

INSPECTION REPORT

Heron Cross Primary School

Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124003

Acting headteacher: Mrs Emma Pattinson

Reporting inspector: Mrs Mary Speakman
21581

Dates of inspection: 7th - 10th February 2000

Inspection number: 191340

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grove Road Heron Cross Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST4 4LJ
Telephone/ Fax number:	01782 233565
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Harris
Date of previous inspection:	20th –24th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Mary Speakman Registered inspector	English English as an additional language Music	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well the school is led and managed
Mr Michael Romano Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with its parents
Mrs Diane Gale Team inspector	Science Religious education History Areas of learning for children under five	Equal opportunities
Mrs Barbara Jones Team inspector	Art Design and technology Geography	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils Special educational needs The work of the special educational needs units
Mr David Vincent Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Physical education	How well pupils are taught

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Heron Cross Primary School has 258 full-time pupils; 42 children attend the nursery part-time. There are 22 pupils attending the Speech and Language Unit and 23 pupils attending the Learning Difficulties Unit. There are 31 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals, which is above average. Twenty per cent of the pupils in mainstream classes are identified as having special educational needs; this is well above the national average. Overall, there are 45 pupils with Statements of special educational needs in the school; five are in mainstream classes and the remainder are in the special educational needs units. There are three pupils who speak English as an additional language. Many of the pupils are from homes where there is considerable social or economic stress. Many of the pupils who attend the special educational needs units travel some considerable distance to school. There is a high level of mobility within the school roll, particularly at Key Stage 2. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is very much below the average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school has made good progress in improving the quality of its provision since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching is good. Although standards of attainment are below average they are improving, particularly at Key Stage 2. The staff and governing body have a strong commitment to driving up standards. The school is an orderly community and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The good quality of teaching particularly in the special units, Key Stage 2, and for children who are under five.
- The acting headteacher and the senior management team provide energetic leadership and clear educational direction for the school.
- The provision for children who are under five and the progress they make.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs both in the special units and in mainstream classes.
- There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.
- Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good, and that for moral and social development is very good.
- The progress made in art and music throughout the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, information technology, religious education and history.
- The monitoring of teaching by curriculum co-ordinators.
- The use of assessment information to inform planning and target setting.
- The rates of attendance and unauthorised absence through more efficient monitoring procedures.
- The role of the curriculum co-ordinator.
- The monitoring role of the governing body.
- The provision for outdoor play for under fives in nursery.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school which was last inspected during January 1997, has had to deal with some major areas for improvement and has made good progress in doing so. But there is still a way to go in raising standard in important areas of the curriculum, such as English and mathematics. Since the previous inspection, the quality of education provided for children who are under five has improved

and children now make good progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes¹. The provision for pupils who attend the Speech and Language and Learning Difficulties Units has improved considerably, and pupils who attend these classes now make good progress towards achieving the targets in their individual education plans. A systematic approach to managing pupils' behaviour has been introduced and pupils' behaviour is much improved. However, although the literacy and numeracy strategies are having a good impact on progress in individual lessons, standards at the end of the key stages are slow to rise. Teachers give good attention to improving pupils' speaking and listening skills but there is no overall scheme in place to promote this systematically. Progress in writing could be better promoted across the whole curriculum. The provision for information technology and religious education is not consistent enough, and there are insufficient resources for information technology to be taught effectively.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	97	98	99	99	
English	E*	E	E*	E*	well above average above average
Mathematics	E*	E	E*	E*	average below average
Science	E*	E	E*	E*	well below average very low

Where the comparative grade is E* this means that the school's performance is within the lowest five per cent nationally. These scores do not reflect the standard seen in mainstream classes and are distorted by the inclusion of test scores for pupils who attend the Speech and Language and Learning Difficulties Units. Most of these pupils have Statements of special educational need, or are being assessed for Statements. Pupils in mainstream classes generally achieve standards that are below national averages although standards in reading were judged to be in line with national averages. Standards achieved in 1999, by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in mainstream classes, were below those for pupils in schools with similar free school meals entitlement. However the group was a small one of 23 pupils and four pupils in that year group had Statements of special educational needs. Trends in results over time are very erratic and depend very much on the number of pupils with Statements of special educational needs from year to year. The school has predicted targets for Key Stage 2, for the year 2000, that are based on data from tests in English and mathematics undertaken through Key Stage 2. These targets are particularly ambitious for English. Test results in 1999 at Key Stage 1 indicate standards that were very low when compared with national averages, and with similar schools. However, as with Key Stage 2, if the results of pupils attending the special units are omitted, the test results for pupils in mainstream classes in 1999 are below national average in reading, writing and mathematics. They are in line with standards achieved by similar schools in reading and writing and below in mathematics. These findings generally reflect the standard seen in mainstream classes during the inspection, with the exception of reading. Standards in information technology are below what is expected at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make slow progress in this subject throughout the key stages and, by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well below what is expected. Standards in religious education are below what is expected by the Local Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils who attend the Speech and Language and Learning Difficulties Units

