give sufficient attention to the individual needs and capabilities within the class or group, nor do they set down specific targets in their short-term planning. This means that although some pupils attain what they are capable of, particularly those with special needs who get effective support and well-matched work, some pupils are capable of learning at a faster rate and attain potentially higher standards. More specific objectives would enable teachers to make more detailed assessment and to set precise targets for the next steps in pupils' learning, especially for the higher attaining pupils. Additionally, in a few lessons it was apparent that too little work had been set for some pupils and as a result they took too long in doing in the task, instead of being given a more demanding extension activity. In some subjects, the over-reliance on worksheets also inhibits the level at which some pupils can work. This was particularly noticeable in science. Day-to-day assessment is competent, but there could be better and more frequent use made of written comments to show how pupils can improve their work.

30. The curriculum and assessment

26. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that successfully enables pupils to have full access and equality of opportunity. The richness of the curriculum makes good contribution to the quality of education provided but there are time issues arising. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. There is inconsistent practice in the way higher attaining pupils are challenged, and enabled to learn at the optimum rate. This term a schedule which gives release time for senior managers and subject coordinators has been drawn up with the specific intention of monitoring the quality of the curriculum and standards being achieved. Assessment identified at the time of the previous inspection, although improved in English, mathematics and science, and in the establishment of a whole-school recording system, still has aspects ripe for development. Assessment in the core subjects of information technology and religious education and most foundation subjects is not yet in place. This is unsatisfactory. Assessment information is not used sufficiently well to help teachers in their planning nor to monitor the progress of higher attaining pupils. Assessment remains as a key issue for the school to address.

27. The curriculum planned for children under five is broad and balanced. It is satisfactorily planned to provide a variety of activities covering the defined areas of learning leading to the desirable learning outcomes. The curriculum prepares children soundly for the National Curriculum and the next stage of their learning.

28. The school provides its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. It fulfils the requirements for sex, drug and health education. Since the previous inspection a number of improvements have been made to the curriculum in both key stages. Appropriate policies and

schemes of work have been developed in all subjects. An analysis of time allocated to subjects has resulted in increased time for English and mathematics in response to the recommendations of national literacy and numeracy strategies. The school is providing a varied and rich curriculum by giving time to other subjects, and reasonable balance is achieved. The curriculum is very full however and occasionally there is time slippage as a run-over from one lesson causes the next one to start late. This slippage is exacerbated by movement about the school, sometimes without justification, for example to use the specialist music room when the lesson could have been held more immediately in the classroom. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented soundly overall, although not all teachers are secure yet in planning specific learning objectives, matching tasks to pupils' abilities or managing the literacy hour effectively. A good start has been made in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy.

29. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of all pupils and satisfactorily meets the intellectual, physical and personal development needs of most pupils. Higher attaining pupils, however, are not always sufficiently challenged. Although there have been improvements in the quality of planning with the development of schemes of work, some weaknesses remain in medium and short term planning. Different levels of achievement are not always sufficiently addressed. Short-term plans do not always give enough detail of how the work is to be matched to the different groups of pupils, nor do the plans show what pupils are expected to learn or experience in each lesson and work is not always referenced to the National Curriculum attainment targets or programmes of study. While teachers are aware of the need to challenge higher attaining pupils by the provision of more opportunities to make decisions for themselves, these are not currently addressed in a systematic way. The joint planning strengthens the delivery of the curriculum and encourages staff to share their expertise as well as promoting continuity of the pupils' learning between classes and year groups. The best practice observed within the school, is not sufficiently shared.

30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Procedures for identifying their needs are effective, although there are missed opportunities for earlier identification with the youngest children. Such pupils receive good support from the support staff, including the additional literacy support where a concentrated programme for targeted pupils is proving effective in helping to raise standards in literacy. Individual education plans are appropriate, regularly reviewed and updated to take account of changes in pupils' needs. All aspects of the Code of Practice are appropriately met.

31. The curriculum is broadened by a programme of educational visits to places of historic and cultural interest, such as the recent canal boat experience, although there is no longer an opportunity for older pupils to participate in a residential experience. Visitors to the school also enhance the curriculum in areas such as health education, personal safety and specific projects. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is provided. Clubs include musical activities, for example recorders, keyboards and orchestra, and sporting activities include football, rounders and short tennis. From time to time, other clubs such as folk dancing, and archaeology occur. These make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and social and cultural development.

32. A key issue on the last inspection identified the need to plan for more consistent assessment procedures in the classroom and wider recording of attainment. While improvements have been made to assessment and recording processes, the issue has not been fully addressed and practice remains inconsistent. Assessment in information technology, religious education and most foundation subjects is not yet in place. This is unsatisfactory. A comprehensive assessment policy helps teachers gather a considerable amount of information about pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. Standardised tests in core subjects are undertaken in addition to the National Curriculum tests. A system for recording pupils' attainment in all subjects throughout the year has been developed and detailed records are maintained. However, assessment information is not used

sufficiently to help teachers in their planning nor to monitor the progress of higher attaining pupils. This term a schedule which gives release time for senior managers and subject coordinators has been drawn up with the specific intention of monitoring the quality of the curriculum and standards being achieved.

33.The school meets its obligation for the administration of statutory assessment tasks and tests. Results are analysed to some extent, and broadly realistic institutional targets set as a result of this analysis. Personal target setting by pupils is at an early stage of development. A marking policy is in place but marking remains inconsistent across the school. In too many examples of the work retained from last year, presentation was poor and teachers had not picked this up in their marking. The best examples contain positive comments and suggestions of ways in which pupils can improve their work but, in some cases, marking is mainly a series of ticks. However, teachers' oral feedback to pupils is often informative and includes suggestions about improving their work.

38. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

34.The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This maintains the provision for spiritual, moral and social development recognised at the last inspection and improves upon the provision made for cultural development. Pupils are valued and both pupils and adults treat one another with the respect. Acts of collective worship of a broadly Christian nature make a useful contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, and meet legal requirements. The school gives its pupils a good foundation for their future life in school and society.

35.There is a clear commitment to fostering pupils' spiritual development in subjects as well as assemblies. The school has some difficulty in meeting all together because of the restrictions of space in its halls so meets instead in groups of lower, middle and upper school pupils. The assemblies cover a range of issues and topics that meet spiritual needs during time spent reflecting upon the morals behind the stories told. The Christian religion is part of the ethos of the school, and some other major world faiths such as Sikhism, are appropriately recognised and valued in religious education lessons. Special events from other religions such as Diwali are celebrated with a leading role effectively taken by a governor who celebrates it as part of her faith. There are no regular themes to assemblies but instead they are based upon current issues or seasons with head teacher and staff joining pupils in giving due recognition and reflection time to them. Visitors to the school, such as the local Methodist minister in the inspection week, support pupils well in drawing conclusions about Christian values and beliefs.

36.Moral development is well promoted. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Knowledge of this difference is well supported by the rewards system of the school. This develops from the time that pupils start school when they receive stickers, through to older pupils receiving certificates for acting appropriately in helping others in some way. Older pupils help younger ones to settle into school by looking after them at break and lunch times. The value of all adults and other pupils, including those with special educational needs who are fully integrated into all activities in the school, is well recognised. Teachers ensure that the simple, but appropriate, school rules that are readily accepted by pupils because they have been agreed between adults and themselves.

37.Provision for social development is good. Children are encouraged from the time that they enter school as under fives to work together co-operatively. Emphasis is appropriately placed upon social and personal development at under five as most children enter school with either a varied pre school experience or none at all. Teachers plan activities throughout the school in many lessons such as science and design and technology where pupils work in pairs and small groups as well as having opportunities to work together as a whole class. Pupils take responsibilities seriously such as older ones looking after lunch boxes for younger ones and taking registers for the teachers in some of the extra curricular activities such as attendance at

the recorder groups. There are no residential visits made by pupils currently but there are a good range of quality day visits made to places of interest that are connected to curriculum such as the recent visit to the Tudor Manor House at Coalville. This, like other visits, has been thoroughly researched by teachers in Year 6 to ensure that maximum learning opportunities are being made as well as good social experiences being given. Pupils often listen carefully to one another in lessons, such as music and science, as well as teachers as a demonstration of their good social skills. Taking part in inter school sporting activities is a further effective opportunity given to pupils to extend their social development in a meaningful way.

38.Provision for cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school enables pupils to study a multiplicity of faiths and cultures. Special events such as Diwali are celebrated, and this is made more meaningful for pupils by the involvement of a governor who shares her personal experiences. Appropriate provision is made for pupils to prepare for life in a multi-cultural society. They make music with instruments from other cultures that indicate clearly the instruments value in increasing their range of musical skills. They listen to poetry and literature from other cultures with the school having made a conscious effort to support this by their selection of materials to deliver the literacy strategy. The experiences given to pupils widens their knowledge and broadens their understanding and so adds quality to the curriculum provided.

43. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

39.The previous inspection found that this school provided a happy, secure environment and this continues to be the case. All members of staff work very well together as a team and everyone does their best to ensure that the pupils' day-to-day needs are met as fully as possible. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting are pleased that their children are known to staff as individuals and are confident that very good care is taken of anyone who may be upset or injured. Their views are supported by the inspection team.

