

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **GUNNESS AND BURRINGHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Gunness, Scunthorpe

LEA area: North Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 118010

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Kate Buckley

Date of inspection: 5 – 7 June 2000

Reporting inspector: Dr Richard Perkin  
14591

Dates of inspection: 5 – 7 June 2000

Inspection number: 191173

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys and girls
School address:	Burringham Road Gunness Scunthorpe North Lincs
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Jennifer Smith
Date of previous inspection:	14/1/97 – 16/1/97

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Richard Perkin	Registered inspector	English	What sort of a school is it?
		Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
		Art	
		History	
		Music	
Mickie Jacobs	Lay inspector		How high are standards? - 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?
Lesley Clark	Team inspector	Education of children aged under five	How high are standards? – The school's results and the pupils' achievements.
		Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
		Special educational needs	
		Mathematics	
		Information technology	
		Design technology	
		Geography	
		Physical education	

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils	73		(a very small school)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	8	11%	(slightly above average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	15	21%	(broadly average)
Pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0%	(below average)
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0	0%	(below average)

Gunness and Burringham is a very small voluntary controlled Church of England primary school in the village of Gunness, just outside Scunthorpe. The pupils are drawn very largely from the villages of Gunness and Burringham. All are white and their social and economic background is overall below the national average. Children's attainment on entry is below that expected nationally, particularly in the area of writing. At the time of the inspection, there were six children under the age of five in the reception class, working alongside pupils from Years 1 and 2. The school has suffered from severe staff instability for the past few years and is at present led by an acting headteacher.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving and now very effective school that is making up time lost through instability in staffing. Standards in English, mathematics and science have already reached the levels seen during the last inspection after a sharp decline in recent years. The initiatives recently put in place have had a positive effect on the ethos of the school and on pupils' academic and behavioural standards. Teaching is very good and leadership excellent. The school provides good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- Standards in information technology and religious education are above those expected nationally for eleven-year-olds.
- Pupils' personal development, their levels of responsibility and initiative and their relationships are excellent, nurtured by very effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The school knows its pupils very well because of its very good practice in monitoring, support and guidance.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Excellent leadership and management from the acting headteacher is supported by very effective subject co-ordinators and a committed governing body.
- The very effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are having a positive impact on standards;
- The curriculum is enhanced by a strong commitment to equal opportunities, by a very good programme of personal, social and health education and by very good links with nearby schools and colleges.

#### What could be improved

- Standards of writing throughout the school are not as high as they could be;
- The range of extra-curricular activities is limited;
- Neither the pond nor the play area for children under five has a secure gate and the surface of the under-fives' play area is uneven;
- Annual reports to parents do not provide enough information about their children's progress.

*The school's strengths considerably outweigh its weaknesses. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

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

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Improvement overall has been very good, particularly during the past year. Standards of attainment in the core subjects are broadly similar to

those at the time of the last inspection; however, during recent years, standards have fallen badly, particularly in maths and science. Inspection evidence is that they are now rapidly improving. Similarly, attitudes and standards of behaviour fell drastically after the last inspection and have now returned to their previous very good levels. Standards in information technology and religious education are now above average and the physical development of children under five has also improved. Teaching, standards and progress for the infants have improved and higher attainers in the juniors are now being challenged much more systematically and are achieving well. The quality of writing has improved for all pupils, though there is still further progress to be made. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has significantly improved and is now very good; there are frequent high quality opportunities for pupils to reflect and experience awe and wonder. Personal and social education is now timetabled and is of a very high quality. The quality of teaching is very much better. The raising of staff expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour has led to great improvements in pupils' self-esteem. The quality of leadership and management has improved considerably. The health and safety concerns identified during the last inspection have been fully dealt with, though this inspection has identified a small number of others.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	E	A	B
Mathematics	D	D	D	E
Science	D	D	E	E

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

Pupils' performance in English in the 1999 end of key stage tests was well above the national average and better than the average for schools with a similar catchment area. In mathematics, pupils' performance was below the national average and well below that for similar schools. In science, they performed well below both the national average and that for similar schools. Inspection judgements are that attainment in English, mathematics and science are in line with the national average for eleven-year-olds and that, while standards in writing are still slightly below average throughout the school, pupils' attainment is improving in response to the initiatives the school has established. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well overall in terms of their prior attainment. Standards in information technology and religious education are better than expected for eleven-year-olds. Standards in all other subjects are at expected levels. The disparity between test results and inspection findings are partly due to the small numbers involved but also relate to greatly improved provision and teaching during the past year. The school has set itself challenging but realistic targets for future attainment and is on target to meet them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all ages show a real eagerness to learn. They concentrate hard with genuine interest in what they are doing. Pupils listen very well, to teachers and to each other. Pupils are proud of their work and eager to show their teachers what they have achieved.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in and around school. Standards of behaviour had slipped and parents are particularly delighted with the way behaviour and relationships have improved in the past year. Behaviour in most lessons is of a very high standard.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships in the school are outstanding, both between pupils and adults and amongst pupils of all ages. There is real mutual

	respect. In classrooms, pupils work together happily and constructively. The playground is a joy. Pupils show an eagerness to take on responsibility. They show a mature and perceptive understanding of how their words and actions can cause hurt and distress to others.
Attendance	Attendance is improving and is close to the national average. The rise in attendance figures reflects the eagerness pupils now have to come to school and the confidence they and their parents have in the current staff.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7 – 11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very 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.*

Forty-eight per cent of teaching and learning is very good or better; in one in five lessons observed, the teaching was excellent. One hundred per cent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better. The teaching of English is very good, particularly for the juniors, and the skills of literacy are very well taught. The teaching of mathematics is very good with very effective development of numeracy skills. There is some excellent teaching of religious education and personal and social education. Teachers work effectively with pupils of all levels of ability. Teaching has particular strengths in the lively and stimulating teaching methods used, in very effective classroom management based on excellent relationships, and in the very high level of expectation at the top end of the juniors. These qualities lead to very high levels of pupils' learning and, in particular, to very high levels of effort and independence in the pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A broad and balanced curriculum that meets all statutory requirements is enhanced by very effective strategies for literacy and numeracy and a very carefully considered approach to equal opportunities, consistently implemented. There is a very effective programme of personal, social and health education. Relationships with the local high school and college are very constructive. The range of provision of extra-curricular activities is too limited.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for pupils' personal development, including rich opportunities for reflection on themselves and their behaviour and on the world of nature and its wonders. The clear and shared behaviour policy is consistently implemented, with very effective strategies for targeting individual problems of self-esteem and a very well-developed reward and sanction system. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to operate independently.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring, supportive atmosphere in which every child and pupil is valued as an individual. Pastoral care is the responsibility of class teachers and parents see the headteacher as particularly caring and interested in each child as an individual. As a result of the new assessment procedures and target setting, standards are rising throughout the school and most noticeably in Key Stage 2.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works well in partnership with parents, who have very positive views of the school. Parents contribute well to their children's learning and to the work of the school. Annual reports to parents do not provide clear enough information about children's progress.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the acting headteacher are excellent. She has a clear vision and a willingness to act firmly and appropriately and has implemented many positive changes in a short time. Enthusiastic and committed co-ordinators make a very effective contribution to standards and to the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The relatively new governing body operates effectively through its committees and through governors with specific responsibilities. It has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and operates well as a critical friend to the school. It effectively meets its statutory duties and plays an appropriate part in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors pupils' achievements, the quality of teaching and other provision very effectively and takes appropriate and speedy action. It is constantly looking to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and the school uses its resources well. Financial control and the day-to-day running of the school are very efficient. The principles of best value are effectively applied.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed and it has very good accommodation, markedly better than during the last inspection. Classroom support assistants operate effectively to support lower attainers and high calibre ancillary staff not only do their jobs extremely well but provide enormous value-added to the quality of life in the school. Learning resources are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They like the good behaviour of pupils;</li> <li>• They like the school's high expectations of pupils;</li> <li>• They like the good teaching;</li> <li>• The school is approachable;</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would like more activities outside of lessons;</li> <li>• They would like clearer information about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

