

INSPECTION REPORT

HURDSFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Macclesfield, Cheshire

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111233

Headteacher: Mr T Cumberbatch

Reporting inspector: Mr M Lester
20596

Dates of inspection: 8th to 10th May 2000

Inspection number: 191162

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hulley Road Macclesfield Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Wright
Date of previous inspection:	27 th to 30 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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		Design and technology	The school's results and achievements
		Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
Mr W Twiss	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Miss D Cliff	Team inspector	Under fives	
		Special educational needs	
		Science	
		Information technology	
		Art	
Mrs P Underwood	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		English	
		Geography	
		History	
		Music	
		Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hurdsfield Primary School is a smaller than usual school of this type with 127 pupils on roll. The number of pupils has fallen significantly since the last inspection, but has now stabilised. The school is located in the north east of Macclesfield in the centre of the Hurdsfield industrial and local authority housing estate. Most pupils are drawn from the immediate area, which is below average in terms of social and economic indicators. For example, the percentage of pupils (currently 34%) eligible for free school meals is above average in comparison with other primary schools. The pupils' attainment on entry reflects the full ability range, but is below average overall.

The pupils are of predominantly white ethnicity. About a third of them, which is above the national average, are included on the school's register for special educational needs, but most of these are at stage 1 and 2. Currently, there is one pupil with a statement of special educational need. Most pupils come from homes where English is the first language.

The school has experienced considerable staffing changes during the past three years; for example there have been four different headteachers. The appointment of the new headteacher is perceived by the school community as positive and the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that provides a sound education for its pupils. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are average. They remain below average at the end of Key Stage 2, but they are improving. The pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes overall. They are now making good progress in most lessons as a direct result of good quality teaching across the school.

The headteacher sets a very clear direction for the school that is sharply focused on raising standards. The school uses its available funds effectively and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils' attitudes to learning are good.
- The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good.
- The pupils' academic performance and welfare are monitored and supported effectively.
- The school is very well led by the new headteacher who offers a clear vision for improvement.
- The school takes timely and effective action to meet the clearly identified priorities for improvement recorded in the existing action plan. For example, the standards attained at the end of Key Stage 2 are rising.
- The new procedures for monitoring and improving the schools' performance are most effective, for example, the pupils' attendance levels, behaviour and rate of learning have all recently improved

What could be improved

- The standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics, science and religious education are lower than they should be.
- The curriculum for information technology in Key Stage 2 does not meet the requirements and standards are lower than they should be.
- The teachers do not have clear guidance, except in English and mathematics, about what is to be taught in each subject every year.
- The involvement of the staff in leading and managing the improvement priorities is inadequate.

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

N.B. The current school action plan includes all these issues for improvement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected three years ago. Since then there have been a considerable number of staff changes, a significantly falling roll and a decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The decline of the school, and in particular the disaffection of pupils and parents, has been checked and the school is now improving rapidly. The school now has robust systems in place to enable it both to identify and to deal effectively with its own weaknesses.

The school action plan for improvement is an informative and well considered document that sets out a brisk, but realistic programme of development. Decisions relating to expenditure are, whenever possible, closely linked to educational outcomes and are based firmly on best value principles.

Despite the decline in fortunes of the school in recent years, the high quality and focussed input of the new headteacher has enabled it to make satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection. The standards achieved by the pupils remain satisfactory overall at the end of Key Stage 1 and although standards have fallen at the end of Key Stage 2, they are now improving quickly. Across the school the pupils' speaking and listening skills, which were previously judged to be low by national standards, have improved. Levels of unauthorised absence have fallen and the pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. The overall quality of the leadership has improved, and the headteacher has identified the need to broaden the leadership and management role of other staff. The recently introduced systems for monitoring and evaluating school performance have provided much helpful information. The headteacher has applied it to good effect to improve the quality of education provided and in particular the quality of teaching and the rate of the pupils' learning. The curricula for English and mathematics are well developed, but the headteacher is aware of the need to draw up more detailed guidance about what is to be taught in other subjects every year.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	E*	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	E	E	E	
Science	E	E	E	E	

The table illustrates the low standards achieved in recent years. Results declined significantly between 1996 and 1998. The 1998 results were the lowest ever published by the school with attainment in English being within the lowest 5 per cent nationally and no pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics or science. In 1999 the results improved considerably in all three subjects; attainment at the expected Level 4 or above rose by an average of 20 per cent and a few pupils reached the higher Level 5. However, they remained well below average overall. Taking these subjects together over the four years from 1996 to 1999, the pupils' performance was well below the national average. However, the results of tests for seven-year-olds have been more encouraging. The 1999 reading and mathematics results were broadly in line with the national average and writing was above average. When compared with similar schools these results were above average overall. Analysis of the results since 1996 shows that

performance in all three areas dipped in 1997 but has since improved. Taking the period 1996 to 1999 together the performance of the pupils was close to the national average overall.

The inspection findings indicate that standards by the age of eleven are now improving, but are still below average in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. Standards in all other subjects in Key Stage 2 and in all subjects by the age of seven are average overall. No overall judgement was made concerning music. The headteacher makes effective use of the information he gathers from tests and assessments of the pupils' performance to set challenging but realistic improvement targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have a good attitude to learning and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The school functions as an orderly community and behaviour is satisfactory overall. Year 6 pupils occasionally remain challenging.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Relationships in the school are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The recent focus on this aspect has brought the levels of attendance and unauthorised absence close to the national average.

Most of these aspects had, until recently, declined since the last inspection. The new headteacher has very quickly achieved significant improvements, but recognises the need to sustain this improvement over time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. All of the lessons seen throughout the school were either satisfactory or better; almost 70 per cent were either good or very good. Although the quality of teaching across the school is good overall it is more securely so for the youngest and oldest pupils. A particular feature of the teaching is the constructive relationships developed with children, through the constant reinforcement of appropriate behaviour, leading to positive attitudes and good learning.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is effective throughout the school. These lessons are frequently good and on occasions very good. The teachers plan their lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils, identifying how tasks will be modified for different groups. However, they are generally not making sufficient use of information technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum offers a broad range of opportunities with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but it does not fully meet statutory requirements because the provision for information technology is currently unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The individual education plans have appropriate targets. The learning support for these pupils, both in classes and groups, is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The needs of the pupils with English as an additional language are well met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The school promotes well the pupils' awareness of right and wrong. The whole ethos of the school is one of consideration and friendship. Cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school pays good attention to the pupils' welfare and ensures they are well cared for. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour are very good.

The school places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and this is central to the determined plan to raise standards. The curriculum is enhanced through good use of the local environment and extra-curricular activities. However, the provision for information technology is unsatisfactory overall. The use of assessment data to plan any relevant changes or modifications to the curriculum is limited.

The school has effective links with parents who provide good support for the work of the school. The parents are very satisfied with the high standards of care provided for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher has a very clear vision and strong commitment to school improvement. The leadership and management roles of other staff have yet to be fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed and alongside the headteacher are fulfilling their key responsibilities by steering the school through a period of considerable improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. The headteacher, supported by the governing body, has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. A potential budget deficit has been overcome and a range of grants well deployed to support school improvement.

The headteacher provides strong leadership so that the management of the school is improving. The levels of staffing are generous and the accommodation is spacious and well maintained. The learning resources are satisfactory overall, but provision for information technology is inadequate.

The school has clearly identified and recorded targets for improvement that are supported by carefully considered allocations of funding. The principles of best value are applied appropriately. The headteacher most effectively leads the action taken to meet the schools' priorities for improvement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. They are well taught and encouraged to work hard. • The children make good progress at school. • The headteacher and staff are approachable. • The new headteacher is quickly and effectively improving the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of the pupils is not as good as it should be. • The range of extra-curricular activities is limited. • The setting of homework is inconsistent across the school.