40.There are close links with the Birstall Pre-school Links Group and great care is taken when introducing these young children to their new environment and the school's day to day routines. Induction procedures are very thorough and this early attention pays dividends in ensuring that these youngsters settle quickly and have a positive beginning to school life.

41.Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are satisfactory. The school uses a range of assessment procedures but, as yet, there is no whole school approach to using assessment information when planning what pupils will do next. Overall provision for pupils with special educational needs, however, is good. Although the school does not formally identify these pupils until they have been in school for at least two years, members of staff are sensitive to their individual needs and the progress they make is closely monitored.

42.A strong emphasis is placed on behaviour and the procedures used to ensure that standards remain high are effective. When dealing with pupils who have behavioural problems, class teachers skilfully and subtly defuse potentially volatile situations. Particularly good work or effort is recognised with stickers or certificates and may be incorporated into the recently introduced school newsletters. Team points are also awarded and pupils eagerly await the announcement of the winning team during Monday assembly. Pupils are well supervised during play and lunch times. Although some pupils are concerned about bullying, they also indicate that members of staff resolve any such problems. Pupils have requested a "Bully Box" in which notes of concern may be placed by pupils who have worries, and this is shortly to be introduced.

43.Regular and punctual attendance is very effectively promoted. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good and any unexplained absences are systematically followed up.

44.Child protection procedures are appropriately in place, although recent changes to the staff mean that key members have not yet received all the necessary specialist training. Governors are aware of their duties and carry them out diligently. Routine health and safety procedures are satisfactory and statutory requirements are met in full.

49. **Partnership with parents and the community**

45.This school sees a close partnership with parents as being fundamental to its work and is keen to encourage their involvement as much as possible. Parents indicate that the office and teaching staff are friendly and approachable and that they feel encouraged to play a full part in the day to day life of the school. The previous inspection found that the parents were kept well informed and this continues to be the case.

46.Parental attendance at meetings with staff is excellent and the school also provides information on more specific initiatives, such as the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Hours. The Acting Headteacher has recently introduced school newsletters and these are full of interesting information on, for example, forthcoming topic work, updates on the role of the governors and day to day events in the life of the school. The school prospectus is attractively presented and very informative. The governors' annual report to parents is generally informative but misses out some minor information about staff training and term dates. The quality of information provided for parents is good.

47.Pupils' annual reports usually contain useful comments on how pupils have progressed in English, mathematics and science. Comments in other subjects, however, often tend to refer to work undertaken by the whole class and do not adequately describe how individual pupils have progressed and this is a weakness. All parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to talk with the special needs teacher during consultation evenings and many take up this offer. They are also encouraged to play a full part in discussions about their child's future learning targets.

48.Parents' involvement with day to day school life is good and a significant number regularly come in to help with a host of activities, including reading, sewing and cooking. The school is keen to put their talents to the best possible use and provides a very useful information booklet for those who would like to help. Parents are keen to be involved and their contribution is very well organised. Each helper has a staff mentor and training sessions are held for those who are particularly interested in helping with literacy and numeracy. Home/school reading diaries provide a useful avenue of communication and these are used very effectively, especially in the lower school. Although some parents feel that homework is set inconsistently, their concerns are not supported by the inspection. The homework policy is very clear and conversations with pupils reveal that it is indeed a regular feature of school life. Not only is homework very well linked to work undertaken during lessons, the amount set compares well with other schools.

49.The Family Association provides valuable support and a range of social and fund raising events are held. Their generous financial support enables the school to buy resources such as books, computing software, white boards and listening centres.

50.Links with the community are good and the school is visited by a range of people such as the community policeman and school nurse. Local community groups and sports clubs make good use of the school's facilities and the hall and swimming pool are regularly rented out. As well as providing an additional source of income, this contact helps to raise the profile of the school locally. There are good links with local colleges of further education and, although the school is located in a residential area, contact with industry is developing. A visits programme

to places such as Snibston Discovery park, New Walk museum, Belgrave Hall, Beaumanor Hall and Cropston field study centre for example, widen pupils' horizons. These links successfully enrich the curriculum, and make a very worthwhile contribution to the quality of education being provided.

55. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

55. Leadership and management

51. Riverside Community Primary School has recently undergone major changes in management. The acting headteacher has been in post for just a few weeks, she is supported by an acting deputy head teacher and by a senior management team who have yet to have much experience of the strategic oversight of the school. The unifying factor in these changes is the governing body, which is alert to the strengths and weaknesses of the school and takes an active, exacting and successful role in boosting the work of the school.

52. The previous inspection report identified effective management practices and a wholly positive ethos in school. Despite the changes in management, this appears to have been maintained. Because of the timing of the current inspection it is not possible to judge the impact of altered management practice, though the indicators look good.

53. The acting headteacher was quick to introduce a number of well-judged changes to management procedures and practice in a bid to raise standards and improve the quality of education. She has a clear and strong sense of educational direction and is working hard to build a united management team that is capable of taking hard decisions at the right time. She is firm in her resolve that it is the responsibility of all staff and the governors to share in school management and has identified, and released, sufficient funding for the work of monitoring and evaluation of strengths and weaknesses to begin in earnest. She is identifying and building on the strengths of a management team whose impact is untested because of their collective inexperience. The acting deputy headteacher and other senior leaders are growing together as a team charged with the management of the whole school and not just their individual responsibilities.

54. The governors are a successful force in school management. They have very good oversight of the work of the school, act as its critical friend and they are alert to whether decisions impact on standards and the quality of education. They publish all of the necessary information and generally ensure that statutory requirements are met. Governors play a key role in establishing the priorities of the school as expressed in the development plan. Members of staff also assist in the formulation of whole school priorities. The current school development plan is of good quality and identifies clearly what everyone should strive for. School priorities are known by all and management ensures that good progress is made in achieving them. The budget is well linked to the priorities of the development plan.

55. The aims of the school are achieved soundly, though there is inconsistency in ensuring all pupils reach their full potential. The staff are good role models for the pupils and relationships and morale are both good. They successfully cultivate good attitudes and values in the pupils. The good ethos of the school is well underpinned by the pleasant working atmosphere in school and by the good drive for better standards.

56. Monitoring of all aspects of the work of the school is at a relatively early stage of development. Overall, the quality of monitoring is satisfactory, but until recently, few people were actively involved in the process. This term, a new programme of direct monitoring of standards, teaching and the curriculum has been introduced. Individual members of staff are nominated to take part by senior managers. This process is matched closely to the priorities of the school development plan and includes information technology, literacy, numeracy and the work of newly qualified teachers. Additionally, a complete roster of appraisal has been

undertaken within a matter of a few weeks and this has helped senior managers evaluate progress with current priorities and identify likely opportunities and demands for the future. The school still has a way to go in ensuring that monitoring is rigorous and set against clear criteria. For this reason, monitoring is one of the key issues of the inspection.

57. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good on the whole. A number of senior managers each have a measure of responsibility for special educational needs provision but the role of the special needs support teacher is not as well defined as it might be. Her expertise remains untapped in some respects and she has few opportunities to share her good practice with other members of staff. A significant omission is the monitoring of lessons or part-lessons missed by the large number of pupils who are withdrawn for additional support, especially for reading. In addition, the re-integration of pupils into class after withdrawal is not always well managed.

58. Assessment is an issue for managers as the current year unfolds. Indeed, it is another key issue of the inspection. The limitations of assessment extend to the use of its data in planning future work. Whilst the school has set demanding targets for attainment to the year 2002, and has already had a large measure of success with these, the process of setting targets for individuals and groups of pupils and then sharing them is inconsistent. Such targets are not always based on clearly stated learning intent and so, for example, work is not always well tailored to the needs of high attaining pupils. School management shows good attention to the overall target of better standards. This has yet to be filtered uniformly into targets at class or individual pupil level.

59. Good management systems and procedures are being built at Riverside Community Primary School, but there are several key tasks for managers to complete in order to demonstrate their effectiveness. The school has made good progress with improvement since the last inspection, and on current evidence of the quality of management, it has good capacity to continue to improve in the future.

64. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

60. The school has sufficient experienced and appropriately qualified teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and to teach children who are under five. There is a good mix of newly qualified and very experienced teachers and a high level of expertise for teaching pupils with special educational needs.

61. The number of classroom support staff has increased since the previous inspection and this is having a positive impact on the quality of education provided. They are suitably qualified and some training has already been provided in Additional Literacy Support. This is having a very positive impact upon pupils' basic skills development and there are plans to extend this training. All classroom ancillaries have attended training on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The administrative and mid-day staff contribute very effectively to the running of the school.

62. There are effective arrangements for the professional development of staff. Hitherto, staff needs have been identified through government initiatives and through priorities identified in the school development plan. Staff appraisal has only recently been introduced, however, and this is helping to identify areas of individual interests and needs as well as whole school need. Current levels of staff expertise are good overall although there are specific shortcomings in information technology, design technology and religious education.

63.The school has extensive accommodation, including a wide variety of useful specialist rooms which is satisfactory for the effective delivery of the curriculum. These include two libraries, several stores and designated facilities for science, music and audio-visual equipment. Although there are two activity areas for the youngest children, they do not have their own outdoor play area. Individual classrooms are usually large enough for the number of pupils on roll but, in some, the free movement of pupils and adults is impeded by inappropriately placed furniture and the storage of some superfluous resources. The school has yet to audit and rationalise its learning resources in order to ensure that optimum use is made of available teaching and storage space.