Inspection judgements strongly concur with parents' positive views. They agree with the parents that there should be a wider range of activities outside of lessons. They also agree that annual reports to parents should provide clearer information about children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 The attainment of children entering the school is below average and by the age of five they reach below average levels in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development. Their personal and social development is at the level expected of this age group and children settle to work confidently. This helps them to achieve satisfactorily and they learn well, showing interest, concentration and increasing independence.
- 2 Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected of seven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science. The results of the 1999 national standardised tests suggest that attainment is well above average for reading, is close to the national average in writing and below average in mathematics. Over time, the school's results show wildly erratic variations compared to national trends. The small size of year groups makes standards appear to differ from year to year more dramatically than they actually do but these variations also reflect the inconsistent teaching pupils at this key stage received because of changes in staffing. Inspection evidence confirms that very few pupils attain higher than average levels by the age of seven.
- 3 By the end of Key Stage 2, overall standards are in line with those expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. Results in the 1999 national standardised tests for eleven-year-olds indicate well above average attainment in English, below average attainment in mathematics and well below average attainment in science. Compared to similar schools, pupils' test performance is above average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Pupils' performance over the past few years indicates that standards in English are close to the national average and are below average in both mathematics and science. This broad picture, however, is misleading. Although the trend in results over time broadly follows the national trend, closer examination of several years' results suggests fluctuations in the standards attained in any one year group. Standards in mathematics and science declined during the recent period of instability between 1997 and 1999. Although standards appear to be similar to those reported in the last inspection, in fact they have improved quite dramatically this year and have now begun to climb to their former levels. Pupils now achieve very well and higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 are enabled to fulfil their potential in all three subjects. The very good quality of teaching enables pupils to learn efficiently and effectively and the school is taking steps to address specific weaknesses such as those in writing.
- 4 The national literacy strategy is used very well to provide a clear framework for teaching and learning. This assists inexperienced teachers who are also well supported by the excellent leadership for this subject. In order to achieve greater consistency of attainment, individuals are carefully targeted and given extra support so that they can fulfil their potential. Additional literacy support for groups of pupils is being phased out for a more intensive individual learning programme. Speaking and listening is promoted very well through the provision of opportunities to speak to large and small groups. This boosts pupils' confidence and teaches them to listen carefully. Writing, however, is less systematically taught throughout the school and so overall standards are slightly weaker than in reading and speaking and listening. Mathematics

is similarly very well led. The co-ordinator introduced an additional daily mathematics session in order to raise pupils' ability to calculate quickly and accurately. Pupils are challenged to beat their own personal targets as well as broader targets for pupils of similar attainment levels. This, combined with very good implementation of the national numeracy strategy, is having a marked impact on standards throughout the school. Additional support is given to pupils and successfully raises the standard of average attaining pupils. In science, a sensible policy and a very good scheme of work, combined with teachers' competent subject knowledge, give a sound basis to the very good teaching pupils receive.

- 5 Standards in information technology are above average overall. Pupils learn a great deal and from a below average attainment on entry to the school attain average standards by the age of seven and above average standards by the time they leave school. The good quality resources are accessible and used extensively in the school's computer suite. Pupils are trusted to use the computers in their free time and so they can pursue their interest independently. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons in the classroom make techniques explicit and by simplifying procedures through role-play enable lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs to attain at least average standards. The full range of the National Curriculum is taught and so pupils learn how to control, for example, the phases of traffic lights, or to add a voice commentary to cartoons.
- 6 The use of literacy, numeracy and information technology in other curriculum subjects ensures that they are truly central to pupils' education and contribute to raising standards overall. Pupils are encouraged to find out information for themselves and to give valid reasons for their answers. They use the Internet frequently to assist them with work in geography and history, for example. Teaching skilfully blends subjects so, for example, information gleaned from the Internet about what animals eat is used to develop pupils' reading and comprehension skills. Similarly, in mathematics, information technology provides information that pupils then use to solve mathematical problems using negative numbers, for example, when calculating the temperature of planets.
- 7 Pupils' attainment in religious education is above average overall. Frequent opportunities to reflect and discuss enable pupils to have a much wider appreciation of the importance of different religions and other faiths. They are able, for example, to make observations about the construction of a mosque, pointing out that because of the lack of windows the people are central and this enables them to focus on prayer. Their understanding is wide-ranging as in their reflections that wars ensue when people do not try to understand each other's faiths, citing Bosnia and World War 2 as examples. This reflects the very good teaching they receive.
- 8 Pupils attain average standards in all other subjects. Standards are higher in Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, pupils' achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Many pupils began Year 2 with limited literacy and numeracy skills because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching is now good and has enabled pupils to learn a great deal in a very short time. Overall, pupils achieve well, particularly higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. A measure of their success is the number of older pupils who no longer need individual support to enable them to attain standards that are close to the national average.

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

- 9 Pupils of all ages show a real eagerness to learn. They concentrate hard with genuine interest in what they are doing and often make perceptive comments. For example, when discussing the meaning of hygiene in design and technology, a Year 1 pupil interjects; "That's what you've got Mums and Dads for - to look after you". Pupils listen very well, to teachers and to each other. In structured discussions in Years 3 and 4, everyone understands that the person holding the key ring has the right to speak and no one else at that moment. In Year 2 numeracy, pupils love pouring coloured water when learning to measure capacity and are able to do so sensibly with few spills. Pupils are proud of their work and eager to show their teachers what they have achieved.
- 10 Pupils behave very well in and around school. Standards of behaviour had slipped and parents are particularly delighted with the way behaviour and relationships have improved in the past year. Behaviour in most lessons is of a very high standard. Very occasionally, the youngest children forget to put up their hands before calling out an answer and the inattention of some older boys results in slower learning for them during the final whole class session in literacy hours. Pupils are polite to all adults and usually to each other. Staff really trust pupils, allowing them, for example, to access computers and the photocopying machine without direct supervision. They all know and understand the school rules (the 'promise') and just how they are expected to behave. There are no exclusions.
- 11 Pupils show an eagerness to take on responsibility. Younger pupils tidy up when asked to and children who are under the age of five are successfully encouraged to change for physical education. Older pupils are very good at taking initiatives. Year 5 and 6 pupils have set up a school newspaper and ensure that they have contributions from lower down the school as well as from older pupils. Year 6 pupils have written to governors about school uniform. An outstanding example of how well the pupils conduct themselves is the assembly given by Years 5 and 6. This developed from personal and social education lessons. The pupils are able to act out episodes at school of which they are less than proud, inviting the rest of the school to tell them which elements of the school promise had been broken and to consider the feelings of those involved. Pupils show a mature and perceptive understanding of how their words and actions might cause hurt and distress to others. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are also able to use structured discussions to explore their feelings and how they can support each other.
- 12 Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to use their independence and initiative equally with other pupils. Pupils who formerly had behavioural or other special educational needs are given particular responsibilities and they take their duties very seriously.
- 13 Relationships in the school are outstanding, both between pupils and adults and amongst pupils of all ages. There is real mutual respect. In Years 5 and 6, the atmosphere in the classroom is relaxed and often humorous with the result that the pupils adore their teacher and work very hard to please her. In the dining room, the recently reintroduced 'family service' has created a sociable, friendly time with older pupils helping younger children under sympathetic and unobtrusive adult supervision. In classrooms, pupils work together happily and constructively. The playground is a joy. Pupils play in mixed age groups and boys and girls share football and netball.

Midday supervisors enthusiastically engage in games and the school secretary and caretaker also join in the fun. Pupils are learning 'old fashioned' games such as cat's cradle and how to use a whip and top. These all contribute to the school's happy family atmosphere.

- 14 Attendance is improving and is close to the national average. The rise in attendance figures reflects the eagerness pupils now have to come to school and the confidence they and their parents have in the current staff. As a small school, attendance figures are affected markedly by illness and holidays amongst very few pupils. Most pupils are punctual. Parents understand their responsibility to inform school of reasons for absence and usually do so promptly. The statutory requirements for the recording and reporting of absence are met.

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

- 15 Pupils are very well taught. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Over 80 per cent of the teaching is good or better. It is very good or better in 48 per cent of lessons and excellent in one in every five lessons. It is satisfactory in the remaining 20 per cent and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The quality of teaching and learning is good for children under the age of five and for pupils up to the age of seven. The teaching of older pupils is very good and excellent for the oldest pupils in the school. Literacy, numeracy, science, information technology and religious education are very well taught and enable pupils to attain high standards in relation to their level of attainment. The quality of teaching of pupils' personal and social development is very good and forms a distinctive part of their overall education.
- 16 The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory overall. There were weaknesses in the teaching of children under the age of five and a quarter of their lessons were unsatisfactory. Teaching at Key Stage 1 had considerable weaknesses and overall 20 per cent of lessons at both key stages were unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, the teaching staff has changed. A number of teachers have stayed for only a short while and the present staff provide a new stability for the school. This contributes to the overall very good quality of teaching as teachers now work and plan together as a team. Co-ordinators monitor the teaching of their subjects and so there is a consistency in delivery across the school. The school is aware that greater consistency is required in the teaching of early writing skills and in ensuring consistency in presentation of older pupils' written work. The teaching of children under the age of five is now properly planned for and gives children a very good start to their learning. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used very effectively and contribute very well to the high standards of teaching and learning.
- 17 In the last inspection, teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs was satisfactory overall. The very good quality of support these pupils receive is now much more consistent and consequently they learn as well as others. Pupils receive additional specialist support from well-trained staff who clearly enjoy helping pupils to learn. In one lesson, for example, pupils' interest in football teams was utilised very well to help pupils to read words with more than two syllables accurately. The pupils were enthusiastic about their lesson and the pace of learning kept them absorbed in their tasks.
- 18 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall for children under the age of five. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting activities. They have

appropriate expectations of children of this age and manage children very well so that learning is both productive and enjoyable. Within literacy and numeracy lessons, work is well planned for children to begin to learn how to read and write. Sometimes, however, children are kept seated on the carpet for too long, listening to support staff before starting activities, and consequently miss out on some of the planned practical activities that would help them to learn to form their letters accurately. They benefit from daily physical activities both in the hall and in the outside play area and learn much new vocabulary through number rhymes and games. Teachers help children to feel secure whilst at the same time developing their confidence to explore. There is insufficient targeting of and support for children in controlling their pencils and brushes in order to develop their confidence in writing.