The inspectors agree with the many positive comments made by the parents. The new headteacher, supported by the staff and governors, has effectively begun to restore confidence in the school. The rate of improvement is rapid in several areas and the school has moved forward significantly since completion of the parental questionnaires. For example, the new assertive discipline policy is consistently applied throughout the school and the behaviour of the pupils is now satisfactory overall. The teachers set homework in line with the national guidance and the provision for extra-curricular activities is good. However, the school acknowledges the need to provide parents with more regular information about these two matters.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be broadly in line with the national average in most subjects at both key stages. The school has since been through a period of decline. This is most noticeably evident in the end of Key Stage 2 national assessment results, which have been well below average in recent years in English, mathematics and science. However, the results in Key Stage 1 have remained broadly average during this period. This decline has now been checked. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is now good overall and this supports the pupils in making good progress in lessons. The test results for this year are predicted to be broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and to improve to below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The current Year 5 cohort are confidently predicted to achieve results next year that will be broadly average overall.
2. The results in the Key Stage 2 national tests fell significantly between 1996 and 1998. The 1998 results were the lowest ever published by the school with attainment in English being within the lowest 5 per cent nationally. No pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics or science. In 1999 the results in these subjects improved considerably. Attainment at the expected Level 4 or above rose by an average of 20 per cent and a few pupils reached the higher Level 5. However, the results remained well below average in comparison both with schools nationally and those in similar circumstances. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together and considering these subjects together the pupils' performance was well below the national average and improvement was below the national trend.
3. The current, very carefully considered predictions for the current Year 6 indicate that the improvements in last years' results are being maintained. When considering attainment at Level 4 and 5 together; (the average point scores as included in the inspection summary), the results are likely to be below the national average but to be broadly average in comparison with similar schools.
4. The results in the end of Key Stage 1 national tests dipped significantly in 1997. However, they have since improved and for the past two years have broadly returned to the levels achieved in 1996. The 1999 results were close to the national average in reading and mathematics and were above average in writing. When compared with similar schools, these results were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Taking the period 1996 to 1999 together the performance of the pupils in these three areas was close to the national average. The teachers' assessments of the pupils' work in science last year indicate that standards at the age of seven were well below the national average and also below average when compared with pupils in similar schools. These assessments were not in line with the test results in English and mathematics.
5. The current, very carefully considered predictions for the current Year 2 assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science, considering attainment both at the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3, indicate that results overall will be close to the national average. When compared with similar schools these results are likely to be above average.

6. The cumulative result of eleven-year-olds for the past four years show that both boys and girls have performed at similarly low levels. However, the analysis of assessment results for seven-year-olds indicates that the boys performed at a relatively higher level than did the girls. Putting all the results of the girls together their performance was close to that of their age group nationally in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. In comparison, the boys' performance in relation to their age group nationally was above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The headteacher's analysis of results indicates differences between the performance of boys and girls within year groups but no overall significant imbalance. The inspection findings show no evidence of gender bias within the teaching; both boys and girls are working productively across the curriculum.
7. The inspection findings indicate that by the age of eleven standards are now improving, but are below average in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. Standards in all other subjects in Key Stage 2 and in all subjects by the age of seven are average overall. The exception is music for which no overall judgement was made. The percentage of pupils, (25.9%), identified on the register for special educational need is higher than the national average. The majority of these pupils attain in line with their abilities.
8. The attainment of pupils on entry to school reflects the full ability range, but is below average overall. The pupils make good progress in the foundation stage; this is maintained through Key Stage 1 and enables them to reach standards that are broadly in line with the national average by the age of seven. They achieve well in terms of their earlier attainment and standards are higher than in similar schools. Until very recently, the pupils in Key Stage 2 have made poor progress in relation to their earlier attainment, and have achieved standards well below the national average. However, they are now making good progress overall as they recover lost ground. Standards in Year 6 are improving and the pupils are attaining levels that are below the national average overall but broadly average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. The pupils in other year groups throughout the key stage are achieving standards overall that are in line with those expected for pupils of their age.
9. The adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has had a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics. The teachers have clear guidance about what to teach and devote their time to planning the most effective ways to deliver their lessons. The quality of teaching in these two subjects is good overall and on occasions very good. This promotes good progress in the pupils' learning. The current focus upon teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy is supporting the pupils across the school to develop a range of basic skills, which they are beginning to apply to other areas of learning. However, written evidence of this has, until recently, been very limited at the end of Key Stage 2. The school predicts that as these basic skills become more secure, along with improved curriculum guidance in other subjects, standards across most subjects will rise.
10. The headteacher is very effectively monitoring and evaluating the pupils' attainment and progress. He is in turn supporting the teachers to accurately carry out the same exercise and to use the information gathered to set more challenging but realistic targets for improvement. This is an important development as there was some considerable variation between the teacher assessments and test results for pupils at the end of both key stages last year. For example, in all areas assessed, with the exception of mathematics at Key Stage 2, the teacher assessments were lower than the test results. The inspection findings indicate that teachers are now more accurately assessing what children can do and what they might be expected to do. For example, the current year 5 pupils are confidently expected to reach standards that are broadly average next year. This will continue the trend of improving attainment, at the expected Level 4, started in 1998 and maintained this year. Targets for subsequent years are higher but also deemed to be achievable within the new culture of high expectations.

11. Whilst the school has recently taken considerable steps forward in raising standards, there is still potential for further improvement, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school action plan for improvement sets out a clear strategy to realise this potential.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The pupils' attitudes to their work and the relationships that they enjoy with each other, visitors and the teachers are good. The standards of behaviour and the personal development of the pupils are satisfactory. The school has worked hard in arresting the decline in the pupils' attitudes, which it experienced in recent years. Consequently, it has improved the pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for their work. The parents have a growing confidence in the schools' approach to setting standards of behaviour and the staff have high expectations of what is acceptable in and around the school.
13. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The majority demonstrates a healthy sense of enquiry and enthusiasm in lessons. They settle quickly and listen with interest to their teachers. For instance, in a Year 2 science lesson all pupils were keen to investigate and discuss the types of mini beasts and plants, which they had discovered around the school grounds. The school works hard to build up confidence for all pupils. Even the youngest pupils are keen to answer questions and talk about their learning. In a mathematics lesson seen in the reception class, the teacher asked the pupils what they had learnt. They enthusiastically responded by demonstrating the use of numbers up to 20. The pupils with special educational needs have in the main a positive attitude to school and their work. Several pupils lack confidence while others with behavioural difficulties present challenging behaviour. The school has identified clear strategies for managing these pupils and supporting their progress. The pupils are aware of these and can often be seen trying to manage their own behaviour.
14. Overall, the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. This is in line with the previous inspection report though it is clear that the standards had since fallen, especially amongst the older pupils. The staff have worked effectively to check this decline and to promote high expectations of positive behaviour. The pupils now generally behave in a responsible manner and move about the school in an orderly fashion. Their conduct in classrooms is satisfactory, but very occasionally a minority of the older pupils cause disruption to lessons. The teachers are adept at applying appropriate methods of dealing with such disruptions when they occur. An orderly picture of behaviour was observed at breaks and at lunch times. There were no signs of oppressive behaviour. There were two fixed term and two permanent exclusions in the year prior to the inspection. These sanctions were part of the schools' behaviour management strategies, which are succeeding in eliminating exclusions.
15. Relationships in the school are good. The pupils are polite and courteous. They welcome visitors and value the help they receive from volunteers. The pupils enjoy positive and productive relationships with their teachers. In lessons, they are often able to take turns at explaining and reviewing their work, a task that they undertake with enthusiasm. They understand concepts of sharing well. This was demonstrated in a design and technology lesson, which examined the characteristics of various kinds of fruit. The pupils shared their resources fairly, giving each of them an opportunity to participate fully in the lesson. They show appropriate respect for school property and there is no deliberate damage to resources or the environment.
16. The pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They develop a range of social skills through such activities as play and taking lunch together. Routine jobs such as register collection and distribution and help with setting up assemblies enable the pupils to understand their wider responsibilities to the school. On several occasions, pupils were seen to remain on task and sustain concentration in lessons even when not formally supervised. Overall, the opportunities provided for personal development encourage the pupils to become responsible citizens.