64.There are significant maintenance problems and governors recently commissioned a survey on the overall condition of the buildings. Although this resulted in an extensive catalogue of outstanding building and redecoration work, it has helped the school to prioritise its most immediate needs. Some of the most urgent work has been carried out and there are plans to introduce a rolling development programme. Despite the best efforts of the Acting Headteacher and governors, however, major issues relating to the maintenance of the external fabric of the building have not yet been resolved. Water ingress continues to cause dampness and damage to internal walls and ceilings. Despite the depressing condition of various areas of the school, common sense dictates that the first step is to make the building weather proof. The attractive and welcoming atmosphere of the school is a testament to the many staff who successfully brighten up their classrooms and corridors with imaginative and colourful displays. The Premises Officer works hard to ensure that the building is maintained as well as possible and that it is kept very clean.

65.Learning resources for children under five are unsatisfactory. Many are old and inaccessible to the children and this inhibits the pace at which independent learning skills are developed. There is little equipment for physical development such as climbing or balancing, or wheeled toys for the children to control.

66.Learning resources for the older pupils are adequate in number and of generally sound quality. Although there is a general shortage of software, there are plenty of computers and the quality of equipment in design technology is high. The increased use of information technology would bring benefits to those who are receiving additional basic skills support through the very well organised Additional Literacy strategy (ALS) work. The generous financial assistance of the parents and the support of the wider community make a significant contribution to the quality of resources available. Good use is made of a well- conceived programme of visits and visitors to extend the curricular opportunities for pupils.

71. The efficiency of the school

67.In the 1996 inspection report it is stated that the school operated efficiently and that the use of most resources was good, though better linking of finance to the matter of improvement of the quality of education was flagged as an aspect for refinement. At that time, the school was judged to give sound value for money. Since that time, the school has sustained its strengths in efficiency matters and has worked well to overcome weaknesses. There are still some aspects that require attention, nevertheless by the time pupils leave at eleven years most have made good progress over their time at the school, Standards are above that expected and this represents good value for money.

68.The school operates as an efficient organisation with very good procedures for the planning, control, monitoring and evaluation of financial transactions. The bursar gives valuable and successful support and advice to managers on budgetary issues and has developed a very good system of administrative procedures to ensure that money is handled very well. She is supported well in this service by the secretary who combines a friendly welcome with a good

level of administrative assistance. Communication is good within school, and priorities are pursued with determination by all staff.

69.The governors have very good expertise in financial matters and carry out their duties effectively. They have very good control of the budget and ensure that it is matched carefully to the priorities of the school development plan. This plan is well costed and the implications for staffing, resource provision, accommodation and time availability are identified expressly in the school's development plan. Governors are secure in their knowledge of the impact of their decisions on the quality of education, particularly teaching and standards but have yet to play a full role in evaluating for best value.

70.Most forms of resources are used properly and to sound effect. Teaching and other staff are assigned responsibilities on the basis of their strengths. Additional funding for special educational needs is well spent on the provision of good quality learning support and the expenditure on the Additional Literacy Strategy is very effective. As identified elsewhere in this report, there are a number of issues that relate to the use of resources. Time is not used as well as it might; some lessons start late and the pace in others is too relaxed. The accommodation is spacious and spread out and this contributes to the, sometimes ineffective, use of time because pupils have to move from one place to another, and lose learning time in so doing. The school has yet to evaluate precisely whether such movement can be avoided and also, whether the accommodation is as well used as its spaciousness would allow. Examples of slack in the use of the buildings and resources is seen in some arrangements for the teaching of information technology, and the arrangement of furniture in the demountable classrooms so that intrusive noise from the next class is reduced. The storage of much equipment is imperfect, as many open cartons are left lying about, with some shabby contents spilling out.

71.School managers are aware of these shortcomings and have taken positive action to redress some of them. A smarter use space available is necessary to match the school's outward image to its quest for high standards.

72.In 1996, the school gave sound value for money and now it gives good value. Emphasis has been given to the value the school adds in Key Stage 2 which is enabling pupils to make good progress, so that by the time pupils leave their achievements are above average. As rates of progress become the best they can be at all stages of education, school managers can anticipate an even better return on the resources they invest.

77. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

77. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

73. Education for children under five is provided in up to three reception classes with shared use of an activity area. At the time of the inspection twenty-four of the children were under the age of five and were being taught in two reception classes. The children enter the reception classes at the beginning of the term in which they will be five. Pre-school experiences are wide and varied. The local authority's baseline assessment is undertaken within the first few weeks of entry to the reception classes. Information from this indicates that attainment on entry to the school is average. This is supported by inspection findings.

74. The provision is appropriate for the needs of children under five. The use to which the accommodation is put, its cluttered appearance, and the tired condition of much of the equipment was raised as concerns at the time of the previous inspection, and remain as such today. The last inspection report also commented on the need for teachers to focus on one or two activities in order to ensure children are learning what is intended. Staff have effectively addressed this issue and teacher-directed activities are well planned and tightly focused. The curriculum is well planned and matched to the Desirable Outcomes for Learning for children under five. It provides a broad and balanced programme of teacher-directed learning experiences but there is a lack of free access to suitable structured play activities to extend exploratory and investigative play, and to enable children of this age to make choices for themselves and to practise and improve their skills. There is currently no provision for structured outdoor play but the school has recognised this requirement within its Development Plan, and governors are aware of the need to develop these facilities for children under five.

79. *Personal and social development*

75. Children generally make steady progress in personal and social development, and attain levels which are similar to those of other children of this age. Children take responsibility for their own aprons in creative activities and help one another with zips and fasteners when they put on their own coats for outside play sessions. They are well behaved, show respect for the feelings of others, and follow the rules when taking turns in games and discussions. Children respond positively to their experiences at school, forming amicable relationships with their peers and attending well to their teachers. They tidy up at the end of each session, and when given the opportunity they are happy to take responsibility for choosing activities and resources appropriate to their needs. They converse freely during social activities and they co-operate with one another during play activities, helping one another to fill containers in water play and working together to build with large blocks to make different constructions. At lunchtime, children who bring sandwiches to school or have school meals sit quietly and responsibly, and behave very politely asking for help when needed and showing independence whenever possible. Teaching of personal and social skills is generally good, with a consistent approach that enables children to understand the behaviour that is expected in school. There is not, however, an appropriate emphasis on the development of independence in learning, which impedes the potential of some pupils to make good progress in this aspect of their development. This is caused by the way in which activities are laid out, and the restricted access that results from this.

80. ***Language and literacy***

76. Children develop early language and literacy skills satisfactorily, make steady progress, and attain levels that are appropriate for their age. The children listen attentively to their teachers and to one another, listen to stories with interest. They discuss their ideas freely and enthusiastically as they make their own moving skeletons with the help of a parent. They report back to their peers confidently, relating their experiences on their way to school in the morning, and their work during the session. Children's language skills are developed very well through role play where the children play alone or within a small group. Children hold books carefully, turn the pages correctly, and can be heard quietly "reading" the story to themselves. Children are beginning to be aware of phonics and to identify several letters of the alphabet by their "sound" although few are able to relate this initial sound to a word. The school now places emphasis on the development of reading and the children make good progress in this area. There is a very close involvement with parents and this is having a very positive impact on attainment. Children take books home to share with their parents and all enjoy stories and reading. Most children form letters of the alphabet correctly and many are able to write their name accurately using both upper and lower case letters. The organisation of the role play areas however does not support the use of emergent writing effectively and this area of language and literacy development is less strong than the teaching of reading. Overall the teaching of language and literacy is sound.

81. ***Mathematics***

77. Children attain levels in mathematics, which are similar to those of most five-year-olds. Mathematical understanding and skills are effectively developed through sorting and matching activities, weighing activities, water play, activities using shape, position, size, and quantity. They practise sequencing and pattern making in bead threading and painting activities, and enjoy counting forwards and backwards using songs and rhymes to support learning. Children in reception count to ten with confidence and recognise the numerals although not all can confidently sequence them. A few higher attaining children are able to indicate how many there are altogether, for example, if there are already 16 children present and one latecomer then arrives. A small minority of children can add and take away by counting forward and backwards and a very few higher attainers use the language of mathematics correctly. Children make satisfactory progress in mathematical skills overall. Teaching, although generally sound, allows too few opportunities for focused practical work in free choice activities to extend learning effectively.

82. ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

78. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developing appropriately and they attain levels that are similar to those of most children of their age. Well structured opportunities are provided for children to develop technological skills through their use of construction toys during play activities with both large and small apparatus. Children investigate the growth of tadpoles and sequence the events in the life cycle of a frog. They plant sunflower seeds and note their growth with interest. When opportunity is given children enjoy exploring and investigating the properties of water as they pour from a variety of containers and observe and develop their knowledge of water as an object of force. All children recently enjoyed a visit to the canal where they were able to experience at first hand how man-made canals and how water levels can be controlled by locks. As they become more familiar with computers children under five are developing early skills with the mouse and track ball; they all draw and match pictures and letters proudly. All can use headphones and tape recorders confidently to listen to taped stories and rhymes. Children make sound progress in this area of learning with sound teaching and a clear focus for learning. They work with adult support to create moving skeletons, using split pins, and scissors confidently.