- 19 The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and enable pupils to learn well. They set challenging standards, sometimes over-challenging for some pupils so that they are faced with tasks that they do not have the basic skills to deal with. Planning is good and time is used well. Some of the activities are imaginatively planned and a lively pace ensures a good rate of learning. A notable feature of teaching at this key stage is the enjoyment experienced by both teachers and pupils. In a mathematics lesson, for example, teachers were as eager as the pupils to see if their predictions were correct. Group activities are well planned and matched to pupils' capabilities. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' reading and writing skills in the early parts of the literacy hour. Much of this is, however, due to the teachers' inexperience. Targets are suitably different for different attainment levels within the class and marking gives a very clear indication of which parts of pupils' learning are secure and which need further development.
- 20 The quality of teaching and learning is very good at Key Stage 2 and pupils acquire skills and knowledge at an excellent rate. In the most successful lessons, because of the highly challenging work, pupils have to make supreme intellectual and creative effort. Since much of this quality of teaching is new to them, they thrive on the challenges and so learn exceedingly quickly and insatiably. The teaching of basic skills is very good at this key stage and teaching methods are highly effective in enabling pupils to learn. Additional mathematics sessions supplement the national numeracy strategy and motivate pupils to beat their own targets for calculating quickly and accurately. Additional intensive short-term literacy support enables lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs to learn at a similar rate to others. The development of writing skills is less evenly taught in each class. In excellent lessons, very clear exposition, confident subject knowledge and very good varying of pace to obtain instant responses all contribute to the atmosphere of concentration and purposeful effort. Teachers throughout the school use praise well. In excellent lessons, it is used extremely skilfully to move pupils to a deeper understanding. Excellent class management and control based on excellent relationships and effective use of humour combine with stringent time targets to maintain a highly effective rate of learning in these lessons.

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

- 21 The school provides a good curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. Subjects are well organised and based on appropriate policies and schemes of work. In particular, the national guidelines for literacy and numeracy are very effectively implemented. This broad and balanced curriculum, that includes all subjects of the

National Curriculum and religious education, is very effectively supported by a programme of personal, social and health education that includes sex education and drugs awareness. The delivery of the curriculum, particularly for older pupils, has a strong focus on developing pupils' independence and initiative and this leads to high levels of pupil's confidence. There are many productive links between subjects. In particular, the plan to integrate information technology more fully with other subjects is already operating effectively, in particular in the use of CD-ROMs and the Internet for finding information. The curriculum for physical education and information technology has considerably improved since the last inspection.

- 22 The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is well matched to their capabilities to develop their learning of basic skills. This enables them to participate equally in lessons such as information technology. The provision for these pupils is very good and, as a measure of its effectiveness, by the time pupils are in Year 6, many achieve standards that are close to the national average. All requirements of the Code of Practice are met and good quality individual programmes of work are written. These are easy to follow and practical to implement so that much teaching of pupils with special educational needs can take place alongside other pupils in the class. Learning support assistants are very well trained and effective. In addition, the school secretary, dinner supervisors and caretaker have received training to teach individuals in additional literacy sessions. This provides an exceptionally cohesive system within the school and an integrated curriculum that spans both work and play.
- 23 The school has very good links with its partners in education. The playgroup is housed in what is also the dining room. The nursery nurse is currently working with the two parents who run the playgroup to develop curriculum links and share ideas and practice. Relationships with the main receiving high school are very good. Pupils are able to enjoy science, design and technology and information technology lessons on visits to the school. They also use sports facilities at the high school, which extends the range of physical education they experience. A new scheme has recently been introduced in the core subjects whereby pupils start work on certain themes whilst still at primary school and these will be continued at their chosen high schools. This is to avoid the duplication and lost time that sometimes occurs on transfer. The school also works closely with the further education college, welcoming student nursery nurses into Key Stage 1. Links with the community enhance the curriculum well. The school has good relationships with the church and the vicar visits regularly. Other visitors stimulate the pupils to think along fresh lines; a visiting shaman, for example, challenged the pupils' understanding of belief and tolerance. Residential and other visits enhance the pupils' learning in, for example, geography and history. A Millennium production with other schools in the cluster stimulated learning in the arts. Because of the many changes of staff, the school has not developed a wide range of activities outside of school time and, while parents and ancillary staff provide valuable experiences through a craft club and football and netball clubs after school, the range of provision is too limited.
- 24 Children under the age of five are taught in a class with five, six and seven year olds by two teachers and an experienced classroom assistant. They work to an appropriate curriculum and, through often thoughtful grouping, share the benefits of working with older pupils of similar attainment levels. However, at times this leads to some children being introduced to learning that finds their basic skills in, say, letter recognition and formation too under-developed and the work becomes daunting rather than challenging. A well thought out system for planning has recently been introduced; this ensures coverage of the National Curriculum requirements and, in medium-term

planning, identifies clear objectives and assessment opportunities. Day-to-day planning is generally good and makes effective use of the teachers' assessments to cater for the wide range of attainment in the mixed age classes. The teachers' careful approach means that the policy for equality of opportunity is generally very well implemented.

- 25 When she first arrived, the acting headteacher turned her attention to raising pupils' self-esteem and improving their attitudes and behaviour. The resulting changes and initiatives have made a great improvement to the ethos of the school, as parents, governors and local education authority staff confirm. For example, the programme of personal and social education makes a superb contribution to pupils' personal development. In times set aside for structured discussion in Years 3 and 4, pupils explore their feelings and how they can help each other. They are able to admit their shortcomings in front of the whole class. In Years 5 and 6, pupils act out, for the rest of the school and visiting parents, episodes when they have been unpleasant to each other and rude to teachers. They have the maturity to ask the rest of the school to comment upon their conduct.
- 26 Other provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils has been equally effective. In particular, the consistently high expectation of pupils to take on responsibility and to use their initiative has produced a community whose maturity and confident friendliness to visitors is marked. After the criticism of the quality of provision for spiritual development in the last inspection, the school has successfully sought to build in frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect on their life, their feelings and the world about them. Often very high quality school assemblies and the use of the school's environment in science lessons, for example, engage pupils in thinking about their lives and the beauty of their surroundings. Pupils participate in the school prayer with commitment. Constant encouragement to be open-minded about other people's ideas enhances pupils' appreciation of others' beliefs and life-styles. A striking and thought-provoking display in the hall promotes thought and respect for others' beliefs and ideas as well as celebrating pupils' own shared efforts.
- 27 Pupils' moral development is very strongly fostered by the consistent application of the school's behaviour policy and the pupils' own open commitment to the School Promise; pupils often spontaneously referred to the School Promise in discussing behaviour and attitudes. The excellent creative supervision in the playground encourages caring and sharing in a positive and meaningful series of enjoyable activities. Adults present an excellent example of social and moral behaviour in their relationships with each other and with the pupils. Good work and behaviour both in school and outside are celebrated – the 'Let's Celebrate' display is full of certificates and trophies won by pupils in a variety of activities. In addition, the school has developed a most effective system of target setting for behaviour as well as for academic achievements and the pupils' progress towards their targets are on the target board for all to see. The new lunchtime arrangements encourage older pupils to help younger pupils and lead to comfortable social mixing of all age groups. Visits to a variety of museums, places of work and a Sikh Temple, as well as a residential visit to an outdoor pursuit centre, enhance social development and often make a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development.

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

- 28 The school provides a caring, supportive atmosphere in which every child and pupil is valued as an individual. Governors and the caretaker maintain the school to high



standards and carried out a full health and safety check a few months ago. The issues raised have mostly been addressed. However, some significant concerns remain. Access to the pond area is still open and the gate to the under-fives' play area is insecure. Both of these are potentially hazardous. The under-fives' play area has not been resurfaced to the high standard of the main playground. It is very uneven and could cause young children to trip. Child protection procedures are secure and a number of ancillary staff have attended training voluntarily. The headteacher plans to review and formalise policy. First aid is administered with sensitivity and care and a good number of staff hold a first aid qualification. Very good records are kept. The needs of children with specific medical and educational conditions are understood and met. Pupils with special educational needs are identified effectively by the class teacher and assessed. They have good quality programmes of work written for them. Along with other pupils, they have individual targets in literacy and numeracy. Their progress is assessed and recorded regularly and targets revised accordingly. There is very good liaison with all other professionals involved with the pupils.