17. Levels of attendance are satisfactory and there has been a consistent improvement over the last three years. With the support and advice of the Education Welfare Officer, the school has more than halved the level of unauthorised absence in the last academic year. The pupils come to school on time, return to lessons promptly after breaks and their lessons start and finish promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Then, ten percent of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory. During the current inspection the teaching was never less than satisfactory and was either good or very good in nearly seven out of ten lessons seen. It was very good in nearly one out of six lessons. The proportion of good and very good teaching has increased markedly.
19. Although the quality of teaching is good across the school it is more securely so for the youngest and oldest pupils. The contribution made by both the learning support assistants and additional teachers across Key Stage 2 is good overall and on occasions is very good. It is evident, for example, in the organisation of the additional literacy support, the splitting of Year 6 into two classes for mathematics and the group-work in the Literacy lessons.
20. The teaching of English and mathematics is usually good throughout the school. The teachers have a secure knowledge of what they need to teach, drawing effectively upon the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They use the national planning frameworks well to support the delivery of interesting and challenging lessons. The teachers' plans are often annotated with helpful comments about what works well and whether future plans need amending. This was evidenced in Year 5 mathematics planning in which the teacher appropriately amended her planning for later in the week as a direct consequence of the pupils' progress earlier on.
21. Although the teaching is often good across other subjects, the teachers do not have sufficient guidance about what should be taught across each year in order to guarantee consistently good progress for the pupils. The co-ordinators have accurately audited the current provision in each subject and identified the areas in need of development to ensure that teachers do have very clear guidance from the beginning of next term. This initiative is appropriately a priority in the current school improvement plan and links with other priorities such as developing the role of the co-ordinators. It is also intended to support the teachers in more accurately identifying next steps in learning and providing appropriate but challenging targets for individuals pupils.
22. In those lessons in which teaching is very good the teachers provided very interesting, challenging activities that motivated the children to apply themselves most diligently to achieve the clearly identified learning aims. In all cases the teachers drew most effectively upon their subject knowledge to develop and amend activities in direct response to the pupils' progress. The teachers had a very clear understanding of what the children needed to learn next. This was seen in Year 3 and 4 English group work, Year 5 and 6 mathematics lessons and in reception and Year 6 physical education lessons.
23. The effect of this good teaching is clearly evident in the positive responses of the pupils. They are stimulated and interested in what the teachers ask them to do and are eager to learn. Sometimes, as seen in geography in Year 5, the pupils are disappointed when the lesson ends. On the increasingly rare occasions that the pupils' behaviour is unacceptable the teachers consistently apply the assertive behaviour guidelines to good effect and prevent disruption of the learning. For example, in a Year 6 physical education lesson, a few children attempted to be uncooperative but were successfully brought back on task and achieved good learning.

24. The headteacher has very quickly and effectively introduced well-considered strategies to support improvements in the teaching. For example, he is very effectively monitoring and evaluating the pupils' attainment and progress. He also supports the teachers in accurately carrying out the same tasks and in setting more challenging but realistic targets for the pupils to achieve. This is in direct contrast to last year when there were some significant differences between the teacher assessments and test results at the end of both key stages. There is a clearly thought out strategy to maintain generous staffing levels that allows pupils across the school to be taught in small ability groups, particularly in English and mathematics. During the inspection, this was particularly effective in providing additional literacy support in Years 3 and 4, and additional learning support across Key Stage 2 and in Year 6 support from the headteacher. These lessons were frequently good and often very good enabling the pupils to make at least good progress in their learning. As a further consequence of creation of these groups, other class teachers were able to deliver good quality lessons as they were left with smaller classes and a narrower range of pupil needs to deal with. The recent introduction of assertive discipline procedures are consistently applied by the staff, both around the school and in lessons, and have a positive effect upon the pupils' attitudes in lessons and enables the teachers to focus upon the intended learning.
25. The teachers show clear consideration in their planning for the pupils with special educational needs. Expectations are high and resources are used well to help them. All teachers and support assistants use effective questioning and challenge the pupils appropriately to develop skills and understanding. The pupils withdrawn to work in a small group were effectively taught about basic punctuation. By using question and answer and a game they learnt how to use punctuation to get expression in their reading.

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

26. The curriculum for the youngest children is carefully planned to ensure thorough coverage of all of the areas of learning within the Foundation Curriculum for pupils under the age of five. At Key Stage 1 and 2 the curriculum offers an appropriately broad range of opportunities but does not fully meet the statutory requirements. This is because the provision for information technology in Key Stage 2 is currently unsatisfactory and does not meet the needs of the pupils. The school has appropriate plans in place to ensure that the curriculum for information technology is securely in place and that this then supports the development of the curriculum in other subjects.
27. The current provision includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, providing a range of worthwhile activities that meet the pupils' interests and needs, including those with special educational needs. This richness enables pupils of different levels of attainment to take part in lessons as well as promoting self-esteem and motivation. However, progression in acquiring skills is less secure as some subjects did not have, until very recently, helpful guidance about what is to be taught each year. The school is aware of the need to further develop this guidance to support consistently good learning of skills across the school.
28. Religious education is based on the locally agreed syllabus and satisfactorily enriches the pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. However, evidence from the work that the eldest pupils did earlier this year was very limited. There is a daily act of collective worship in which pupils learn about Christianity and other religions through stories and festivals. Moral issues are also a feature. There is provision for delivering sex and drugs education and encouraging pupils to have a healthy diet.

29. The school has effectively planned for literacy and numeracy lessons. These are well established due to the positive attitude of the teachers, and the detailed planning that is helping to raise the pupils' attainment. However, their wider effect is less strong so far, since the links with other subjects have not been sufficiently developed. For instance, there are a few examples of the use of literacy in history and the use of co-ordinates in geography.
30. There is a good range of extra curricular activities: they include sports such as football and netball, country dancing, drama, homework for Year 6 pupils three nights a week, recorders and athletics. Although most clubs are for Key Stage 2, the younger pupils can play football. All clubs are open to both boys and girls.
31. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual development and opportunities for this are to be found in assemblies, where pupils are given time to reflect, and in religious education lessons. Few opportunities are planned across the curriculum although in reception pupils were amazed at what they saw inside a passion fruit: it was not what they expected.
32. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Various situations are used to teach pupils the difference between right and wrong. The classrooms have their own set of rules prominently displayed. Visitors are treated politely and with respect. Good behaviour is commented on and rewarded either by praise or a certificate. The whole ethos of the school is one of consideration and friendship.
33. The provision for social development is satisfactory. The pupils are given responsibility both around the school and in the classrooms for everyday tasks, such as taking the register to the office. During many lessons observed, the pupils were encouraged to work together and to share ideas. Their social development is also promoted through residential visits organised for pupils of all ages. An understanding of the needs of others is fostered through charitable fund-raising; for example the pupils invite their parents to cake or toy sales organised in support of Blue Peter and other appeals.
34. The pupils' cultural development is also good. Through geographical studies, listening to non-western music and looking at different religions, the pupils learn to appreciate other cultures. The local environment provides a rich source of first hand history, and visits to these sites further enrich the pupils understanding.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school's monitoring of the pupils' academic performance and personal development is good overall. Particular strengths within this provision are the systems for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour. However, although the procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' academic progress are satisfactory the use of the information gathered to support curriculum developments is unsatisfactory. The headteacher has identified this issue as part of an initiative to strengthen the curriculum within the school improvement plan.
36. The school provides good personal support and guidance for the pupils in its care. The staff are highly effective in implementing the detailed policies for child protection and the pupils' general well being. The teachers have a good knowledge of those pupils whose personal circumstances demand sensitive care and support. They work tirelessly to ensure that those pupils who, for example, experience temporary social difficulties are fully integrated into the daily routines of the school.