83. ***Physical development***

79. The children's physical development is generally satisfactory for their age and they make steady progress. Many children can run, skip, jump, and land confidently showing a developing use of space and an awareness for the proximity of others. Children do not have access to a secure outdoor play area or wheeled vehicles for independent or co-operative play. They are learning to use space effectively in lessons in the hall, with improving avoidance techniques and sound control of their own bodies. Children enjoy taking part in physical education lessons and move confidently and imaginatively as they travel about the hall using both hands and feet. Most children show appropriate levels of co-ordination and balance. Fine motor skills are developing soundly and children make satisfactory progress in the skills of cutting, gluing, drawing and writing. Many children use scissors with a good level of competence and a few are able to manipulate split pins effectively as they assemble the parts to make a moving skeleton. Teaching of physical skills is sound with a secure subject knowledge and a good use of assessment to match teaching to identified needs.

84. ***Creative development***

80. Children's creative and artistic skills are developing appropriately for their age and are evident in the bright displays of work. Children attain levels in most areas of creative work, which are typical for their age and progress overall is sound, but in creative artwork access to materials for imaginative expression is restricted by the organisation within the reception classes. Children use paints, crayons, pastels, chalks, and collage in their artwork. They learn to mix colours appropriately creating their own self-portraits and their own representations of what they see around them. Creativity and free expression are encouraged and children explore a very wide range of artistic materials in their work. They use clay, dough, and papier-mâché with obvious enjoyment as they model a variety of insects using different media. Musical expertise is developing well as children learn to play untuned percussion instruments with good levels of control and confidence, "talking" to one another through the use of instruments. They show increasing control over their use of percussion instruments and they are beginning to develop an understanding of rhythm as they clap and use instruments accurately and with appropriate levels of creativity. Children listen carefully in singing lessons and use gesture very effectively to support their rendition of, for example, "One Potato." Teaching is good with secure subject knowledge of the creative arts and a willingness both to teach skills and to encourage creativity and free expression. Resources for learning are good and appropriate for the needs of the under fives but their free use by the children is restricted by their limited access owing to the layout of the rooms.

85. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

85. **English**

81. In the previous inspection, in 1996, standards were judged to be in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1 and often above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Analysis of the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 shows that standards in English were well above the national average. They were average when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence today indicates that standards in English have been maintained as average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2, although reading is better than it was at both key stages. Writing is the weakest element of the English profile of achievement. Attainment over time indicates that standards are rising in Key Stage 2. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls at either key stage.

82. The 1998 National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 show that attainment was close to the national average in reading and above the national average in writing. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was well below the national average.

83. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2, pupils achieved well above average standards in English. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Over the last three years, the standards pupils have achieved in English have been above the national average. Standards achieved were close to the average for schools with pupils' from similar backgrounds. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven, their overall attainment is above average. This reflects good progress over time, with accelerated learning at the end of Key Stage 2 due to very effective teaching.

84. Inspection evidence demonstrates that standards in English have been maintained, although in Key Stage 1 reading is improving, but writing standards are less secure. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is beginning to have a positive effect on reading in particular in Key Stage 1. Good use of parents and friends who come into school regularly to hear children read is a positive feature. The school, under the leadership of the acting headteacher, as coordinator, has ensured that most aspects of the literary strategy are established well. However not all teachers are secure in their use of time or planning specific learning objectives and matching tasks to the needs of all pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils in group work activities.

85. Standards in speaking and listening are average throughout the school and pupils make steady progress in learning with some articulate pupils attaining above average standards. At Key Stage 1 shared text at the beginning of the literary hour provides good opportunity for speaking and listening. The youngest children enjoy the Big Book stories, and respond confidently when questioned about the text. Sometimes the discussion sessions do not build sufficiently on the pupils' current vocabulary by asking more demanding questions. Year 1 and 2 pupils listen carefully to instructions and discuss and recall the text. In a good Year 1 lesson using the text of 'The Little Red Hen' the teacher drew effectively on what the pupils already knew, and extended their vocabulary. Older pupils in this key stage, understand and explain what an author and illustrator are. Several pupils are able to explain articulately the meaning of vocabulary in poems linked to 'the sea' and can discuss the images in the poem but the tasks sometimes set in lessons are not sufficiently demanding, particularly for higher achieving pupils.

86. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils show themselves to be interested listeners and they are attentive to their teachers and peers. Pupils are eager to participate in discussions about components of the shared text, characters, actions and descriptions. They explain their ideas thoughtfully using standard English and grammar. By Year 6 a significant proportion of pupils have a good command of spoken English language. Low attaining pupils have the confidence to participate in discussion, largely as a result of effective questioning strategies used by the teachers. The good focus on drama in Key Stage 2 also makes a positive contribution to pupils' confidence in speaking and listening. In a Year 6 drama lesson pupils demonstrated good skills in improvisation. Many were articulate and confident in their roles, linked to history and a study of the Tudors. They worked well collaboratively as prisoners, guards and street entertainers. Effective use of questioning assessed pupils' understanding and extended thinking skills. In the final plenary session of the literary hour, pupils are often given the opportunity to address groups of pupils and speak to an audience, However, too few other opportunities exist in other areas of the curriculum to extend pupils' skill in this aspect of English.

87. Reading standards are average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress in reading over time. By Year 2, the pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties, can use all the basic strategies well for reading. They read accurately, can understand what they read and most can retell a story and express preferences about authors and types of books they enjoy. Some have a sound understanding of the use of dictionaries. Most understand basic punctuation when reading and higher attainers use this effectively but some pupils lack expression in their reading. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in reading is above average. Pupils read a wide range of literature with accuracy and understanding. They enjoy reading and seek pleasure from books, both fiction and non-fiction, expressing their preferences for both author and genre. Most pupils read accurately, fluently and with expression. Many are able to use inference and deduction. Most pupils can skim and scan texts for information. Progress in reading is good in Key Stage 2, particularly for the oldest pupils. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress towards their targets because they are well supported, particularly through the additional literary strategy modular work. Good support is given by volunteers to supporting reading.

88. Standards in writing are below average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress over time. By Year 2 most pupils are correctly forming letters and handwriting is well sized and spaced but not yet joined. The quality of presented work however is unsatisfactory. Work is often untidy, with much crossing out and books are sometimes dog-eared and torn. There is little reflection of the caring ethos of the school in the standard of presentation. The vocabulary shown in reading at this key stage by the high attainers is not sufficiently embedded into written pieces. Over-use of work sheets in some respects is limiting progression in the sequencing of sentences and the correct use of grammar. For example the use of capital letters and full stops is at the level expected but other use of punctuation is not as advanced as it might be. The range and purpose for writing is limited in this key stage. Group tasks in the middle section of some literacy hours are not always sufficiently well targeted at challenging high attaining pupils. In group work some pupils are not yet into the habit of sustaining independent study whilst the teacher's attention is elsewhere and this has a negative impact on rates of progress.

89. Pupils' standards in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. Although handwriting and presentation is a concern across the school it does improve at the end of Key Stage 2 where writing is reasonably neat and letters are properly formed. In Key Stage 2 pupils write for an increasing range of purposes: writing poems, stories, letters, accounts of visits and book reviews. Writing is well organised, using paragraphs, and pupils use a good range of punctuation accurately within sentences. Many higher attaining pupils express ideas and opinions clearly. Pupils know how to redraft their work to improve the quality of their writing. By Year 6 the pupils understand the different forms of writing and can use dictionaries speedily and competently. They demonstrate basic skills in information technology for re-drafting texts.

90. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Good quality support for pupils in Key Stage 2 through both in-class additional help with literacy, and withdrawal to work in small groups with a specialist teacher, enables pupils work very effectively towards the individual targets set for them.

91. The pupils' response to English is mostly good. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress commensurate with other pupils of the same age.

92. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and there are good relationships between pupils and teachers. Pupils enjoy the literary hour. When tasks are appropriately matched and sufficiently interesting then pupils are well motivated and they sustain concentration well. Most listen attentively and are eager to respond to questions or engage in discussions. They enjoy listening to a good range of stories and poems and working with different texts.

93. Teachers have been soundly prepared for the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, although not all aspects are secure for all teachers. At both key stages the quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory, and is good overall. It is stronger for the older pupils in Key Stage 2. In the very good teaching, teachers demonstrate very secure subject knowledge and plan effectively, with high expectations and carefully matched work. Effective questioning skills contribute to pupils' learning. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils studied the different styles of story opening. In the lesson the lively teaching style motivated pupils well. Firm discipline and a brisk lesson pace ensured pupils concentrated and remained on the task. Effective questioning by the teacher extended pupils' knowledge and encouraged them to think more deeply. High expectations of all pupils ensured that they made good progress. Throughout the school teachers use homework effectively and value the work completed at home. While teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons, the weakest aspect is the provision for higher attaining pupils and the lack of pace in the same lessons. This directly impedes the progress pupils make.