- 29 Teaching and non-teaching staff know all the children very well and have a good awareness of their family backgrounds. Pastoral care is the responsibility of class teachers and parents see the headteacher as particularly caring and interested in each child as an individual. Although as yet there are no on-going personal records, staff use their knowledge sensitively to ensure that all children receive the support and guidance they need. The process of getting to know children starts before they join the school. The nursery nurse makes a home visit so that she can meet children and parents in the environment where they feel most comfortable. The majority of children transfer from the playgroup and they start part time, joining the whole school for lunch and then spending the afternoon with the reception class so that they become familiar with the school and routines. Year 6 pupils have several opportunities to visit the high school and to experience a very large school. Sensitive consideration is given to the needs of pupils coming from a small school so that they do not feel isolated and alone.
- 30 Attendance at the school is improving. Registers are checked for patterns of absence or poor punctuality. Regular and prompt attendance is one of the criteria for the 'star of the week' but members of staff are asked to interpret this in the light of individual circumstances. If parents do not inform school as to why their child is absent, the secretary checks on the first day.
- 31 When the acting headteacher came to the school a year ago, behaviour was a major cause for concern to her and to the parents. Everyone involved in the school has worked together to develop a code of discipline called the 'school promise', which is easily understood and achievable. Rewards and sanctions were introduced and children throughout the school have quickly learnt how they are expected to behave. The result is a happy, calm atmosphere in which everyone is valued and feels valued and where the wish and will to achieve is accepted as the norm.
- 32 Assessment of pupils' academic progress is an integral part of all the priorities of the school development plan. Teachers have worked hard to compare pupils' work with national expectations and the targets set by the governors in conjunction with the local education authority. As a result, they have introduced individual and group targets that have been effective in raising teachers', pupils' and parents' expectations of what children can achieve. Parents are informed of the targets. Pupils who achieve their targets are awarded certificates, those who do not are given different targets so that they do not lose heart. Some pupils have made very significant individual progress in

the past year. For example, one parent described herself as being thrilled with the dramatic improvement her child has shown in her work and her attitudes.

- 33 The marking system is clear and can be understood by children and pupils throughout the school because the symbols and explanations are very simple. Marking is effective in helping pupils to know how well they are doing and how they can improve. Individual and group assessment is used well by teachers in their forward planning and within lessons. As a result of the new assessment procedures and target setting, standards are rising throughout the school and most noticeably in Key Stage 2.

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

- 34 Parents are very supportive of the acting headteacher, her staff and the improvements they have seen in the past year. Parents at the meeting could not speak highly enough of the dramatic changes they have seen in standards of behaviour and work. Some parents actually felt that their children had previously been marking time and that they have now made great strides forward.
- 35 The quality and quantity of information parents receive is satisfactory. The current prospectus is a useful document that outlines all that parents need to know but is rather thin on detail about the curriculum. The governors' annual report to parents gives an adequate summary of the previous year's work. Parents are happy that regular newsletters keep them informed about what is going on. They appreciate the school newspaper, which includes school news contributed by pupils throughout the school. Parents are informed of their children's literacy and numeracy targets. They are invited to contribute to reading records. Reports to parents for last year are just adequate and the acting headteacher already has plans to improve the quality and content this summer. At the moment, comments and targets are rather general. There is no indication of how children are actually doing against national curriculum levels and no self-assessment by pupils themselves. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress.
- 36 The majority of parents find the head teacher and all the staff easy to talk to and this is a major change in the past year. Formal reporting evenings are held each term but parents are confident that if they come in to school to discuss a concern or problem, they will be listened to and the difficulty resolved. Parents are consulted about changes such as the timing of the school day and the wording of the home/school agreement. As part of the school development plan, the headteacher and governors have been committed to involving parents in improving pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. An information technology workshop for parents has been very well received and some pupils attend with their parents. Many parents attended evenings designed to inform them about the literacy and numeracy hours.
- 37 Parents help in school and with extra curricular activities, doing whatever is required from supporting pupils using computers to laminating resources. The Friends of Gunness and Burringham is a small group of committed parents who put on social and fund raising events which result in significant amount of much appreciated extra money for the school.

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

- 38 The quality of leadership and management of the acting headteacher is excellent and has already led to rapid improvements in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and academic

standards and in the school's partnership with parents. Having very effectively analysed the situation, she showed a clear vision and a willingness to act firmly and appropriately. Effectively supported by the local education authority, the governing body and her team of subject co-ordinators, she has produced an excellent development plan that clearly identifies appropriate priorities and the actions needed to achieve them. Subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and committed even where their subjects are not priorities and most monitor achievement and planning in their subjects. They make an effective contribution to standards and to the quality of provision.

- 39 The relatively new governing body operates effectively through its committees and through governors with specific responsibilities. It is well led by a knowledgeable chair and is beginning to draw on the skills and experience of its members to sharpen its focus. Consequently, it has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and operates well, raising issues when necessary and taking great interest in pastoral issues. Governors are well aware of the problems caused by the lack of a stable staff and are doing their best to make temporary contracts permanent. The governing body effectively meets its statutory duties and plays an appropriate part in shaping the direction of the school. Individual governors take their responsibilities seriously and have monitored the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and discussed their observations with teachers.
- 40 The school monitors pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching and other provision very effectively and takes appropriate and speedy action as a result. Individual target setting is very well developed for all pupils and the large majority make significant progress as a result. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management of special educational needs. The high expectations of pupils' behaviour and progress give pupils the confidence and will to succeed. The provision is very well organised so that pupils receive the benefit of individually planned work as well as learning alongside other pupils.
- 41 The school gets the best out of its staff in spite of the fact that a high proportion are on temporary contracts. There are very good systems for the induction of newly qualified teachers and effective procedures for staff development (both teaching and non-teaching staff). Teachers therefore are well informed about the subjects they teach and lead. In addition, very high quality supervisory and administrative staff not only do their jobs extremely well but provide excellent support for pupils in the playground, in extra-curricular activities such as netball, and in one to one literacy support that greatly benefits the attainment and progress of lower attaining pupils. The school, when its staffing is more settled, will have very good potential for the training of new teachers.
- 42 The school makes good use of its resources and applies the principles of best value effectively, evaluating spending decisions carefully against pupils' progress and comparing the cost of different strategies with prudence. The funding for pupils with special educational needs is used effectively to provide additional support that complements the very high quality provision for these pupils by their class teachers. Financial planning effectively supports the school's priorities; it is informed by accurate up-to-date financial statements. The school makes effective use of new technology to support financial control, pupil data and the very efficient day-to-day running of the school. Use of the Internet and e-mail is also becoming a constructive feature of the pupils' curriculum.

- 43 The school makes effective use of its good staffing levels and it has very good accommodation, which is used efficiently. The accommodation is markedly better than during the last inspection and is used effectively to raise pupils' standards of work. The computer suite, for example, is extensively used by pupils in lesson time and also during breaks and lunchtimes. The hall is used for a variety of purposes but in particular has had a noticeable impact on pupils' physical development. Both these areas were criticised in the last inspection. Learning resources for information technology are good and they are adequate for other subjects. Resources are accessibly stored and this enhances pupils' independence in such activities as exchanging reading books.

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

- 44 In order to further improve standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- ❖ Improve the quality of pupils' writing by:
  - Organising the teaching of infant pupils so as to ensure their more secure and systematic learning of basic writing skills; (*paragraphs*)
  - Focusing in the junior classes more clearly on the consistency of high quality presentation of written work and ensuring greater attention to sentence structure, grammar and punctuation, without losing the lively range of work now produced. (*paragraphs*)

Further issues to be considered are:

- ❖ Attend to the outstanding health and safety issues by:
  - Providing a secure gate to the pond;
  - Providing a secure gate to the under-fives' play area;
  - Evening out the surface of the under-fives' play area to the standard of the main playground. (*paragraphs*)
- ❖ Improve the quality of the annual reports to parents to provide parents more effectively with information about their children's progress. (*paragraphs*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
20%	28%	32%	20%	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	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	73
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y2 – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	15

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
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	5	5	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	3	5
	Girls	5	5	4
	Total	10	8	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (72)	80 (100)	90 (90)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	10	9	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (73)	90 (91)	100 (55)
	National	82 (80)	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	9	5	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	6	7
	Girls	5	2	4
	Total	13	8	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (50)	57 (50)	79 (66)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	6	7
	Girls	5	2	4
	Total	13	8	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (50)	57 (50)	79 (66)
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (69)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	60
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	24

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998 - 99
	£
Total income	176563
Total expenditure	181195
Expenditure per pupil	2553
Balance brought forward from previous year	15407
Balance carried forward to next year	10775

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	73
Number of questionnaires returned	24

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	25	62	12		
My child is making good progress in school.	42	38	21		
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	38			4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	62	8		
The teaching is good.	50	42			8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	38	12	12	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	29	4	4	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33			
The school works closely with parents.	42	38	17	4	
The school is well led and managed.	58	21			4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	38	4	12	
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	21	12	25	8