37. A strong aspect of the school's work is the health care shown towards the pupils. Professionals from such services as nursing and dentistry provide regular medical screening. The teachers are alert to opportunities to reinforce health messages in their lessons. In one science lesson, for example, the teacher asked pupils to explain when they should always wash their hands after handling soil. This successfully alerted pupils to the risk of infections from contact with termites. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy in place. Staff are vigilant in their reporting and rectification of hazards. There were no outstanding health and safety matters at the time of the inspection.
38. The school has a thorough induction programme. Parents are invited into school and their children have opportunities to sample classes before they embark on their journey through education. An independent playgroup hosted by the school regularly visits the reception class for story time and this is helpful in introducing very young children to the school environment.
39. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection with improving the arrangements for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress and the use of the information gathered to support effective lesson planning, particularly in English and mathematics. The teachers are now accurately identifying what the children can do and what they should do next in these subjects. In addition, the headteacher has gathered and evaluated a wide range of assessment data and begun to use this information to guide the provision of appropriate learning experiences for the pupils. For example, the school assesses exactly what the children are capable of when they enter the reception class and uses this information to target support for individual pupils. Similarly, older pupils who need extra assistance with aspects of their literacy and numeracy work receive specialist help in small groups. However, the headteacher has appropriately identified the need to fully involve all staff in the analysis and use of this information in order to develop the role of co-ordinators and strengthen the curriculum provision across all subjects.
40. The systems for the early identification and support for pupils with special educational needs are very effective. The special needs register clearly identifies reasons for concern and tracks the pupils' progress through the stages of assessment. There are regular reviews of the pupils on the register, although the overall monitoring is still at an early stage of development. The teachers and learning support assistants are sympathetic to the needs of the pupils, value their opinions and treat them with respect.
41. The pupils' personal development is well monitored by the class teachers. A Record of Achievement enables the pupils to record their successes and to set targets for improvement as they move through the school. The teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils and conscientiously use this to provide guidance and encouragement. The school has an effective liaison with the local secondary school. Through exchange visits, teacher discussions on pupil's needs and sampling of lessons, the pupils are well prepared for a smooth transition to the next stage of education.
42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting high standards of behaviour and levels of attendance are very good. They have, for example, succeeded in improving the pupils' attitudes to their learning and the school is now well on the way towards eliminating unauthorised absence. In classes, the teachers consistently apply the school's procedures for maintaining orderly discipline and this is largely successful in avoiding disruptive or oppressive behaviour.
43. Parents are very satisfied with the standards of care provided by the school. Overall, the support given to the pupils has a positive effect on their academic progress and their development as individuals.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Relationships between the parents and school are good. The parents have positive views of the school and they confidently expect the newly appointed headteacher to maintain the pace of school improvement. The school enjoys the active support of many parents who express a high level of satisfaction with many aspects of its work.
45. The school is an open and welcoming place. The staff are approachable and are always willing to discuss issues such as homework with parents and carers before and after the school day. A significant number of parents regularly help in the classrooms and other volunteers from amongst the governing body and community support them. The volunteers help with routine preparation tasks, reading and maths work. The majority of parents have recently signed up to a home-school agreement that sets out their responsibilities in helping their children to learn. There is a satisfactory level of help at home with parents supporting tasks such as reading, research, tables and spelling. The school has recently secured resources to help improve this aspect of its work. There is an active Friends Association that raises money for resources. This is successful and it has, for instance, recently contributed towards the purchase of books.
46. Communications between the school and home are satisfactory. The parents find that recent improvements are keeping them informed about school events and that the school takes their suggestions seriously. A weekly newsletter outlines what is happening in school and the teachers inform them of the topics which they are covering each term. The annual reports summarise what the pupils can do and invite both pupil and parental comments. A useful feature of the reports is the 'next steps' section which sets targets for future improvement. Regular meetings for the parents provide opportunities for them to discuss their children's progress with the teachers. The school's prospectus contains relevant information and the governors' annual report to parents meets the statutory requirements. Although the parents of pupils who need extra help with their learning are invited into school to discuss what can be done, they do not always take up this opportunity.
47. A minority of parents felt that the school did not provide enough regular homework or sufficient enrichment activities through clubs. The inspection evidence indicates that the teachers set homework in line with the national guidance and that the provision for extra-curricular activities is good. However, the school acknowledges the need to regularly provide parents with more details about these two issues. At the time of completion of the parental questionnaires, there was significant concern about the behaviour of the pupils. The inspectors found strong evidence of considerable improvements in this area and judged the pupils' behaviour to be satisfactory overall.
48. The school has maintained the positive relationships with parents identified in the last inspection report. This makes a useful contribution to the pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management of the school has improved since the last inspection. It is now good overall with some very good features. The recently appointed headteacher has accurately assessed what needs to be done to improve the general effectiveness of the school. He sets a very clear direction for the school and the vision is to become one of the most improved schools in the locality. As a direct result of this, the staff, governors and parents demonstrate a renewed confidence in the school's determination to succeed and improve further. It has recently achieved significant improvements in attendance levels and the pupil's attitudes to work as a direct consequence of strong leadership and good teamwork.

50. Although he has only been in post since March, the headteacher has carefully analysed exactly what the pupils are achieving. As a result, rapid action is taken to bring about improvements. This has, for instance, already improved the overall quality of teaching and concentrated efforts on improving the standards attained by pupils by the age of 11. The school's action plan for improvement is well communicated and understood by staff and governors. It provides a well-focussed agenda for improvement underpinned by relevant targets. The highly effective style of leadership ensures that a hard- working and motivated staff is making a significant contribution to school improvement.
51. The governing body is properly constituted and benefits from a wide range of expertise amongst its membership. The governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They support and question the school's plans for improvement and receive regular reports on progress. A specialist committee of the governing body keeps a watching brief on budgets, thus ensuring that the school's priorities are supported with adequate resources. The school seeks out competitive quotations for its major purchases and is conversant with the principles of best value. In almost all respects, the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities, but at the present time it is not able to ensure that the National Curriculum requirements for information technology are being met. However, appropriate plans are in place to address this issue once the relevant government funding is available.
52. The headteacher has, in consultation with the co-ordinators, assessed how each of the subjects is managed. A start has been made on monitoring the quality of the teaching and reviewing plans but this is at an early stage of development. The co-ordinators have job descriptions making their roles as subject managers clear. This was part of a key issue for action at the last inspection and the school has made satisfactory progress with this. However, the school recognises the need to further develop the role of the co-ordinators so that they have greater influence in shaping and improving curriculum planning, setting targets and raising standards. In addition the headteacher has appropriately identified the need to develop a comprehensive performance management policy that includes the increasing range of procedures used and information gathered concerning professional development, self-evaluation and target setting.
53. The school has been successful in securing specific grants. These are properly used for their intended purposes and help the school to meet its priorities for improvement. For example, financial support from the local education authority is enabling the school to retain teaching staff. This is having a beneficial effect in checking the decline in standards experienced in recent years.
54. Following recent appointments, the school has a good match of staff to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of its pupils. The support staff are well deployed and are clear about the positive contribution which they make in classes. Whilst the school has rightly concentrated efforts on developing staff expertise in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, it recognises the need for a wider programme of professional development in order to enhance expertise across the full curriculum.
55. The accommodation is spacious, well cared for and of good quality. It provides an attractive and welcoming environment for the pupils and visitors. Displays are used effectively to celebrate the pupils' work. The school's resources are of satisfactory range and quality overall. Good use is made of loans from sources such as museums and the local secondary school. However, the resources currently available for information technology are inadequate, especially for the older pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should now:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - Developing clear guidance about what is to be taught in each subject every year;
 - Enabling the subject co-ordinators to carry out their subject leadership and management roles effectively;
 - Making effective use of assessment data to set appropriate but challenging targets for improvement;
 - Expanding the opportunities for information technology to support learning across the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 3, 67, 78, 87, 101)