94. The acting headteacher, as subject coordinator, together with staff, has worked hard to ensure the sound implementation of the literacy strategy. It is beginning to make a significant contribution to both pupils' literacy appreciation and their cultural development, particularly in Key Stage 2, where the use of a wide range of texts and in-depth study extends experiences. Library provision in Key Stage 2 is good with a good range of fiction and non-fiction and is used well as a teaching resource. The Key Stage 1 library is satisfactory but there is a lack of information about authors, the range of literature and how books are classified. Both libraries would benefit from clearer information to afford pupils better access when researching information for themselves.

95. Learning environments do not contribute well, in many cases, to raising standards. Class libraries are not attractive or exciting areas and several classrooms are cluttered and disorganised. A range of useful procedures are in place to help teachers' assess pupils' achievements in English and this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, some teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment information when planning work for different groups of pupils. Results of national tests are analysed to identify areas of weakness and the school is beginning to set targets for improvement. Pupils also maintain reading records and their own personal development record and there is evidence of self evaluation taking place with older pupils. Although a detailed marking policy is in place, it is not always reflected in the quality of marking. In the best practice marking provides helpful comments to enable pupils to improve their work. Monitoring of teaching is in the early stages of development, some of which has arisen through the literacy hour. Further improvements are needed to ensure high standards in the quality of teaching and learning and the amount of progress made, particularly of higher attaining pupils. Resources have been increased to meet the requirements of the literacy strategy, and these are now good.

100. **Mathematics**

96. At the time of the 1996 inspection, standards in mathematics were average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of the second key stage. Pupils achieved good levels of numeracy in both key stages. Progress was satisfactory to the age of seven, and good from then on, and the subject was taught well throughout the school. The school has worked hard to sustain the strengths and to make the necessary improvements, and today, standards are above average at the age of seven and eleven, progress is good and teaching is a strength.

97. In the 1998 standardised tests, attainment was in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2. When these results are set against those in similar schools, pupils achieved average standards in both key stages. It was evident that in these tests, many more pupils than is usually found achieved the expected level, but that a smaller than expected proportion achieved the higher levels. There was little difference in the achievement of boys and girls at that time.

98. Preliminary results from the 1999 standardised tests show a similar pattern to the 1998 scores. During the inspection, the overall picture of above average standards was confirmed. At the end of both key stages, attainment is above average. There are good standards of numeracy throughout the school and pupils have good knowledge and skills in measurement, data handling, shape and space and the use and application of mathematics across the curriculum.

99. The scrutiny of work showed that pupils start Key Stage 1 with average levels of mathematical knowledge and skills and that by the age of seven, standards are average. Likewise, at eleven, standards are better than expected for this age. This trend of rising standards as pupils move through school is confirmed by lesson observations and the school's own assessment data. Accordingly, progress is judged to be good across the school for all pupils including those with English as an additional language, though it fluctuates at

times from class to class.

100. Most mathematics lessons start with a session devoted to numeracy. The school has made a good start with its numeracy strategy because skills and knowledge are sharpened in these lesson introductions. Pupils' knowledge of counting, arithmetic and patterns in number is good, though the older pupils, especially, could be faster to solve problems. After the introduction, pupils spend time on the main theme and they study this in good depth. As an example, a Year 4 lesson on the different types of triangle showed that most pupils could classify triangles according to their side and angle properties. Many could explain the similarities and differences between them, and demonstrate these by folding the triangles to match sides and angles. The pupils were thinking mathematically and their explanations showed good command of proper vocabulary, including *scalene*, *isosceles* and *equilateral*.

101. In this lesson, the highest attaining pupils were both stimulated and extended by the work. In other lessons, this is not always the case. On several occasions, in both key stages, the higher attainers were observed to relax too early in their learning and to take more than the necessary time to complete the task. The main reasons for this leisurely learning are low expectations, imprecise identification of what is to be learned by all pupils and a plodding pace to some lessons. In one Year 3 lesson, whilst the pupils attained at above average levels, this was not high enough. In this lesson, their progress was unsatisfactory overall because it was so erratic. When the teacher was close by, pupils worked soundly, but at other times, when the teacher was elsewhere, they dawdled and little was achieved. In general, the school has strengths to draw on in setting demanding work for pupils, but the recognition and sharing of the best practice is under-served.

102. Such strengths include pupils' attitudes, behaviour and the relationships they form. All of these are good, so pupils are keen to learn, they enjoy work that is set at the right level and they are not afraid of challenge. In one Year 1 lesson pupils were observed to be "*highly attentive, well motivated and well behaved*" and "*they worked quickly and with good application, extending their work $\frac{1}{4}$ showing initiative and independence*" as they classified two-dimensional shapes. This type of response is not unusual in school, though not every teacher demands it as of right. Pupils with special educational needs usually show such dedication to their work. They are well supported by a good team of learning assistants; they enjoy the work and make every effort to succeed. These pupils make good progress and often achieve at better than expected levels.

103. Likewise, there are many strengths in the teaching of mathematics and the quality overall is good. Well over seventeen hours was spent in observing twenty-five mathematics sessions. More time was spent in examining pupils' work from the previous year. All this evidence pointed to good teaching at both key stages, with some which is very good or excellent. Particular strengths include teachers' good knowledge and understanding of mathematics, thorough planning, well-honed methods and organisation, firm but fair discipline and good control and the effective use of well-planned homework. There was some unsatisfactory teaching of mathematics in both key stages during the inspection. Weaknesses of teaching include slack pace and inconsistencies in the identification in planning of exactly what skills and knowledge will be learned by particular groups in lessons. Elimination of these will go a long way to improve the level of challenge for all pupils.

104. The curriculum for mathematics is good because it develops all aspects in a logical sequence, provides the necessary opportunities for learning number and arithmetic facts such as tables and number bonds and has good focus on problem solving and investigation. Assessment procedures are thorough, though the information produced by assessment is not used consistently to plan appropriate tasks for all pupils. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and successful coordinator who gives good support to her colleagues. Monitoring of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject is satisfactory. It is also improving as the subject leader has recently been given opportunity to observe other classes and

teachers at work. School managers have set appropriate targets for achievement in mathematics to the year 2002, and are currently on-target to achieve these.

105. Mathematics is a subject where the school can find many of its strengths. It also has a number of weaker elements. There is, however, ample evidence to indicate that the pace of improvement will re-double in the future and that staff will build well on what has been achieved well.

110. **Science**

106. At the time of the previous inspection standards were average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. Strengths have been maintained with accelerated progress at the end of Key Stage 2. Preliminary results from the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds indicate rising school standards in science.

107. By the end of Key Stage 1, teacher assessments in 1998 show standards are well above national average in experimental and investigative science and above average in life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes and therefore overall in science at level 2. Teacher assessments also show standards above national average in experimental and investigative science, broadly in line with national average in materials and their properties but below average in life and living processes and physical processes at level 3. Standards are shown to be broadly in line with national average overall at level 3 at the end of this key stage. Compared to similar schools teacher assessments show standards broadly in line with the national average.

108. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in National Curriculum tests in 1998 are above national average at level 4 but below national average at level 5. According to teacher assessments standards are above national average at level 4 and below national average at level 5. When compared to similar schools, standards are broadly in line at level 4 according to teacher assessments but below average according to national tests. When compared to similar schools standards are well below average at level 5 according to both tests and teacher assessments. Trends from 1996 to 1998, however, show above national average standards for both boys and girls in science.

109. Inspection findings, based upon a very detailed analysis of a sample of pupils' work gathered over last year, and a significant number of lesson observations that gave opportunity to study work for this academic year, show that standards are average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2 with accelerated raising of standards at the end of Key Stage 2. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when standards met national expectations at both key stages. The impact of regular review and analysis of results together with internal moderation of work has supported this improvement.

110. At Key Stage 1 pupils study materials and their properties through the processes of focused investigation and exploration. Their investigations are carried out in pairs and small groups before they invariably come together to share their findings appropriately as whole classes. In this way they share their learning and effectively learn from one another. They are encouraged to use accurate scientific words and they do this efficiently. They work well together as they compare the elements of a fair test of different materials absorbing the same amount of water. They recognise the need to be accurate with their resources as well as their words if they are to make a really fair test in a scientific sense.

111. At Key Stage 2 the investigative and explorative nature of science is maintained and further developed. At years 3 and 4 pupils make an extended study of plant growth. At Year 3 they consider and make predictions about growth and record in simple forms of writing and tables whilst at Year 4 they collect evidence from quantifiable observations. They carry this out in small groups and then share their findings verbally with one another before they make their own decisions on the recording format to be used. They clearly know that evidence is supportive of their initial predictions as they make measurements over a period of time. At Year 5 they consider saturated solutions in order to draw conclusions from their fair testing which has been conducted in a variety of ways with a variety of materials. At Year 6 pupils are required to apply their scientific knowledge and understanding to produce information in a meaningful way as they revise their work on light in order to produce an information leaflet that will be informative to the general public. They investigate and explore light and reflection through making systematic enquiry by using mirrors in pairs, sharing information in small groups before sharing more generally with the whole class. They make decisions on recording. From the sample of work however it is clear that recording is too often constrained by the over use of worksheets which do not allow the more able pupils particularly to develop their independent learning skills.

112. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress. On occasion pupils make very good progress at this key stage. This is particularly when they are able to talk with confidence about their investigations and make appropriate suggestions about recording formats in both years 1 and 2 as they study sinking and floating and materials and their properties. Where progress is best pupils have greater awareness of scientific processes because work has been well supported by appropriate work sheets. In Key Stage 2 progress is good. Where progress is best pupils are able to pose their own questions and test fairly, for example in year 6 when they make a study of light. In Year 5 they are able to disregard what is inappropriate as they fair test saturated solutions as a result of well structured open ended questioning by their teacher. They have good measures of confidence in not only talking about their investigations and drawing their own conclusions but are able to give clear indication that they can record using accurate scientific language when they are given appropriate opportunities to do so. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages as they are fully involved in the group learning situations. In these groups they are well supported by the other pupils as well as teachers and support staff. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls or by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. In Year 6 this is particularly well promoted when they complete group work because the paired work is invariably boys and girls being paired together in their investigations.

113. Pupils have good attitudes towards science across both key stages. Attitudes are very good at Key Stage 1 where progress is best. Pupils show good levels of concentration because they become involved in the practical nature of their tasks. They are given ample opportunities to investigate and explore and in doing so they are able to make their scientific discoveries which are more meaningful to them in consequence. They listen to one another and are able to talk with confidence. In their listening they take account of one another's views particularly in their paired explorations. They draw conclusions with accuracy.

114. The quality of teaching is good across both key stages. It is occasionally very good at Key Stage 1. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are well supported in this respect from having an appropriate scheme of work to draw upon as a knowledge source. They plan according to National Curriculum requirements. Learning objectives are well established where teaching is best in both Key Stage 1 and in Year 6 classes at the end of Key Stage 2. This is where learning and progress is accelerated. Tasks are well resourced and are targeted at the different level of learning needs appropriately. Good pace is maintained and invariably teachers intervene to ensure that learning is progressing well by making perceptive interventions to pupils' decision making. The quality of teaching makes a positive impact upon the standards achieved.

115. The policy and scheme of work is very detailed and entirely supportive to teachers in planning an appropriate programme of work. It meets National Curriculum requirements effectively. The hard working and committed co-ordinator generates committed responses from colleagues in their quest to raise standards in science. Science benefits from on-going review and revision where necessary, assessing with some accuracy as a result of in built mechanisms within the scheme of work. As yet, the coordinator does not have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate other than through monitoring teachers planning, what the quality and impact of teaching and learning is through the school. Resources are satisfactory both in quantity and quality. They are particularly well maintained by an ancillary assistant with an efficient system for checking their targeted use and return to the specialist science room.

120. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

120. Information technology

116. The previous inspection report stated that attainment in information technology was generally at the expected level at the age of seven and eleven and that pupils made satisfactory progress. Teaching was variable in quality, there were not enough computers and the subject was in great need of revamping. The school has made additions to the numbers of computers since that time, but information technology remains something of a Cinderella subject because it is not as well promoted as other subjects, and although standards are acceptable, they could be much better.

117. In general, pupils do achieve the expected level of competence and skill by the end of both key stages. In some cases, this is due to the intensity of practice with computers at home, and in some classes the work is well-structured, regular and demanding. There is, however, too much inconsistency in practice between teachers and so, pupils attain at levels which are minimally satisfactory but potentially could be higher.

118. Pupils develop the necessary skills and knowledge in the use of computers to communicate information, text and pictures. The youngest pupils show good skills with the track ball and mouse and can select from icons and a simple menu to load their program. These skills are further developed and refined in Key Stage 1. Here, pupils master the necessary keyboard skills so that they can type simple text accurately, showing due regard for simple punctuation and the use of capital letters. Year 2 pupils make good class books using the *Storybook Weaver* program and they produce patterns and pictures to support work in other subjects. They also know that computers can be used to control machines and processes. Key Stage 2 pupils are able to make their text emphatic and interesting by changing the font, its size, colour and the layout of the text. They can compile simple data bases successfully, and interrogate them, draw more elaborate patterns and pictures, and operate the multi-media facilities of the computer with confidence. In all this work, pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages, though this rate of progress does not approach that of the best found in other subjects.

119. In their work, pupils show good attitudes to information technology; they are well behaved and enjoy good relationships with staff and the other pupils. In two of the lessons observed, one in each key stage, the response of pupils was very good because the teacher set demanding tasks and expected the pupils to participate fully in the learning even though there was only one computer in use. Every child had opportunity to answer questions, suggest ways of approaching problems, explain ideas or to enter commands, information or numbers at the keyboard. The learning was active, taxing and enjoyable. In other lessons, these qualities are not promoted as consistently and progress in learning is slacker.

120.The teaching of information technology is satisfactory overall, but not often very remarkable. In lessons such as those illustrated, teaching is very good, the pace is brisk and the methods and organisation are polished, and control and discipline very effective. On the other hand, in many lessons the approach varies little, teachers have shaky knowledge and levels of confidence and the pace can be slack. In such lessons, higher attaining pupils go without challenge because the exact skills and knowledge to be taught and learned are indistinct, assessment is weak and targets for learning are uncommon.

121.It is evident that there is urgent need for an expanded programme of staff and curriculum development and greater cross-school monitoring and evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in information technology. Additionally, there is a strong case for the possible re-organisation of the computers to allow half- or whole-classes to use them at any one time. At present, computer use is sometimes restrictive, because it relies on the teaching of whole classes in front of just one machine. Then, because only pairs of pupils at most, can follow up the work at the same time, progress for some can be slow. Practice for some pupils takes place much later in the week when they have to try to remember a complex chain of commands in order to develop their skills.

122.Despite these shortcomings, it is clear that the process of improvement has begun. Management of information technology is good. The subject coordinator has recently taken sole charge of the subject and is knowledgeable, informed and a strong leader who has very good insights into what needs doing to boost the subject. She has already set in train several carefully evaluated strategies to improve the quality of provision, rates of progress and standards. Over the last year, the school has doubled the number of computers, installed a network to support effective use and, in the week before the inspection, commissioned its Internet link. The subject leader has very good ideas for making maximum use of these costly facilities. She has started to monitor work, teaching and the curriculum directly in the classroom and is pursuing well-judged priorities for the overall advancement of the subject.

123.Information technology is a priority for the school. Some successes are evident, but the subject has yet to match the best practice and achievements in other subjects. However, because leadership is a strength, good progress with improvement is likely.

128. **Religious education**

124.The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The revised scheme of work that has been introduced recently is a major step in helping pupils learn from religion as well as learning about religion.

125.In 1996 inspectors found standards broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and the quality of teaching satisfactory and sometimes good. However, there was a need to provide further training for teachers and to build on the religious content of assemblies by developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. These issues have all been addressed appropriately and the school has a secure basis from which to make further improvements, notably in the provision of an effective system for assessment.

126.Standards achieved in 1999 at the end of both key stages meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make good progress at both key stages. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 begin to recognise the similarities and differences between religions and know that light is a symbol used by Christians and Hindus. Pupils in Year 2 engage in purposeful discussion about the moral issues raised by the story of Rama and Sita. They are developing a set of principles by which to make decisions about right and wrong. In lower Key Stage 2 pupils think about harvest time and know why Christians believe this is an important festival. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have studied the teachings of many religious leaders and can talk and write thoughtfully about their meaning in daily life. They show good understanding of the principles taught by Guru Nanak and can use them to write moral tales.

127. Pupils enjoy their work in religious education. They welcome the opportunity to contribute to discussions about what makes people special, the need to care for their friends, animals and appreciate the beauty of the natural world. Older pupils can compare and contrast the rules by which Christians, Jews and Sikhs live their lives and readily identify similarities and differences. When written work occurs in religious education pupils need to be encouraged to take more pride in the presentation of their work because much of the work seen was untidy with many spelling mistakes.

128. Overall, teaching is good and a minority of very good teaching was also seen. The best teaching was seen where teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident to be adventurous with their class. In these lessons teachers create an open, trusting climate in which pupils feel confident to express their thoughts and ideas knowing their views will be sensitively received. When a Year 4 class was invited to reflect quietly on what thoughts or special places helped them to feel secure and whole their responses showed considerable insight into the human condition.

129. Subject leadership in religious education is good, although the coordinator is a member of the mathematics curriculum team rather than a member of the humanities team. The new scheme of work is underpinned by a good deal of research by the coordinator and is successfully changing the approach to religious education at the school. She has a clear development plan for the subject and is aware that further consideration is required if religious education is to link with other subjects such as personal, social and health education to provide a cohesive programme. Assessment is unsatisfactory as there is no effective whole-school system in place. Staff training, particularly in assessment has been insufficient to date. Resources are satisfactory. Links with places of worship and members of local faith groups are in place but could usefully be extended to include more non-Christian people and places.

134. **Art**

130. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in art, including pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language. They achieve standards in creative painting, sketching, and three-dimensional work that are appropriate for their age, and where teaching is particularly strong they reach high standards and creativity is well developed. Pupils experience a mix of painting, sketching, clay, papier-mâché, and collage work, and use stitching very effectively in work allied to design and technology.

131. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use paint well, blending it skilfully in a good range of tones, shades, and consistencies. Young pupils work effectively to mix shades and tones to produce paintings after the style of Rousseau, and older pupils consider carefully the line and approach of a wide variety of artists in their own work on seascapes. They associate mood with colour as they interpret the seascapes of Cezanne and Kokoschka and attempt to blend and mix colours in their own work with watercolour and pastel. They use smudging and sweeping strokes very effectively to create storm effects of spray and anger. In three-dimensional work pupils work at a high level of expertise with clay, and create simple collage using sequins to decorate fish in a three-dimensional display.

132. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 work collaboratively in groups to select their own materials to create collage representations of the wives of Henry VIII using imagination and skill to create a rich tapestry of texture and colour. By the time they are eleven many pupils attain high standards with observational sketches in pastels of historical figures. They use knowledge of line and form to good effect, develop smudging techniques well, and apply pastel pencils to highlight their work.

133. There are good examples of artwork in display work throughout the school, demonstrating the good progress pupils make in the development of skills. Pupils use clay and papier-mâché

in 3D artwork, they develop close observational skills in still life sketches in pencil, and use watercolour and pastel well. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work very effectively with clay to make thumb pots and decorate their work imaginatively using clay tools well. Pupils in Year 4 have collaborated very competently to create a collage of natural autumn fruits with attention to texture, shape, and balance. Their imaginative two and three-dimensional work using torn paper on a black background is particularly striking. Progress is good across both key stages with pupils developing skills as they build on their early experiences.

134. Teaching is good and where subject knowledge is particularly secure it is often very good. Techniques necessary for the development of skills are generally well taught. This was seen in a Year 1 class where pupils were taught with great care how to wedge clay to remove air and then how to roll and shape the clay to the required form. Expectations are appropriate and work is well matched to the pupils' needs and level of development. Some teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge to develop pupils' work effectively. The school tries hard to address this through planning and the sharing of expertise within year groups. The last report of 1996 commented on a variation in progress according to teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm. Progress is now maintained overall throughout lower, middle, and upper school but further training for teachers is still required.

135. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and in many instances they are enthusiastic and strive for high ideals. Most concentrate deeply when involved in individual work and are co-operative when working together. The last report of 1996 stated a need for improvement in resources and the inclusion of resources from non-western cultures. Resources are extensive, carefully chosen, in good condition, and well matched to the needs of the National Curriculum. The curriculum and resources now reflect art from different cultures although this is not extensive. The school has a good range of media and materials. There is an effective scheme of work now in place and the school is compiling a portfolio of pupils' work although there is not yet an effective method of assessing and recording skills progression.

140. **Design and technology**

136. There has been a marked improvement in the provision in design and technology since the last report in 1996. Issues raised of skills teaching; assessment; and resources have all been addressed. The progress made by pupils in each key stage, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, is good overall. The school is following national guidelines for teaching the subject. Pupils are now engaging in a well-planned range of activities that ensure that necessary skills are systematically developed before pupils begin their design tasks.

137. Young pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy investigating the materials used in food technology as they use pre-prepared plans (recipes) to cook a variety of foods with high quality parental support. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 explain their planning orally as they investigate lever, pivot, and sliding mechanisms and then make a sliding mechanism of their own to illustrate the rhyme of "Incey Wincey Spider". Pupils in Key Stage 2 investigate the construction of boxes and then design and make new packing for their own cereal product "Gnasher's Nosh". They evaluate their plans, choose the most appropriate, and then evaluate the final product: *"There's too much chocolate in it and it's too expensive!"* By the time they are eleven pupils work collaboratively to design and make a street plan of Birstall complete with model houses.

138. The teaching of skills is currently a top priority within the school. The newly appointed co-ordinators are striving to raise the profile of the subject and to give to pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, the skills which are appropriate for their age group and are necessary for the scheme of work. Pupils in Year 3 were observed making their own instruments from a plastic bottle in a music lesson to produce appropriate sounds and rhythms. Pupils in Year 5 measure, mark out, and cut and shape wood for a meaningful purpose. They join materials accurately in a permanent way and make good progress in lessons in developing their skills.

139. Pupils work with confidence and enjoyment in design and technology. They work well together and support one another very effectively, sharing knowledge and helping each other. They show a sound awareness of safety from an early age.

140. In the few lessons seen the quality of teaching was good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and clear planning with a detailed and purposeful teaching of skills. Tasks are interesting and give pupils opportunities to make choices.

141. Recent initiatives in design and technology have resulted in the implementation of a national scheme, clear targets for improvements in the profile of the subject, resources have been reviewed and replaced and storage organised. A skills list is being prepared by co-ordinators in order that assessments may be made in a more meaningful way.

146. **Geography**

142. The school has addressed most aspects of the key issues raised in the 1996 inspection successfully: pupils now make satisfactory progress at both key stages and the quality of teaching and the curriculum provided are no longer causes for concern. Assessment, however, continues to be unsatisfactory because there is no effective whole school system in place for teachers to follow.

143. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know how to draw a plan of their classroom and make simple maps. They can successfully create a key to identify natural and man-made features. They can recognise an appropriate symbol for a church, grass-land, sea and hill and know that a beach will be next to the sea. Pupils in Key Stage 1 undertake a monthly walk around the extensive school grounds and record with accuracy the changes in plant and animal life through the year. They undertake weather surveys and make simple weather maps well. They are beginning to use geographical language confidently to describe features such as hill, mountain, river, lake and road. They can look at a large scale map of the area and identify the school and the street where they live. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to consider man's impact on the environment and can classify areas by use with competence. Map-making, and the use of maps for research continues to be developed at Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 4 can accurately identify the main countries in Europe and with some support most managed to identify where Rome is and the name of the nearby river from an atlas. Pupils in Year 6 use their good understanding of the contents and index pages to explore an atlas new to them. They show speed and accuracy in locating places such as Birstall and Leicester. They have mastered the directions of the compass and are able to give directions to enable journeys to be completed successfully. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have undertaken a series of in depth studies of contrasting places such as a village in India, the island of St Lucia, and Sedborough. Pupils' achievements in geography match well those of others of a similar age.

144. The response by pupils in geography is good. Pupils enjoy their work particularly when they have the opportunity to find things out for themselves. They work well in pairs and groups and support pupils with special educational needs well. While maps and diagrams are often neat and the content of written work in geography is often interesting the quality of presentation and spelling is unsatisfactory.

145. The quality of teaching in geography is satisfactory overall but there is a small amount of both unsatisfactory and good teaching. Teaching is unsatisfactory when pupil management is ineffective and too little work is covered in the lesson. In effective lessons expectations are appropriate for most pupils but work of a higher standard should be expected from higher attaining pupils. In a good lesson, for example in Year 2, pupils made good progress because of high expectations, sharply focussed questioning and firm pupil management which meant pupils were acquiring good work habits. Overall the quality of teachers' planning lacks the necessary precision to specify what pupils of different ability should learn in the lesson. Pupils

with special educational needs are well supported in lessons across the school. There was no variation observed between the quality of learning for boys and girls or for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

146. Subject leadership in geography is good and as the leader of the humanities team the coordinator is well placed to manage the review of both history and geography for Curriculum 2000. Since the previous inspection a new scheme of work for geography has been introduced and the content compared with recent national guidelines. The curriculum for geography addresses all aspects of the subject, there are good links with history and many opportunities to reinforce literacy skills. Assessment is unsatisfactory as there is no effective whole-school system in place. Monitoring has yet to identify weaknesses in pupils' understanding of what it is really like to live in another place and the use of atlases for research. Resources are satisfactory and a number of well-chosen visits and visitors add to pupils' knowledge and understanding.

151. **History**

147. The school has addressed most aspects of the key issues raised in the 1996 inspection successfully: pupils now make satisfactory progress at both key stages and the quality of teaching and the curriculum provided are no longer causes for concern. Assessment however continues to be unsatisfactory because there is no effective whole school system in place for teachers to follow.

148. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are building a sound knowledge base about life in Victorian Britain. They display this clearly when comparing artefacts from then and now and writing about their use, the materials they are made of and similarities and differences with today. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy looking at the different clothes Victorian children wore and had some insight into how wearing such clothes would restrict activity. More however needs to be done however to help young pupils appreciate how different daily life was without electricity or central heating. Pupils' understanding of key ideas such as chronology increases as they get older. For example, pupils in Year 5 have a better understanding of how long ago Henry VIII reigned than pupils in Year 3 have about the Roman invasion of Britain. This is also an area where pupils with special educational needs find a particular difficulty. Pupils are developing the ability to use historical evidence to argue a point of view. For example, when pupils in Year 4 wrote letters to Emperor Claudius to argue for or against the invasion of Britain. Research skills are being developed well as pupils find out about the past from documents, pictures and paintings. Many pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 understand the need to test the source of evidence for accuracy and bias but this is an aspect of history which needs more emphasis. A small minority of Year 6 pupils believe the information in books to be true because it is in an information book and apart from word of mouth could not suggest any way in which the writers had gained their information. The quality of discussion in history is good. Many pupils at both key stages are articulate confident speakers. By Year 6 they enjoy vigorous and testing discussions about Henry VIII, his wives and family and the reasons for the dissolution of the monasteries.

149. Pupils enjoy their work in history. Pupils in Year 2 became rather excited as they examined a suitcase of Victorian clothes but were easily controlled by their teacher. They settled down quickly to draw and write about what they would pack for a seaside holiday and what Victorian children packed. Pupils in Year 6 read an epitaph from a tomb and showed some insight into what it meant to become King when still a boy. As part of her homework a pupil identified how the young king, Edward VI was a puppet manipulated by others. While the content of written work in history is often interesting the quality of presentation and spelling is unsatisfactory.

150. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and a minority of good teaching also seen. The best teaching is seen where teachers have good subject knowledge, planning is detailed and sets

clear learning targets and teachers lead challenging question and answer sessions which meet the needs of all pupils in the class including higher attaining pupils. In these lessons a vigorous pace is maintained, knowledge is shared and skills well developed and assessed, for example, when pupils in Year 6 identified the impact the dissolution of the monasteries had on the lives of monks, nuns and the community.

151. Subject leadership in history is good. Since the previous inspection a new scheme of work has been introduced and the content compared with recent national guidelines. The curriculum for history is rich and varied and there are good opportunities to reinforce literacy skills. The history curriculum is, however, over-crowded and the school has recognised the need to modify the content. The coordinator has a good understanding of the issues which need to be addressed, and is keen for example, to increase the use of information technology. As a member of the humanities working team she is well placed to contribute to a review of both history and geography in the near future. Assessment is unsatisfactory as there is no effective whole-school system in place. Monitoring has yet to identify where staff training is required for example in how to develop pupils' understanding of chronology and historical enquiry skills. Resources are satisfactory and a number of well-chosen visits and visitors add to pupils' knowledge and understanding.

156. **Music**

152. The subject has maintained its high profile and success in terms of standards and progress since the last inspection in both key stages.

153. All pupils', including those with special educational needs, make good progress across both key stages in all strands of music making with some very good progress at Key Stage 2 when they receive specialist teaching in years 4 and 6. Pupils make particularly good progress in developing composing and performing elements due to the impact of good teaching which builds confidence and enables pupils to develop their skills well. Progress is especially good where pupils' are well challenged by the tasks and when teachers make it clear what their expectations are of pupils' performance. Lessons are generally well organised and consequently pupils are able to enjoy their music making whatever its form. As a result of the good progress pupils achieve standards that are above what would normally be expected for their age in both key stages.

154. At Key Stage 1 pupils clap in rhythm and maintain a beat to taped music. They can experiment with tuned and untuned instruments to compose simple tunes. They are able to control their voices to differentiate between high and low notes and loud and soft sounds. In consequence, they can sing joyously from memory songs that they have learnt previously but also apply this skill appropriately to learning songs that are new to them. At Key Stage 2 pupils build upon these experiences as they make their own untuned instruments in year 4 with plastic bottles and string tightened at different levels to produce different levels and volumes of sound. These skills are enhanced when they work with specialist teachers in years 4 and 6. In year 4 they take up opportunities to communicate musical ideas when they call and make responses as they explore rhythm and duration of musical sound through using a variety of instruments such as Chinese bells and an African calabash. In doing this they also understand that music reflects time, place and mood. This sophisticated level of learning is enhanced at year 6 where pupils combine their individual rhythms accurately in a group, after composing in pairs. In appraising one another's music making, they show their clear understanding of the structure of music. They show high levels of enjoyment and pleasure as they want to share their learning with one another and adults. Boys and girls both show equal enthusiasm for the subject.

155. Pupils concentrate well on their tasks and learn productively and with immense enjoyment. This is confirmed by the happy responses that they make to different forms of music. They consider the use of pulse in rhythm making, and confidently take the initiative to

review and refine their own work. This impacts effectively on what is achieved.

156. Teaching is good across both key stages with some very good teaching by specialist teachers at Key Stage 2, one of whom is the co-ordinator and who teaches Key Stage 1 pupils just as effectively for one period a week. Lessons are well planned and effectively resourced. Well structured lessons ensure that pupils get maximum practical learning opportunities. These are effectively reinforced by skilful questioning by teachers that involves all pupils and generates an atmosphere of enjoyment in music. The only weakness is in the lack of formal assessment.

157. Resources are of good quality and quantity. They include instruments that support the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of music from a range of cultures. There is a good range of instrumental and extra curricular activities which are mainly run by a hard working and committed co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is effectively supported in developing these activities by the other specialist teacher. The range of activities include recorder groups working at different levels of learning, the school orchestra and keyboard work. They are good examples of pupils being enjoyably involved in making music. The subject is well managed and effectively led.

162. **Physical education**

158. The pupils make satisfactory progress in physical education in both key stages and within a few lessons good progress is made. The pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. Girls and boys show equal enthusiasm for the subject. The last inspection report was critical of the lack of outdoor and adventurous activities and the lack of a scheme of work. These aspects have been addressed appropriately. Additional training has been identified by the school, to increase staff expertise and confidence to teach the full range of the physical education programme.

159. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can stretch in a variety of ways and travel in different ways and in different directions. They show increasing control in balancing and the ability to hold their position. They are beginning to link movements into simple sequences, with increasing awareness of the space around them. They are able to work independently and with a partner. In Key Stage 2 pupils work well in pairs to refine skills in passing and receiving a ball and work well in teams, demonstrating their acquired skills in a game of 'benchball'. In gymnastics they perform tucks and star-jumps with good control and work well with a partner to mirror each others' movements. They make speedy progress in planning and developing a sequence of four jumps with a partner. Pupils in both key stages have the opportunity to swim in the school's pool and standards are good as a result. Across the school they make good progress in swimming. In one very good lesson in Year 6, pupils made very good progress in improving stroke technique leading to much more streamlined movements. They demonstrated good skills in critical evaluation of each others' technique in paired work.

160. In both key stages pupils respond positively in lessons, enjoying all aspects of the subject. They concentrate and most behave well, even when the task is not sufficiently demanding. Good cooperation is evident during small team games. Pupils show commitment, are able to sustain effort and are keen to practice skills and techniques. Pupils appreciate each others' efforts and have a good awareness of the need for fair play.

161. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but with some good and occasionally very good teaching in both key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Most teachers set a good example by always being appropriately changed for lessons. Teachers form positive relationships with pupils, and are sensitive to the needs of the less able. The best teaching is characterised by secure knowledge of the subject, explicit learning objectives and well paced lessons that motivate pupils and add to their enjoyment. Sometimes planning lacks sufficient detail and the lesson pace is too slow, affecting the progress pupils make. In some lessons

insufficient attention was given to ensuring pupils warmed up and cooled down appropriately. Time is lost in some lessons through movement about the school and lengthy periods getting changed.

162. The subject coordinator is aware of the need to develop further aspects of physical education through in service training, both for the coordinator and other teachers. He has identified dance as an area for development and also the need to provide greater challenge in some lessons for higher attaining pupils. At present there is no award system for swimming, or record of the success rate by the time pupils leave the school. This is unsatisfactory. The lack of any assessment strategy to help teachers' planning does not contribute to high standards. Resources are good, well managed and efficiently used. The good quality outdoor accommodation, school halls and newly refurbished swimming pool offer good provision for the subject. A sound range of extra curricular activities, including football, athletics, short tennis, rounders and folk dancing enhance the curriculum and pupils' social development.

167. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

167. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

163. The inspection was carried out by a team of seven inspectors who, over a period of four days, completed a total of twenty-eight inspection days in school.

A total of 148 lessons was observed involving 88.4 hours

A range of work representing all ages and a range of abilities was examined carefully to check on the attainments and progress being made in all subjects, but especially English, mathematics and science. Some eight hours was spent in looking at this work most of which had been kept from the previous two terms and was very useful to evaluating pupils' progress over time.

A sample of pupils representing all ages and a range of abilities was heard to read

Discussions took place with all staff, a number of governors, parents and visitors to school to seek their views about the quality of education being provided and the standards being achieved.

Many pupils were spoken to during the week to ascertain the depth of their understanding and knowledge about subjects and to see how they view the school.

Display was evaluated for its contribution to pupils' learning and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

All documentation provided by the school was carefully examined, including teachers' planning, assessment data and records concerning the provision being made for those pupils with special needs.

Registration was observed as were the routines at the start and close of sessions, at breaktime and lunchtime. A number of parents took the opportunity to speak to inspectors at the times when pupils were dropped off or picked up from school.

Assemblies were visited and the act of collective worship observed.

The action plan from the previous report was used as a starting point and together with the school's analysis of its performance was used to check on how well the school has progressed against the targets set. The Registered Inspector held a meeting with 23 parents before the week of inspection and took into account the views expressed and the comments made by the 21% of parents who responded to the questionnaire. 18 hours of meetings with staff plus time spent giving subject and teaching debrief took place

The registered inspector met with the acting headteacher twice daily to share exchange information daily about the inspection process and issues arising.

164.DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	525	3	81	22

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	22.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week	228

Average class size:	26.2
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Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	820 276
Total Expenditure	820 337
Expenditure per pupil	1 530
Balance brought forward from previous year	39 836
Balance carried forward to next year	39 797

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	492
Number of questionnaires returned:	102

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	42	49	3	5	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	37	52	7	3	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	11	40	26	12	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	14	60	18	6	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24	59	9	7	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	26	63	8	1	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	29	49	12	6	4
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25	52	9	12	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32	53	10	2	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	25	56	14	4	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	47	48	5	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

Inconsistent practice in setting homework

That uniform is not well promoted

Pupils like school and parents feel well involved

Pupils have made a good start this year, the acting headteacher is doing a good job.

Communication has improved.