## **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**

- 45 Children under the age of five are taught in a Key Stage 1 class alongside five, six and seven-year-old pupils. The teaching is well organised by two teachers and a classroom support assistant, so children receive teaching appropriate to their needs. Children enter full-time schooling in the September of the year in which they are five. The school has no nursery but makes good provision for four-year-old children who attend part-time for one or two terms depending on their age. The attainment of children entering the school is below average in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. Their personal and social development is at the level expected of this age group. They are quite confident and settle into school readily.
- 46 The provision for children under the age of five has improved considerably since the last inspection. The planning and class organisation has improved and children no longer under-achieve. Pupils have daily opportunities for physical exercise and have times each day when they can choose their own activities. Consequently, they learn well and become increasingly independent.
- 47 In personal and social development, five-year-old children attain standards that are at expected levels for their age. They happily take off their cardigans and jumpers and get changed quite quickly for their physical education lessons. Older pupils help them to change their shoes. Children learn to co-operate and at playtimes push each other round on large wheeled toys, enjoying each other's company. They drink their milk sensibly and take turns to give out the cartons and straws. Children learn to follow instructions and to put up their hand to answer a question. They show good levels of concentration when playing together in the class travel shop. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' planning is thorough and provides suitable activities with clear objectives for learning to develop children's social skills. The classroom is attractively organised into different play areas to encourage children to play and to discover for themselves.
- 48 In language and literacy, five-year-old children attain standards that are below those expected of this age overall. They achieve satisfactorily in developing speaking, listening and reading skills; development in writing is slower. Many children speak in phrases rather than sentences and their vocabulary is quite limited for their age. Most children know that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. They enjoy turning the pages, following the story told in pictures. They like reading with an older pupil and listen intently to stories. Most children begin to copy some words though the size and shape of their letters is often uncontrolled. Higher attaining children begin to write words according to sounds but require quite a lot of support from the teacher to write independently. Activities such as the travel shop encourage children to explore writing through play. Two children 'wrote' postcards describing their holiday with Barnaby Bear and could read their scribbled marks clearly. Most children can write their first name using capital letters appropriately. The quality of teaching is good. The work is well planned and clearly indicates to support staff the areas to be focussed on whilst other pupils in the rest of the class continue with the literacy hour. Sometimes, however, children are kept seated on the carpet for too long before starting these activities and consequently they become restless. Opportunities are

missed to involve children in writing, using the whiteboard, for example, and occasionally children spend too much time listening rather than doing.

- 49 In mathematics, five-year-old children attain standards that are below those expected of this age group. They learn at a satisfactory rate and enjoy learning number rhymes and songs. Traditional number games lead children to understand mathematical language such as 'up', 'over', 'under', 'in' and 'out' as they move appropriately while chanting the rhymes. With older reception pupils, children learn to count backwards from 100 in tens though some are a little muddled by the end. Most children work with numbers up to five, some with numbers to ten and very few with numbers to twenty. In an activity session with support staff, children discover how to make themselves longer and shorter by stretching and curling up. The benefit of this is seen in slightly older children's work as they have a clear grasp of 'smaller' and 'bigger'. The teaching is good overall and planning clearly sets high expectations for this age group. Activities are well thought out to interest this age group and to develop their understanding of mathematics. Children who have a firmer grasp of number work with slightly older pupils. Sometimes, support teachers do not give enough assistance to children to help them to form their numbers neatly and accurately. Valuable learning time is lost when children do not build long and short lines as planned because they have listened for too long.
- 50 In knowledge and understanding of the world, five-year-old children attain standards that are below those expected of this age overall. They are fascinated to learn about their world. Every morning, they are involved in deciding what day of the week it is – most are unsure as they find it hard to remember the sequence. They comment on the weather, observing that it is 'white' today. The teacher carefully explains about clouds and they listen with solemn concentration. With support staff, children learn about creatures at the seaside. They know that there is the sea and 'fishes' and, when asked about tiny seaside creatures, one comments that a 'mouse is very small'. Children make good suggestions as to what to take on a picnic, offering eggs, fish fingers and chocolate spread as possibilities. The teaching is good and activities are well chosen. Pupils choose the order in which they complete tasks and so learn to make confident and independent decisions. They learn a great deal through discussion with adults whilst they busy themselves with their tasks. Most children, however, ask few questions, accepting and absorbing.
- 51 In creative development children attain standards that are below those expected of their age. Although they have many opportunities for creative work, they receive minimal support to help them mix colours, for example, or to use wax crayons more effectively. Consequently, they do not learn as much as they should. The finished results are all of a similar standard. Children concentrate well. They remember songs and rhymes and begin to sing quite tunefully. Children's self-portraits are very immature as limbs and sometimes bodies are omitted. Many pupils scribble rather than colour in. The quality of teaching is good overall and planned activities cover an appropriate range of learning for this age group. Children play busily and happily and concentrate for long periods of time to produce underwater pictures. The children need more assistance to improve their control of brushes and crayons.
- 52 Although in physical development children attain standards that are generally below those expected of this age group, they rapidly grow in confidence. They do physical activities in the hall each day and so soon grow accustomed to moving in large spaces. They enjoy copying older pupils to try to spin a hoop on their hips. Some manage this very well as they wriggle their bodies to try to maintain the spin. Children can run on

the spot and most can hop. Some show good control of their arms as they perform swimming movements in the air. Just over half stand on tiptoes to stretch up tall and a similar number tuck their heads in to make themselves very small rather than just lying face down. Children become confident bike riders. Children begin to manipulate small construction toys. Some work with good concentration on the computer to 'dress teddy for his holiday' and manipulate shapes with ease. Children's pencil control is less secure and this affects their capacity to write letters and numbers and to colour in pictures, staying within the lines. The teaching is good and teachers and support staff clearly enjoy joining in with the children. This adds a delightful sense of fun to lessons. The activities are well planned and well chosen to extend pupils' physical capacity. Teachers make children feel secure whilst at the same time developing their confidence to explore space and movement.

- 53 Children under the age of five are given a good range of opportunities to learn new skills. The classroom is well organised to allow children to play and to work independently. Teachers understand the needs of this age group very well and many of the activities are inventively designed to interest small children. Lower attaining pupils require more assistance in order to develop their control of pencils and paintbrushes. Higher attaining children sometimes miss out on basic areas of learning because it is assumed they have moved beyond that stage. As a result, pupils' writing does not develop quite as well as other skills.

## **ENGLISH**

- 54 By the time pupils leave the school, their overall attainment in English is in line with that expected nationally, though their standard of writing is less well developed.
- 55 Standards by the age of seven are in line with those expected of seven-year-olds. The results of the 1999 national standardised tests suggest that attainment was well above average in reading and close to the national average in writing. Inspection evidence shows that very few pupils attain higher than average levels by the age of seven in either reading or writing. The discrepancy between test results and inspection judgements is partly caused by differences between year groups brought about by the very small pupil numbers. It also reflects the inconsistent teaching pupils at this key stage received because of changes in staffing. Standards in speaking and listening are at expected levels for seven-year-olds and pupils answer the teachers' questions clearly and appropriately. They listen well to instructions and to stories and are beginning to listen to each other with respect. Their reading is at expected levels, though the higher attaining pupils do not read aloud at above average levels. Writing levels for many are as expected for seven-year-olds but very few pieces of writing indicate higher levels than this and a significant minority struggle to make their handwriting clear and fluent or to write at any length. Spelling and punctuation are generally appropriate and most pupils are being taught the basic skills of writing systematically and are making progress from a below average base. The organisation of the youngest mixed age class, however, sometime leads to pupils working with an older group before their grasp of basic skills is well enough developed. Consequently, gaps in their knowledge and understanding lead to written work that is not as good as it could be.
- 56 By the age of eleven, overall standards are in line with those expected nationally. Results in the 1999 national standardised tests for eleven-year-olds indicate well above average attainment in English. Compared to similar schools, pupils' performance is above average. Pupils' performance over the past few years matches

the inspection judgement, indicating that standards in English are close to the national average. The difference between the 1999 test results and inspection judgements is largely to do with the variation in prior attainment within the very small groups of pupils that take the tests each year. This year's pupils are achieving well and both higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs are doing themselves justice, even in writing, which the school recognises is a weaker area and which it is taking steps to improve. Standards have improved since the last inspection in line with national trends.