- Raise standards in information technology by:
 - Providing a broad range of opportunities across the school for all pupils to develop their skills and knowledge and to apply them in all subjects of the curriculum;
 - Ensuring that the relevant government grant is effectively deployed to improve learning resources;
 - Giving further training opportunities to the teachers so that they can make full use of the soon to be enhanced learning resources.
(Paragraphs 26, 51, 94, 95, 99)

- Strengthen the curriculum for all pupils throughout the school by:
 - Developing clear guidance about what is to be taught in each subject every year;
 - Using assessment data to plan any relevant changes or modifications to the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 21, 27, 39)

- Sustain and further develop the recently introduced strategies to promote school improvement by:
 - Identifying and fully developing leadership and management roles for all teachers;
 - Providing appropriate professional development opportunities for all staff;
(Paragraphs 52, 54, 110)

Other issues which the school should consider:

Ensuring that arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of staff, and identifying professional development needs are recorded in one coherent policy and fully implemented. This should include arrangements for the appraisal of the headteacher.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	50	33	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	127
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	44

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	6	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	15	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (74)	85 (78)	85 (83)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	14	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (69)	80 (74)	80 (83)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	17	10	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	12
	Girls	7	5	6
	Total	14	13	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (35)	48 (35)	67 (38)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	9	10
	Girls	5	6	4
	Total	10	15	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	37 (73)	56 (73)	52 (73)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	126
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Average class size	24.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	327595
Total expenditure	358296
Expenditure per pupil	2283
Balance brought forward from previous year	46135
Balance carried forward to next year	15434

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	118
Number of questionnaires returned	68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	40	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	46	19	9	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	41	17	4	3
The teaching is good.	62	34	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	40	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	37	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	44	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	40	12	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	35	50	4	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	43	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	46	22	4	3

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. All children start school at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five. They are currently educated in a class of twenty-one children, five of whom are Year 1 pupils. The younger children are taught as a group for literacy and numeracy lessons. Many of the children have had some pre-school playgroup experience. At the time of the inspection five children were still under the age of five. The results of assessment tasks that the children did on entry to the school show that their attainment is below average. The good quality teaching offered to these children enables them to make good progress and to achieve the expected standards overall by the end of the foundation stage. This judgement is similar to that made at the time of the last inspection.

Personal and social development

57. This aspect of provision is a strength. The children have a good introduction to the demands and responsibilities of school life and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. The teachers and assistants place a great deal of emphasis on this during the children's first term in school. At the time of the inspection the children's skills in this area are well within the level expected. They have developed very good relationships with the adults in school, and are learning to co-operate with other children in a group. The children listen to each other when answering questions and celebrate each other's success. They take turns for example when playing catch, or using some of the large outdoor play equipment. They change quickly and quietly for physical education and show that they can work with a partner. They are encouraged to take care of equipment and their environment, and tidy things away carefully.

Language and literacy

58. The curriculum takes account of the National Literacy Strategy and the children make good progress in the acquisition of their language and literacy skills. They listen in small or class groups and respond to questions about a story. One child explained clearly to the rest of the class, using accurate vocabulary, the work done by his group. In an English lesson the children were observed joining in reading with the class from a shared text. They were using expression following the clear examples given by the class teacher. The children were able to record particular parts of a story in a picture and explain what was happening in it. They understand that text has meaning, and can use pictures to talk about a story. Care is taken to encourage them to form letters correctly, and they are beginning to recognise letters in their names. They are also starting to link sounds with letters and words when reading. The children are encouraged to develop a love of books and know how to handle them carefully.

Mathematics

59. The framework of the National Numeracy Strategy is used effectively in lessons and the children are making good progress. They are beginning to recognise numbers, and when working as a class group join in ordering numbers to ten on a number line. They also identify the alternate pattern that is made by odd and even numbers being written on different colour card. Working in a group with the teacher they recognise and make the numbers one to five from sticklebricks. The children are beginning to respond to such instructions as take 3 bricks. They recognise some simple shapes such as circle and square and can sort objects by size. Children using the sand tray make "bowls of porridge" of different sizes for the three bears in the story of Goldilocks. They can also sort using other simple criteria such as colour and shape. They begin to use basic mathematical language such as bigger

than, more than, to describe shape and quantity. Through the use of sand and water play, the children are learning spatial awareness of different sized containers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. The children's attainment is in line with national expectations in this area of the curriculum. They can talk about their immediate environment, their families and friends and important events in their lives both past and present such as birthdays and outings. They have sorted pictures to make collages of the things to be found in various rooms of houses, such as the kitchen and bathroom. The children are acquiring an understanding of life and living processes and know the names of some parts of a plant. They also know that plants need water. The children were really excited in a lesson about tropical fruits offering answers and suggestions about various fruits as they handled them and the teacher cut them in half. They learnt about the need for hygiene when handling food and why fruit is healthy to eat. Some children were observed working on computers with older partners. They were acquiring the skill of using a mouse, the space bar, and the "Enter" and arrow keys.

Creative development

61. The standards attained are meeting the national expectations. The children paint using vivid colours and learn to cut and glue patterns and shapes to make collage. They can build using a variety of construction apparatus and recycled material. They have the opportunity to use a structured play area created in the classroom, though they were not observed doing so during the inspection. They join in singing with the whole school during school assemblies and singing practice, and are beginning to join in actions to accompany a song.

Physical development

62. The children's physical skills are being developed appropriately in line with the desirable learning outcomes and in some aspects are very good. They use a wide range of equipment and large play apparatus appropriately, and know how to take care of it. The children are taught about the need for care when using scissors and other tools, and to have regard for others when doing so. They are being taught to hold a pencil and use equipment correctly. In a physical education lesson they demonstrated an awareness of space, and could run, skip, hop and balance in a stationary position. The children can select appropriate equipment to fill different sized containers with sand and water.
63. The work is planned to ensure that the children have a wide range of learning activities. It is structured to enable them to succeed and they receive positive support and encouragement from teachers and classroom assistants. Progress through the foundation curriculum is carefully monitored and assessed. The teacher knows the children well and has a very good relationship with them based on trust and fun.
64. There are close links with the pre-school playgroup based in a nearby classroom, and children from there regularly join the reception class for story. Activities such as these help make the transition into school easier for the children. Efforts are made to involve all parents in their children's learning and positive links are being developed between home and school.

ENGLISH

65. Taking the period 1996 to 1999 together the pupils' performance in tests for seven-year-olds in both reading and writing was close to the national average. In the 1999 tests, the pupils' results were broadly in line with the national average in reading and were above average in writing. When compared with similar schools these results were well above average. The current predictions for this year indicate that the results overall will be close to the national average. When compared with similar schools these results are likely to be above average.

66. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together the performance of both boys and girls in English tests for eleven-year olds was well below the national average. The results of the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards in English were well below average in comparison both with results nationally and those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The current, very carefully considered predictions for this summer indicate that the results are likely still to be below the national average but to be broadly average in comparison with similar schools.
67. At the time of the last inspection standards in English were judged to be in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. However, standards in speaking and listening were below average in both key stages. The current inspection findings indicate that standards in speaking and listening have improved and are now broadly in line with the national average by the end of both key stages. Judgements overall are that by the age of seven standards in English are broadly in line with the national average. By the time pupils leave the school, standards, although improving after a period of decline, remain below average overall.
68. The effective introduction of the national literacy strategy and the implementation of the literacy hour have been successful, with teachers having clear ideas of the most effective ways of teaching the various elements. There is an appropriate balance between guided reading and writing. Good quality teaching is helping to ensure further development in reading and writing in both key stages.
69. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are becoming confident speakers. When given the opportunity, they respond to questions and volunteer information about the chosen text in the literacy hour and enter purposefully into discussions, for example, of unusual fruits, their texture, smell and taste. The pupils listen carefully to their teachers when introducing lessons or reading the stories, and respect the views of others. By the age of eleven they offer detailed answers to questions and participate both in class and small group discussions. They are becoming more confident and willing to express their views and opinions. All pupils are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to explore the use of language.
70. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils handle books with care and read a range of texts with varying degrees of fluency and understanding. They are beginning to develop strategies for reading unfamiliar words and using other clues in the books. Some can talk about their favourite books, stories and authors and explain the reason for their preferences. Others are able to retell stories they have either heard or read. The pupils recognise the difference between fact and fiction but are less secure in using books for research, although they know the purpose of a contents page and an index. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils are independent readers, enjoying a range of poetry and stories. Many read with fluency and accuracy: a few with good expression. They are able to discuss the plot and their favourite part but most lack the confidence to make predictions about the story line. When asked to do so, they reply that they do not know enough about the story to make a prediction. Opportunities for research are limited, but the pupils are being taught the appropriate skills of skimming and scanning. Attainment in reading is stronger than in writing, reflecting the national picture.
71. By the end of Key Stage 1, some pupils are able to write interesting stories but many fail to use punctuation effectively, omitting full stops and capital letters, and misspell even the simplest words. Most pupils write in sentences although their vocabulary lacks imagination. Opportunities are provided for pupils to use writing frameworks but rarely do the pupils either redraft their work or discover mistakes for themselves. They write for a variety of purposes: retelling a traditional tale such as the Three Little Pigs, diary entries, letters to Father Christmas, giving instructions, descriptions and composing their own stories. Other skills such as comprehension, grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught. Although pupils learn phonics some are unable to use these skills

to help them sound out unfamiliar words in their reading. Examples of the pupils' work show that few are confident to use a cursive script.

72. At the end of Key Stage 2 there is a lack of the use of more imaginative vocabulary and descriptive language in the pupils' writing. A scrutiny of Year 6 work, particularly from the earlier part of the year, shows a narrow range of language experiences and a poor standard of achievement. However, the most recent work shows an improvement in the variety of tasks offered and in the pupils' responses. The pupils have previously learned about persuasive writing and are now working on developing explanatory text by writing about how things work. Despite further attention to punctuation and spelling, many pupils continue to spell inaccurately and fail to use punctuation effectively. Pupils in Year 5 have produced persuasive writing involving a protest about the building of a new bypass. Groups of pupils wrote letters to any imaginary council in the role of farmers, residents, conservationists and the Action Group. The pupils demonstrated an empathy with those who would lose their homes (I was born here, I want to die here!) and concerns for the local history that suggested a Roman Villa was buried nearby. There are some examples of the application of literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as science, history and technology but they are limited.
73. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their literacy sessions and participate keenly and sensibly. They listen well, with interest during the introductory part of the lesson. The younger pupils in particular respond positively to the reading of the shared text and join in enthusiastically. The reception pupils pretended assumed the roles of the characters during the reading of the Three Little Pigs. Older pupils like to answer questions and join in the discussions, sharing ideas and respecting the views of others. The majority of pupils are able to work sensibly on their own with little adult supervision. They mostly remain on task and concentrate for the appropriate length of time. They share resources and often help each other. Most pupils expressed pleasure in reading, not only in school but also at home. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported within the classroom and in withdrawal groups working on carefully amended tasks. They make good progress.
74. The quality of the teaching in both key stages is good overall. The teachers' planning is detailed, with specific objectives that are made clear to the pupils at the start of each lesson. Such careful planning helps to ensure continuity and progression in the development of skills. Activities are provided that are well matched to the pupils' abilities; this ensures that the pupils make good progress particularly in reading and speaking and listening. The whole class sessions are used effectively for the pupils' to share work and reinforce the learning objectives. The teachers make good use of text to develop the pupils' understanding of different types of writing and encourage them to explore the use of character voices when reading. In both key stages, they establish good relationships with their pupils, giving them confidence by listening to and valuing their oral and written contributions. This was evident in many lessons observed. All teachers make effective use of questioning to increase pupils' knowledge and extend their understanding. A particular feature of the teaching in English is the effective deployment of well-briefed additional teachers, classroom assistants and parent volunteers. These adults are involved in working with pupils both within classrooms and in withdrawal groups. This has a positive effect on the quality of the teaching and the pace of learning for pupils; it allows the teachers to have smaller groups and a narrower range of abilities to manage. Overall, the well-planned and often enthusiastically delivered lessons are beginning to have a positive effect on the pupils' learning.
75. Various visitors also enhance the pupils' language curriculum. They include David Horner, a poet, David Webb a local writer, and live theatre companies.

MATHEMATICS

76. Taking the period 1996 to 1999 as a whole, the pupils' performance in tests for seven-year-olds was close to the national average. In the 1999 tests, the pupils' results were broadly in line with the national average and were above average in comparison with similar schools. The current predictions for this year indicate that results overall will be close to the national average. When compared with similar schools these results are likely to be above average.
77. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of both boys and girls in tests for eleven-year-olds was well below the national average. The results of the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards were well below average in comparison both with results nationally and those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The current, very carefully considered predictions for this summer indicate that the results are likely to be below the national average, but broadly average in comparison with similar schools.
78. At the time of the last inspection standards in mathematics were deemed to be in line with the national. The current inspection findings indicate that by the age of seven standards currently are broadly in line with the national average. By the time the pupils leave the school standards are improving although still below average overall.
79. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have a secure understanding of place value within 100 and can count on and back from a two-digit number. They have a developing mental capacity and use this to help them in solving number problems. In addition they can explain what they are doing. When working with shape they recognise and can name common 2-D and 3-D shapes and identify some of their features, such as the number of sides and corners. The pupils have made good progress, as their attainment on entry to the school was below average overall. This was evident in lessons observed throughout the key stage in which good quality teaching was promoting good learning. For example, the reception children are developing their ability to count and recognise numbers to 10 and many of them are confident to work up to 20.
80. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are not working confidently at the levels expected for their age. There are a few high attaining pupils who perform at levels that are above the national average but a significant minority only achieves below average levels. This is not directly the result of the current quality of teaching, which is consistently either good or better. There has been a decline in standards in recent years but this has now been checked and these pupils are now making up lost ground. However, their attainment overall is still below average. For example, approximately one-third of the Year 6 pupils are not confident when working with three digit numbers or decimals, and lack a good grasp of appropriate mental strategies to support their calculating. However, in work on the surface area of cuboids the rest of the Year 6 group was confidently performing at or beyond the expected level for pupils of this age. Throughout the rest of the key stage, the pupils are generally sustaining the good progress from Key Stage 1 and attaining standards that are at least in line with the expected levels. For example, the current year 5 cohort are nearly all working within the expected levels and almost half of them are working at higher levels. This was evident in work on coordinates in which the pupils understood the concept of four quadrants with several of them working within the first and second quadrant. Similarly, pupils in Year 3 show a secure understanding of locating a point on a grid by numbering the lines rather than the spaces.
81. The quality of teaching is good overall and on occasions very good. The teachers have a secure knowledge of what they need to teach, drawing effectively upon the National Numeracy Strategy and making good use of the national planning framework. The good curriculum provision and the increased emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills and mental arithmetic are contributing to the pupils' overall good progress in lessons. The consistent structure of the planning results in well balanced lessons, and effectively builds on what the pupils already know and understand. All teachers emphasise the importance of mental calculations in the introductory sessions. However, the most effective learning takes place when the teachers use oral work to promote rapid recall skills and

ensure full pupil participation by the good use of the available resources. In addition they are prepared to really challenge the pupils with interesting but demanding work which sometimes goes beyond the original lesson plan. This was seen in lessons at the end of Key Stage 2 concerning surface area and coordinates in which the teacher's expectations rose and lesson plans were amended in the light of the children's confident responses.