- 57 Teachers provide many rich opportunities for pupils to speak to the class or to the whole school and this has a very positive effect on their standards of speaking. The very high expectations that teachers have in most lessons ensure also that pupils' listening skills are well developed. Overall, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above that expected for eleven-year-olds and higher attainers are able to describe events and incidents clearly and with sensitivity to an audience of pupils, teachers and parents with great confidence and aplomb. The school photographer, a Year 6 pupil, is able to instruct adults confidently in order to obtain a pleasing picture: 'Please stand there like that – and that cup will have to go!' Pupils read confidently, with many reading at levels above those expected for their age. They are beginning to look at the implications of the book they are reading and show an often sensitive understanding of characters' feelings. They use a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words and use dictionaries and thesauruses readily and with confidence, not only in English lessons but also in other lessons, such as science. While the writing skills of many do not match the standards seen in their speaking and reading, pupils write for a variety of audiences and purposes, using appropriate language and, often, an understanding of the needs of the audience. Several pupils produce writing of real flair, such as in a frightening poem about what lurks in a cupboard, where the choice of words and the structure of the poem most effectively achieves the desired effect. Technical skills in sentence structure, spelling and punctuation are more variable, even for the higher attainers; because of this inconsistency, even within the work of the more able pupils, overall attainment in writing is not as good as it could be. However, progress has been made in correcting the weakness in writing identified in the last inspection. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well in English, including higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs.
- 58 The quality of teaching and learning is very good, particularly for the oldest pupils, where teaching is sometimes excellent. In the best lessons, pupils respond to the teacher's very high level of expectations by listening carefully, concentrating very hard and behaving very well indeed. They are motivated when the teacher treats them like writing professionals and take on responsibility for suggesting solutions. Because of the supportive atmosphere created and because they are constantly urged to look for alternative views, pupils are willing to discuss ideas and feelings in an open, honest and productive way that often leads to very effective learning. The teacher's own enthusiasm, enjoyment and sense of humour leads to the pupils enjoying the book, even when it is not an easy one to access. At the same time, the teacher develops the pupils' skills in identifying the key points of the passage and in finding the book's significant features. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory overall, the grouping of pupils sometimes results in younger pupils being given work that they do not have the basic skills to cope with and they struggle. In another lesson with older pupils, the pace of learning dropped for a while when a group of boys lost attention because they were asked to do something that embarrassed them.

- 59 The National Literacy Strategy is used very well to provide a clear framework for teaching and learning. This assists inexperienced teachers who are also well supported by the excellent leadership in this subject. In order to achieve greater consistency of attainment, individuals are carefully assessed and targeted and given extra support so they can fulfil their potential. Additional literacy support is being phased out for a more intensive individual learning programme. This one-to-one support is already enabling lower attainers to make good progress. Speaking and listening is promoted very well through the provision of opportunities across the curriculum and elsewhere in the life of the school to speak to large and small groups. This boosts pupils' confidence and teaches them to listen carefully. Writing, however, is less systematically taught throughout the school and so overall standards are slightly weaker than in reading and speaking and listening. However, good opportunities are taken for writing and research in other areas of the curriculum such as history, science and religious education. Information technology is used effectively to support reading and writing and pupils have well developed skills in retrieving information from books, from CD-ROMs and from the Internet.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 60 Overall standards are in line with those expected nationally by the time pupils leave the school at eleven. Results in the 1999 national standardised tests for eleven-year-olds indicated below average attainment and well below average attainment in comparison with similar schools. Pupils' performance over the past few years has also indicated below average attainment with fluctuations in the standards attained in any one year group. This is partly attributable to the small size of groups but also highlights the fact that standards in mathematics declined during the recent period of instability between 1997 and 1999. Although standards appear to be similar to those reported in the last inspection, in fact they have improved quite dramatically this year and have now begun to climb to their former levels. Pupils now achieve very well in terms of their prior attainment and higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 are enabled to fulfil their potential. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected of seven-year-olds. Inspection evidence agrees with the results of the national standardised tests and confirms that very few pupils attain higher than average levels at this key stage.
- 61 There are several reasons for the recent improvements in mathematics and for the very high achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2. The very good quality of teaching is a key factor and generates in pupils an enthusiasm for mathematics. In order to raise with immediate effect the standard of pupils' ability to calculate quickly and accurately, the co-ordinator introduced a daily 'Quick Fire' mathematics session in which pupils are challenged to beat their own personal targets. This was later extended to include broader targets for pupils of similar attainment levels. This, combined with the very good implementation of the national numeracy strategy, is having a marked impact on standards throughout the school. Additional support is given to pupils and successfully raises the standard of average attainers. The use of numeracy in other curriculum subjects ensures that mathematics is truly central to pupils' education. There are very strong links with information technology which again contribute to raising standards overall. Pupils are encouraged to find out for themselves and to give valid reasons for their answers. The reason that overall standards are not above average is that these initiatives are new. It is a measure of their success that standards have risen so far so quickly.

- 62 At Key Stage 1, pupils' achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Many pupils began Year 2 with limited numeracy skills. The quality of teaching is good and has enabled pupils to learn a great deal in a very short time. The numeracy strategy is used very well to give a firm structure and direction to lessons. A lively pace of learning is quickly established and teachers encourage speedy calculations in initial sessions by throwing a soft ball to pupils in turn to prompt quick responses. Resources are used well to check pupils' individual learning. Pupils are encouraged to be 'maths detectives' and in this role they learn how to measure capacity and record their results accurately. They really enjoy pouring coloured water into different containers and are quite incredulous that a long thin container holds less than a low-sided dish and carefully carry out the investigation again to make quite sure. Teachers encourage pupils to explore mathematics through action as in a hide and hunt game to learn about position, direction and movement. Pupils' written work shows a developing understanding of odd and even numbers and average attaining pupils begin to set and to solve their own mathematical problems. Higher attaining pupils have a better understanding of estimation and with practice become more accurate. Targets are suitably different for the different attainment levels within the class and marking gives a very clear indication of which concepts have been grasped and which require further development.
- 63 At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is very good and the range of work covered since September is impressive. The work is clearly very challenging and teachers' expectations of pupils are very high. Frequent challenges are set to improve pupils' timing and accuracy. Pupils' delight in their success at beating their own targets is clearly seen as they gleefully tick their successes, some cheekily drawing a minute 'happy bunny' alongside. There is a strong emphasis on investigative mathematics, to solve problems concerning time and weight, for example. Higher attaining pupils' work on probability shows an above average understanding of estimation and approximation. Pupils know how to check their answers with a calculator and round numbers up and down as an alternative means. Individual standards are improved through regular targets and teachers' marking is encouraging but uncompromisingly sets high standards. Additional classes, to support average attaining pupils, consolidate pupils' use of mental strategies and develop, for example, their understanding of volume and area. Higher attaining pupils in particular benefit from the challenging work, which enables them to achieve highly. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs find it harder to grasp basic concepts so quickly and although they now achieve very well and make very good progress they have not caught up on work missed through previous instability in staffing. This depresses the overall standard.
- 64 Numeracy is used very well in other subjects and in this way forms an essential component of pupils' general education. In science, for instance, pupils learn to order negative numbers in relation to the temperature of planets when they calculate the difference in temperature between Venus and Neptune if Venus lost 700 degrees. When recording the effect of temperature on evaporation, pupils use millimetres as well as centimetres, thus developing an understanding of place value. In geography, pupils use their numerical skills to read and then order countries in terms of square kilometres as well as population. This gives a real purpose for using large numbers.
- 65 The subject is very well led and the co-ordinator has very well thought out strategies to develop the teaching of mathematics. New initiatives are adopted simultaneously in each class so that numeracy is developing apace throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have excellent relationships both with each other and

with their teachers. This motivates them to give of their best and to help each other to succeed. In one lesson, teacher and pupils took it in turns to give instructions to turn through different degrees in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. Higher attaining pupils explained very clearly a good method for organising and comparing different sized pieces of paper with acute and obtuse angles which the class then used successfully. Through this sort of partnership pupils feel valued and supported.

## SCIENCE

- 66 Standards are in line with expected levels at the end of both key stages. In the teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 1999, 100 per cent of pupils attained the nationally expected level, which was very high; however, the proportion attaining above that level was in line with the national average. When compared to similar schools, pupils' attainment was very high for those attaining Level 2 and in line with the average for those attaining Level 3. These assessments showed a strength in investigative science and marked a considerable improvement in this aspect since the last inspection. Inspection evidence shows that seven-year-olds are attaining in line with the national expectation. They are able to identify and record differences between humans and animals and produce accurately labeled diagrams and drawings to illustrate their knowledge. They track the stages of development of human babies and show a sound understanding of the purposes of the five senses. They record their findings about forces such as pushing and pulling in a chart and can test a variety of materials to see which is best for wrapping a parcel. They make generally sensible predictions about in which part of the room ice will melt the quickest and explain their reasons. They set up the investigation with the teacher's help and check carefully to ensure that their test is a fair one. They discuss and record their results. Higher attainers are not given enough opportunity to work at more searching tasks in Key Stage 1.
- 67 National tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 produced well below average results both when compared with national averages and when compared with pupils in similar schools. This was largely because teaching did not systematically follow a scheme of work and therefore pupils did not complete the full programmes of study. With the implementation of a clear policy and an appropriate scheme of work, teaching is of a very high quality and pupils' work during this year shows greatly improved standards, with most pupils being well on target to achieve the expected level in the national tests, with a significant number likely to attain higher levels. Pupils are confident in investigations in Key Stage 2. They provide a clear account of a group investigation on the effect of temperature on evaporation, with an interpretation of the findings supported by a graph and an application to real life, showing how a hair dryer works. They use prediction well and make and check a sensible hypothesis about the heart and the pulse rate. They have a confident and accurate knowledge of parts of a plant and a good understanding about the variety of ways in which seeds are dispersed. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the teachers, particularly in Years 5 and 6, know them so well and target questions that boost their confidence while still challenging them. The erratic levels of progress noted in the last inspection no longer exist.
- 68 The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is good in Key Stage 1 and often excellent in Key Stage 2. While higher attainers are not always stretched in the infants, in the juniors, particularly at the top end, the very confident subject knowledge of the teachers and the very high level of expectation mean that pupils of all abilities learn very effectively. High levels of interest are promoted by the teachers' own

enthusiasm for the topic and by the way in which, for example, the teacher subtly links previous learning about human reproduction with what pupils are discovering about how seeds are dispersed. Constantly challenging comment from the teacher leads to pupils thinking independently and originally; for example, a pupil spontaneously raised the issue of which came first, the seed or the plant. The rate of work and levels of concentration in the most successful lessons are very high indeed, encouraged by excellent class management and very high standards of discipline. Pupils are used to working hard and working independently, as was shown in a largely unsupervised but very productive session where pupils went about a clearly designed set of tasks using the computers to discover more information about seeds. They worked together well and took responsibility for closing down the program and the computer at the end of the session. Teachers use learning resources very effectively to catch pupils' interest; for example, pupils enthusiastically examined leaves from the hedge around the playing field, taking great care with stinging nettles.

- 69 The improvements in science have been brought about largely through the development and implementation of a very good policy and scheme of work and through very strong and effective leadership. The last inspection identified a weakness in investigations; this no longer exists though the concern about challenging the higher attainers at Key Stage 1 is still relevant. The subject makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development; plentiful opportunities are offered for pupils to reflect on life and living things and on their responsibilities in caring for the environment. They are encouraged to wonder at the things they see and touch.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 70 Standards in information technology are above average by the time pupils leave this school. By the age of seven, pupils attain average standards. They achieve very well and by the age of eleven, standards are above those normally expected of pupils of this age. This is a vast improvement since the last inspection when standards were poor, teaching unsatisfactory and leadership of the subject required urgent improvement. Information technology is now one of the school's strengths and reflects the commitment of the staff and the enthusiasm of the pupils for this subject. The improvement to resources to provide a computer suite has further enhanced both provision and attainment.
- 71 Pupils at both key stages cover the full range of the curriculum for information and communication technology. Teachers plan carefully and systematically to include it in other subjects so that pupils become very well used to using it as a tool to assist their learning. The subject is very well led and the co-ordinator is involved in the preparation for teaching, checking resources and talking over successes and difficulties with staff. The information technology development plan indicates very clearly planned developments for the next two years and is realistically linked to finance and staff training in order to achieve its objectives. Through monitoring pupils' work, pupils' attainment across the school is carefully measured. Every pupil has an information technology folder in which pertinent pieces of work are kept to illustrate development and progress. From these, it is clear that pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain similarly above average standards by the age of eleven.
- 72 The quality of teaching is very good and consequently pupils achieve highly as they learn readily and with great interest. By the age of seven, pupils can program a toy to move in specified directions. They 'click' and 'drag' appropriate pictures to produce a



graphic illustration of the weather in different places. Because of skilful teaching they understand that things presented graphically can be easier to understand than textual data. Pupils listen very well to their teachers. When inserting data into a pictogram to show how many vehicles passed the school in an hour, pupils explain carefully that the longer the column in the 'pictogram', the higher the number of vehicles. They name their own work competently, and work together well, taking it in turns as they work in pairs. Pupils behave maturely and responsibly. Work for infant pupils is very well planned to fulfil the challenging learning objectives for this age group.

- 73 Older pupils revel in the amount of freedom they have to use the computer suite. They receive very good teaching. In one lesson, pupils ably demonstrated their understanding of how to sort data using one or more 'search criteria', understanding the subtleties of 'and' and 'or' commands. The pace of working was very fast as, in the classroom, pupils reacted speedily to their teacher's commands to group themselves in various formations in response to computer-type commands. They ably took on the responsibility for commands and could hardly wait to try these out on the computers. They work exceedingly well together, supporting the few who need additional support. They organise themselves very efficiently, often sorting out problems without adult intervention. Teachers help individuals very well whilst respecting those whose skills are technically advanced.
- 74 A very good feature of this subject is the widespread and inventive use of the Internet. Pupils are taught how to find information and through a planned program of questions, designed to develop their skills in retrieving and refining information, achieve highly both in terms of skills and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 6 found a web site on Greek Gods, extracted information and then worked out questions to which they wanted answers and used the Internet as their source. Pupils use control technology to program a set of traffic lights. Groups of pupils use a 'multi-media site', adding their own voice commentary. One such was highly amusing, as pupils had added a commentary to a picture of a man on the moon where the moon talked back as he exclaimed in disbelief, 'That's not the moon!'
- 75 Information technology is used very well to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy as well as in other subjects. Pupils confidently gather information about seed dispersal, for example, or word-process news headlines using different sized fonts. In geography, they use different sized letters and fonts to produce eye-catching and urgently worded posters to prevent people from dropping litter. Pupils are trusted to use the computers sensibly and responsibly. Rules about using the Internet are clearly understood and adhered to by pupils. As a result, pupils are able to take initiative and to act independently. When the batteries to the digital camera, for example, ran out, pupils worked out how to use the extension cable, took the intended photographs, printed and laminated them all without supervision. Pupils use the photocopier competently as well as the printers when producing the school newspaper. This in turn develops pupils' skills in literacy as it is read by partners in 'shared reading' time in the infant classroom as well as independently by juniors.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 76 Standards of attainment are above those expected at the end of both key stages. No judgement was made at the last inspection about attainment in this subject. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge and understanding of a variety of celebrations and festivals from a number of religions. They are able to compare features of a Christian wedding with those of a Hindu wedding and they know that Sikhs worship in a temple.

They know some stories from the Old Testament and are familiar with stories about Jesus. They apply their learning to their own experience. Pupils in Year 6 know stories from a variety of religions and are able to discuss their significance with insight. They write about Jesus as leader and understand the work of the parish priest after a visit by their own parish priest. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the life and several parables of Christ. They have extended their knowledge and understanding of the festivals, beliefs and practices of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. The visit of a shaman introduced pupils to a different approach to religion and they responded with tolerance and interest. They sensitively apply their learning about religion to their own lives and circumstances and are able to draw out moral messages that they then apply to their own behaviour with great honesty and courage. In one lesson, pupils showed a mature and deep understanding of the qualities of places of worship of several religions and used the special atmosphere of what they had created in the hall to appreciate more the qualities that enhance worship. The artefacts and painting that they themselves had produced were recognised as helping them to reflect. Pupils have a very well developed feeling for symbols such as the school symbol of hands shaped in the form of a cross with its title, 'Many hands make a school'.

- 77 The quality of teaching and learning is very high and is seen not only in lessons but in assemblies and hymn practices too. Religious education forms part of lessons in other subjects such as science and personal and social education. Older pupils show well above average capacity for reflection and for sympathetic and tolerant understanding of the ideas and beliefs of others; they are consistently encouraged to think for themselves and to look for alternative answers. Teachers' very high levels of expectation lead to mature and thoughtful responses from pupils. Pupils are interested in ideas and honest in discussing them. They are able to be open and honest about their own faults in the confident knowledge that other pupils will listen sympathetically. The teachers know their subject well and use interesting and sometimes exciting approaches to learning; for example, in order to enable the pupils to experience a place of worship, the hall was darkened and the excellent religious display there focused clearly. Similarly, pupils from Years 3 and 4 were taken into the playing field and asked to feel the leaves in order to feed a discussion about why the world is special.
- 78 The subject is enthusiastically and effectively led. A new Agreed Syllabus and scheme of work has led to a fresh approach to the subject that pupils and teachers are finding exciting. The subject makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **ART**

- 79 Only one lesson was seen and so no overall judgement on teaching has been made. Judgements on standards are based on scrutinising pupils' work in their folders and in displays, discussions with pupils and teachers and an examination of planning. By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards are those expected for eleven-year-olds, as they were at the last inspection. Pupils make steady progress in using a good range of tools, materials and techniques to record their observations and, further up the school, to express their ideas and feelings. They experience the work of other artists, such as Monet and Cézanne, and use them as models to create their own effective still life paintings. They use ink, pencil and water-colour to make good quality paintings that show the effects of light. They use computer-generated art to support

articles in the school newspaper and use their observational drawings of plants and flowers to support learning in science.