82. Most teachers ensure that the direct teaching of skills is given appropriate emphasis. For example, at the end of the key stage, in a lesson on surface area of cuboids, the teacher emphasised the various methods which might be used to help the pupils to understand the concept, and prompted instant recall of precise mathematical language. As a result, the pupils showed increasing ability to calculate the area of a face and find a variety of methods to use this information to calculate the total surface area of the shape. The teachers' secure subject knowledge was demonstrated by the well focused and often challenging questioning that they use to extend the pupils' understanding. In most lessons, they maintain good standards of behaviour; minor disruptions are dealt with quickly and effectively, thus keeping the pupils productively on task.
83. A feature of the teaching in mathematics is the effective deployment of the headteacher to support teaching in Year 6. This has a positive effect on the quality of the teaching and the pace of learning for these pupils as the two teachers have smaller numbers and a narrower range of abilities to manage. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of numeracy because they receive appropriate extra support on interesting activities that effectively meet their needs. The targets for all these pupils are clearly identified in their individual education plans. Similarly, the higher attaining pupils are generally suitably challenged in their groups to reach high standards.
84. Throughout the school, the pupils' have positive attitudes to mathematics and show good listening skills. They are well motivated when given the opportunity to explain how they achieved their answers, thus reinforcing their learning. They are enthusiastic during mental activities, responding eagerly when timed targets are set, and they concentrate well to complete tasks. This has a strong impact on their rate of learning.

SCIENCE

85. The teachers' assessments of the pupils' work last year indicate that standards at the age of seven were well below the national average and also below average when compared with pupils in similar schools. The current, very carefully considered predictions for this year indicate that results will be close to the national average. When compared with similar schools these results are likely to be above average.
86. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together the performance of both boys and girls in tests for eleven-year-olds was well below the national average. The results of the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards were well below average in comparison both with results nationally and those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The current, very carefully considered predictions for this summer indicate that the results are likely to be below the national average but to be broadly average in comparison with similar schools.
87. At the time of the last inspection standards in science were judged to be in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. The current inspection findings indicate that the standards attained by the age of seven are broadly in line with the national average. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards although improving are below average overall.
88. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils can identify and classify plants and living things and note their features. They can name the main parts of a plant and describe the main requirements for growth. They make connections between living things and their environments, such as slugs eat leaves. They can make a bulb light by constructing a simple circuit. The pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of enquiry and are beginning to understand the need for factual research in reaching conclusions. They are beginning to use appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe their observations and are encouraged to use reference books to check and exemplify their findings

89. Overall, the teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, with some good classroom management and organisation. In the lesson observed, the teacher had clear objectives and used challenging questions to develop knowledge and understanding. There were high expectations of the pupils and this helped sustain a good pace in their work. An interesting range of resources was used and the pupils were expected to build upon previous knowledge and experience. They make satisfactory progress across the key stage. They obviously enjoy the subject and are eager to answer questions and express opinions. Their behaviour is well managed and supported. The pupils show that they can listen to and others work together. They can record information using labelled diagrams, but opportunities to record findings in a variety of ways are insufficient.
90. At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils understand the meaning of and can plan a fair test. They use Newtonmeters to measure force and compare and interpret results to understand the relationship between weight and mass. They can discuss life and living processes and health as related to themselves. The pupils understand the life cycles of plants, seed dispersal and food chains. They have also completed work on solubility and electricity.
91. The teaching within lessons in Key Stage 2 was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The teachers use questioning to effectively build on the pupils' previous knowledge to challenge and develop their understanding. When expectations of learning and pace were made clear to the pupils their learning was focussed and productive. The teachers' lesson planning is structured and identifies objectives and assessment opportunities.
92. The pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and enjoy the challenge of investigation. For example, Year 4 and 5 pupils showed excitement and wonder at the outcomes of their experiments into the conditions that are needed for seeds to germinate. They are beginning to record information using a variety of forms such as charts, diagrams, block and line graphs.
93. The recent introduction of the QCA scheme of work means that teachers are beginning to plan a science curriculum that shows greater breadth. Across the school at present, there is insufficient experimental and investigative science for pupils to learn through practical activity and observation. There is also little evidence of teaching about materials and their properties and physical processes. The school has identified the need to consolidate the guidance for the teachers concerning what is to be taught each year and how the pupils' progress will be accurately monitored in order to improve the curriculum and the standards achieved.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

94. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory across the whole school. The pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 continues to be broadly average. However, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is below average. This is because the provision for information technology in Key Stage 2 is currently unsatisfactory and does not meet the needs of the pupils.
95. The limited amount of both computer hardware and software is a major factor contributing to the low standards. The school recognises the need to address this issue and plans to use government funding to enhance learning resources. Training designed to meet the needs of the teachers and the introduction of a full curriculum as soon as possible should also contribute to improvements. Effective monitoring and assessment of the pupils' progress is not yet fully implemented. There are not yet adequate resources for the subject to be taught to more than a small group of pupils at one time.
96. At the end of Key stage 1, the pupils know how to enter commands and understand that they can have a variety of effects. They are competent in the use of a mouse, the basic function keys and a concept

keyboard. They use simple word processing skills and handle data to draw bar graphs. They also use simulations to reinforce their computer skills and to develop their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. They can save and print their work

97. In the lesson observed in Key Stage 1, the teaching was good. The teachers, working collaboratively with Key Stage 1 pupils of different ages, planned and presented structured tasks with clear objectives and shared in the wonder the pupils experienced at the outcomes of their work. One of the youngest children called out with delight "I've done it, I've done it," after successfully completing an operation. They asked challenging questions that encouraged pace and understanding. The pupils show enthusiasm for the subject and talk about their work confidently. They enjoy working with pupils of different ages and collaborate effectively.
98. In Key Stage 2, computers are used only for a limited range of activities including spelling and some basic word processing and data handling. Communicating and handling information in various forms and analysing and the organising of data are underdeveloped skills. Moreover, there are currently no opportunities for controlling, monitoring and modelling external events with information technology equipment.
99. There is little evidence throughout the school of the use of information technology across the curriculum. The school expects to shortly receive government funding that will allow the creation of a computer suite and provide training for staff. The school must take this opportunity to provide the pupils with opportunities to develop their information technology skills and to apply them across all subjects of the curriculum in order to raise standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

100. During the inspection there were no religious education lessons timetabled in Key Stage 1 and few in Key Stage 2. Additional evidence was gathered through a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and discussions with pupils and teachers. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory across the school. Currently standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those identified in the agreed syllabus however; they are unsatisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2.
101. The pupils in Key Stage 1 have had many experiences of learning about Christianity, the life of Jesus, the Christmas and Easter stories, and have visited a local church to investigate symbolism in religion. They have also considered some aspects of Buddhism. Much of the recording is done on worksheets and the pupils are given some opportunities to express their own opinions and thoughts about Christianity. Multicultural displays around the school enhance their understanding of other religions. At the end of Key Stage 2, there is little evidence of the pupils recording any information in this subject during the earlier part of the year, although religious education is clearly now in place. Consequently, these pupils are not achieving the required standards as laid down in the agreed syllabus and their knowledge is inadequate.
102. Although the teachers' daily plans are detailed, their long term planning has only recently been implemented. They are aware of the need for such plans in order to ensure continuity and progression. Christianity and other religions feature in Assembly and festivals such as Divali are discussed

ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY and MUSIC

103. The quality of the pupils' work in art, design and technology, geography and history is in line with that expected for their age at the end of both key stages. This is broadly in line with the judgements made during the previous inspection. However, the standards in design and technology in Key Stage

- 2 have improved. During the inspection it was possible to observe very few art, design and technology and geography lessons and none in history and music. Additional evidence was gathered from work seen around the school, scrutiny of the teachers' planning and discussion with the pupils and teachers. There is insufficient evidence of the full range of musical skills and knowledge acquired by pupils on which to base firm judgements about standards in the subject overall.
104. In art in Key Stage 1, the pupils record their ideas and feelings confidently and work practically and imaginatively with materials, tools and techniques. For example they use pencils, paint, pastels, crayon and fabric in a variety of interesting ways. When working with paint they effectively produce images of kites and exploding pictures through cutting up and gluing pictures. The pupils effectively use a variety of materials and textures as they produce collage, weaving and simple rubbings. They often use their skills creatively to illustrate stories and poetry. In Key Stage 2, the pupils work with increasing accuracy and attention to detail in two and three dimensions. For example, they make good use of mixed media to create pictures of buildings within the locality, clay and papier-mâché to make models and a large sculpture of a giraffe. During the inspection, Year 3, 4, and 5 pupils developed drawings of tropical fruit to create designs from which a banner will be made using individual pieces of batik. Pupils can discuss colour mixing and the use of shading and vanishing points for effect. Links are regularly made with other subjects. Art work has been used to illustrate Greek myths and pottery, and the vibrancy of Caribbean music has been represented in colour. However, the pupils have limited knowledge of the work of famous artists or experience of art from non-western cultures. They are also at an early stage in learning how to evaluate their own work or that of others
105. In design and technology activities in Key Stage 1 the pupils effectively draw upon their learning in art, science and mathematics as they discuss and record their close observations of fruits. Following the period of observation in which they made good use of their senses to accurately discuss and group the items they disassembled them and carried out further observations. In Key Stage 2 the older pupils showed a secure ability to follow written instructions as they made rubber band powered vehicles. Although the designs were not their own, the pupils evaluated the work as they progressed and frequently suggested and tried their own variations upon the original plan. They successfully drew upon their learning in other subjects as they cut and joined a variety of materials with a good degree of accuracy. The finished products were generally well made and worked as intended. Most pupils could satisfactorily identify strengths and weaknesses both within the design and the making process.
106. In geography in Key Stage 1 many of the youngest pupils know their address and some are able to find their home and the school on a map of the local area. They were very excited to think that a letter they had written would actually drop through their letter-boxes. As they move through the key stage the pupils develop their understanding of the physical and human features of the surrounding area. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils draw upon a range of skills as they investigate places and describe their findings using appropriate geographical vocabulary. For example, they use grid references and scales on maps, and can identify countries from their outline. In the lessons observed, the staff had completed questionnaires about their choice of holiday and pupils in Year 3 and 4 used this information to help them decide appropriate destinations. They used an atlas to give them the relevant information about places, including climate, landscape, population and country. The pupils in Year 5 were looking at the uses of water and used atlases to answer questions about other parts of the world. By the end of the lesson pupils were able to discuss in some detail the purposes for which water is used.
107. In history, the pupils have enjoyed visits to local historical sites and museums. Their written work shows some good examples of their empathy with the past. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils show a sound knowledge and understanding of aspects of the past. This was evident, for example, in writing produced after a visit to the Apprentices' House. It took the form of a diary recounting the feelings of the servants and made a comparison between homes now and then. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are able to describe and evaluate some of the main characteristics, events, people

and changes associated with different periods of history. For example in work on the Greeks they give plausible reasons why they would chose to live in Athens rather than in Sparta.

108. It was only possible to hear the pupils sing during assembly and hymn practice. They sing reasonably well in tune and often with clear diction. However, many of the older pupils make little effort despite the praise and encouragement of the teachers. The peripatetic music teacher visits the school once a week and takes each year group in turn. In conjunction with the staff, she plans a wide range of musical experiences for the pupils. The school also takes part in the local music festival. Appreciation of music from other cultures is developed for example, during assemblies when pupils are encouraged to talk about the feelings that are prompted by a range of music. The provision for music has improved since the last inspection when both lesson planning and the available resources were unsatisfactory.
109. In the lessons seen in these subjects the quality of the teaching was satisfactory overall and on occasions was good. As in all other subjects, the teachers show good skills of classroom management, particularly in promoting positive attitudes and good behaviour. Although they plan in detail for each lesson their longer term planning to ensure good progress in learning is not securely developed. The teachers provide a range of practical activities that encourage the pupils to develop their understanding across these subjects. As a direct result of this the pupils are generally enthusiastic, particularly when involved in interesting and challenging activities such as researching information, designing and making pictures, models and machines, exploring the immediate environment and visiting other places of educational interest. For example, in the Year 5 geography lesson using atlases many pupils were disappointed when the lesson finished. The exception to this is the somewhat unenthusiastic attitude of some of the older pupils to singing.
110. The breadth of the curriculum in these subjects is satisfactory on balance. Although the use of information technology to support learning in all of these subjects is insufficient good links are otherwise made across the curriculum. For example, art and music are effectively linked through a Caribbean theme, art and history complement each other in work on Ancient Greece; science often supports work in design and technology. However, opportunities to apply literacy skills across these subjects are underdeveloped. The school recognises the need to strengthen the guidance for the teachers about what needs to be taught each year and then to enhance the teachers' subject knowledge through professional training. It has also appropriately identified the need to enhance the leadership and management role of the subject co-ordinators as an integral part of this process.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. The standards achieved by the end of both key stages are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. This judgement is similar to that made at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils plan and perform skills such as throwing, catching and aiming with safety and control. They work effectively alone, with a partner and as members of small groups to further practice and apply their skills. When provided with the opportunity, they can reflect upon their own and others actions and identify good performance. Overall, the younger pupils in the key stage are confident and competent gymnasts who show good control and awareness of space and of others when working in the hall. A particular strength of the pupils' achievements across the key stage is their ability to work collaboratively in small groups. This often enables them to improve their performance through watching each other and holding sensible discussions.
112. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils, when they apply themselves, are able to respond with control and imagination to open ended opportunities in Dance. Although some pupils can be uncooperative on occasions, they show the ability to work in a group and discuss, evaluate and refine their movements. Most are able to constructively criticise their own and others performance and then develop their performance accordingly. Throughout the rest of the key stage, the pupils show satisfactory control in outdoor games activities such as throwing, catching and aiming. As with Key

Stage 1 the ability of the pupils to work collaboratively is good overall. By the time they leave the school the vast majority are able to swim at least 25 metres.

113. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but varies from very good to satisfactory. The teachers are usually dressed appropriately for the subject and provide good role models through their enthusiasm and participation. They emphasise the importance of warming up and cooling down activities, helping the pupils to understand the effect exercise has on their bodies. Where the teaching is most effective, very good use is made of demonstration and frequent opportunities are given for the pupils to judge their own success. They are encouraged to develop their own ideas, find areas for improvement and raise the standard of their individual performance. The pupils' response throughout the school is good overall with most of them showing enthusiasm for their lessons. This is usually as a result of the teachers regard to safety issues and their high expectations of behaviour. When teachers also have high expectations of performance and provide opportunities for the pupils to evaluate and refine their actions, the learning is good and standards are high. This was seen to very good effect in a reception class gymnastics lesson in which the pupils made very good progress in developing their quality of movement within a confined space. This was as a direct result of pupils being given many open-ended opportunities to respond to practical tasks and follow up questions. Both the children and the teacher watched each others' movements intently and offered suggestions for improvement.

114. The curriculum for physical education is enhanced by the provision of several extra-curricular activities