- 80 Pupils' achievements are good and they develop their skills systematically as they move through the school. The five-year-olds in Class 1 produce lively portraits but, by the time pupils reach Year 2, their portraits have more detailed facial features, for instance. Colours used for painting become more like what was intended and are used well to produce contrasts and other effects. The light effect water-colours painted by Years 5 and 6 pupils take this handling of colour much further to produce quite subtle effects of light and shade. The paintings in the panes of a stained glass window show good skills in form and colour.
- 81 Only one lesson was observed and the teaching and learning in this were good. The teacher had a confident grasp of the skills needed to demonstrate to the pupils how to weave their mat. Pupils responded well to the teacher's expectations and evaluated their own and their partner's work sensibly. They worked hard and behaved well. Pupils are proud of their work and show visiting adults which piece of work they have been responsible for. Older pupils use the displays of art work in the hall sensitively to help them to reflect on what the paintings mean.
- 82 An enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for the subject and has already improved resource levels and is developing pupil portfolios of work to enhance assessment practices. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 83 Only one lesson was seen and so no judgement on teaching has been made. Judgements on standards are based on scrutinising pupils' work in their folders and in displays, discussions with pupils and teachers and an examination of planning. Standards in design and technology are in line with those expected nationally by the time they leave the school and similar to those reported in the last inspection. However, the range of work pupils undertake is much improved and aspects of designing and making show that many pupils have an above average understanding of process. Teachers find many different ways of incorporating design and technology into their teaching and this benefits pupils' practical skills.
- 84 From an early age, pupils gain practical experience in designing and making, using different media. By the age of seven, pupils construct lively and effective cars and lorries using different sized, ready-made boxes, attaching wheels with wooden spindles. The designs are well thought out and teachers have considered how to adapt the process so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can succeed. For example, some sequence a list of pre-written instructions whereas others write a list of what they require. Some elaborate lists, involving blue balloons and paper plates, were also used as an exercise in using commas, which incidentally supported pupils' skills in literacy. Pupils incorporate their scientific knowledge as they decide which is the best material to wrap up a parcel, deciding that 'magazine paper is the best because it's strong and can't rip'. Their papier-mâché animal masks are of very good quality. A higher attaining pupil's written discussion of the finer points of design for a cat, debated the relative merits of bottle tops and paper plates and concluded with the decision 'to cut the end and make some ears out of them because it won't be any good without any ears.'

- 85 Much of junior pupils' design and technology is linked to mathematics and puts to practical use some of their numeracy skills. For example, they design a spinner with a 75 per cent chance of landing on red. Their initial designs include a very good mathematical justification for the number and proportion of coloured segments. They enjoy working together to design and then make a toy with moving parts. Their preliminary work indicates clearly their ability to work systematically through the various stages of planning and making, deciding on appropriate materials. Some of their initial detailed drawings are very fine. Teachers provide large-scale squared paper which facilitates designing accurately and to scale. Pupils write detailed instructions and give precise measurements. They try out ideas and modify designs and the end results are unique, well-made and show a good understanding of force and motion.
- 86 Where the weaknesses lie is in the lack of evaluation and in the similarity of materials in the constructed articles. This indicates that pupils have limited choice in what they use and less freedom to choose how to design and make. Whilst this results in successful models and artefacts, pupils learn less because they do not evaluate success or analyse modifications they have made.
- 87 The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator with imaginative ideas. This subject supports the school's very effective strategies for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

- 88 Although no lessons were observed, it is plain from scrutinising pupils' work and talking to pupils that standards are at least in line with those expected nationally for both seven and eleven-year-olds in both subjects. This is better overall than standards reported in the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 1 where progress was slow in both subjects.
- 89 Infant pupils show an average understanding of geographical words such as hill, wood, field, bridge and river, which they label, appropriately, on a map. They study a village on an island in the Outer Hebrides and note important features such as the road, stream and post office. Pupils consider the different uses of transport such as a boat, lorry, tractor and trailer and begin to understand that in remote localities vehicles such as these would be used to transport food and other essential goods. The teaching is obviously very thorough and has captured pupils' imaginations. For example, higher attaining pupils know and use the term 'loch' and show a good awareness of 'mainland' as opposed to 'island'. In history, they know some of the differences in doing the laundry between the past and the present. They have some knowledge of famous people such as Guy Fawkes.
- 90 Junior pupils study geography in close relation to other subjects such as science, history, information technology and mathematics. From looking at a diagram of the water cycle, for instance, they are able to interpret the key to understand the process of condensation and precipitation. Using information technology to access the Internet, pupils retrieve a map of Europe. They have sound knowledge of what the island of St. Lucia is like. In connection with their work on Ancient Greece, they discover that Greece is part of the continent of Europe, that it is south of their own country and that 'because it is closer to the equator the climate is warmer'. They use the Internet and CD-ROMs to discover more about how people lived in Ancient Greece and are able to place a variety of events and personalities on a timeline with some accuracy. Pupils understand that there are different kinds of evidence, some more

reliable than others, and discuss with interest the history of the school building and how they used an old school logbook to find out about Victorian schools when they were studying Victorian children. In mathematics, pupils learn to read, write and order numbers in terms of squared kilometres for countries and also to read large numbers when comparing population size. The teaching is obviously thoughtfully designed to integrate pupils' knowledge of different subjects. Pupils' written work is neat and diagrams are clearly presented and labelled appropriately.

- 91 Geography is very well led and both subjects are well planned to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy.

## **MUSIC**

- 92 Standards are in line with expected levels by the time the pupils leave the school. The standards indicated in the last inspection have been maintained. Only one lesson was observed and judgements are also based on assemblies and hymn practices as well as discussions with pupils. Pupils make steady progress in singing, with younger pupils following the good example set by older pupils during whole school hymn practices, which are of a good quality. Older pupils sing a range of songs tunefully and vary the loudness and speed appropriately. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 show a good grasp of the five note scale and point out that it relates to a pentagram, which has five sides. They compose and perform a tune based on this scale, using chime bars and other tuned and untuned percussion. They are familiar with standard musical notation. Some higher attainers play instruments such as the piano.
- 93 The quality of teaching and learning in the lesson observed was very good and in the hymn practice was good. Pupils are attentive and join in singing willingly, with younger pupils trying their best to get the words of the hymn right. Higher attainers are keen to demonstrate their skills for the benefit of the rest of the class. Levels of concentration are high and behaviour is very good. The teacher has high expectations and manages the class and the whole school well. A variety of teaching methods and a well maintained pace keep pupils interested and challenged.
- 94 The subject is well led and a recently introduced scheme of work is helping to improve teachers' confidence. The school took part with other local schools in a Millennium production, which extended their musical experience well. The subject contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 95 Only parts of two lessons were observed during the inspection so no judgements on the quality of teaching are made. Judgements on standards are based upon the lessons observed, teachers' lesson plans, pupils' play at lunchtimes and playtimes, when they have access to a wide range of sports' equipment, and their achievements in swimming and extra-curricular netball and football. Overall standards are in line with those expected nationally by the time pupils leave the school. Standards have improved since the last inspection when the inadequate accommodation imposed severe constraints on pupils' overall achievement. The provision for physical education has much improved. The hall is now adequately equipped to provide pupils with the expected range of apparatus work and provides sufficient space for gymnastics to take place safely.

- 96 Pupils' physical development is enhanced by the range of equipment they are able to use at lunchtimes and the good quality playground markings to designate football and netball pitches. Pupils improve their throwing, catching and shooting skills, through very effective coaching given by the dinner supervisors. They line up sensibly, taking turns to shoot goals in netball. Boys and girls play football together well and observe rules such as 'offside' and 'throw ins'. Pupils have a good awareness of space and practise dribbling and tackling skills with due regard to the safety of others. They are friendly but firm as they strive to beat the other team. Older and younger pupils use tennis rackets sensibly and enjoy practising hitting the ball to each other with increasing accuracy. Playground markings such as hopscotch provide an enjoyable means for young pupils to practise alternate hopping and jumping. Some pupils were delighted to find that they could hop in specified directions ten times without overbalancing. Traditional games such as cat's cradle and spinning a whip and top develop pupils' hand and eye co-ordination. In these ways, pupils' play activities become an extension of their learning as they unconsciously practise and so reinforce what they are taught.
- 97 Both infants and juniors understand the reasons for 'warming up' and 'cooling down'. They undertake appropriate activities and younger pupils look suitably impressed at the way vigorous exercise makes the heart beat. Some of these activities are quite imaginative as in the paired work at the end of one lesson when pupils mirrored each other's slow stretching as they found inventive ways of moving different parts of the body. The sporting trophies in the school hall indicate pupils' successes when playing against other schools and clearly show that their achievements are celebrated. Most junior pupils take part in sport in the community and photographs, taken by the school's junior photographer, show their prowess in dance. Swimming certificates indicate that most are able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave school and several pupils attain much more highly.