¹ The nationally agreed goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory schooling at the age of five.

make good progress towards their individual targets. Overall, children in the nursery, and who are under five in reception, make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school, they are keen to learn and settle to work quickly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good both in lessons and in the playground. Pupils know their class rules and understand the reasons for them.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good and a considerable strength.
Attendance	Attendance is well below the national average and the level of unauthorised absence is high.

Pupils are caring and respectful towards each other and the staff, and they value the concern that is shown for them by teachers and support staff. Older pupils understand that others can have learning or behavioural difficulties and are very supportive of pupils with special educational needs. The school is very aware of the high level of absences and is putting detailed plans into action to monitor and improve rates of attendance and to lower unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is good overall with 19 per cent of teaching being very good or better. Only five per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. The teaching in the Speech and Language and Learning Difficulties Units, at both key stages, is a strength, with much of it being very good and sometimes excellent. The best teaching of English is in Key Stage 2 and is characterised by lively, interesting presentations that make demands on the pupils' understanding to which they respond well. The teaching of mathematics, overall, is satisfactory, with the best teaching being for the older pupils in Key Stage 2. This good teaching has sharply defined learning objectives, tasks which provide a stimulating challenge, and lessons conducted at a purposeful pace.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children under five is good and provides them with a stimulating start to school. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 has weaknesses in provision for information technology, religious education and history.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory for pupils in mainstream classes and very good for pupils who attend the Speech and Language and Learning Difficulties Units. Pupils who are based in these units, are appropriately integrated into the life and work of the whole school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is suitable provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language and they make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision is good with particular strengths in the provision for social and moral education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for the personal and social welfare of its pupils well. Arrangements for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance, and their attainment and progress, are satisfactory. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory.

The school has satisfactory links with parents. Informal communication with parents is very good. The school provides for pupils' personal and social development well and ensures, by its policies and practices, that pupils work in a secure and friendly environment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher and senior management team provide satisfactory leadership. They are working hard to continue the improvements within the school and to raise standards. The role of the subject co-ordinators is not yet fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is supportive of the school and has a realistic view of what needs to be done to improve provision. They are satisfactorily involved in planning for the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a realistic view of its performance and of priorities for development. There is an abundance of test and assessment data, which now needs to be used more effectively to set targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Staff, time and resources are generally used effectively with the exception of information technology and the school library.

The acting headteacher and the senior management team provide energetic leadership and clear educational direction for the school. The school has a good number of teaching and support staff who are suitably qualified. Many of the support staff are undertaking a range of qualifications which will enhance their professional expertise. The accommodation is adequate and used efficiently.

The exception is the outdoor area for children who are under five, which does not provide an attractive, or stimulating, learning environment for the pupils concerned. The learning resources are sufficient to support the curriculum in most subjects, although, there are serious deficiencies in information technology where the lack of computers, software, and equipment, significantly limits the planned programme. The school is taking steps to address this issue. The attractive school library area is currently underused and needs reorganising. The acting headteacher and governing body seek to provide best value when considering the school's use of resources

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations of its pupils. • The teaching is good. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns. • Pupils make good progress. • Pupils like school. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more systematic and consistent approach to homework. • More information about what pupils are learning.

The inspection findings support the parents' positive views, as well as views relating to the need to regularise the approach to homework, and to provide more information to parents about what children learn and the progress they are making.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Evidence from the inspection indicates that, by the end of both key stages, pupils' standards of attainment are below average in English, mathematics and science, however, standards in these subjects are higher than those achieved in the 1999 National Curriculum tests. In these tests, standards in all three subjects, at the end of both key stages, were found to be well below the national averages. These test results, however, include those of pupils who attend the two special educational needs units and do not reflect the standard seen in mainstream classes during the inspection. If the results of pupils attending the special units are omitted, test results in 1999 at Key Stage 1 would be ten per cent higher and, at Key Stage 2, results would be approximately 20 per cent higher for all three subjects. In 1999, there were a high number of pupils in the mainstream Year 6 class with Statements of special educational need. Taking all these factors into account, at the end of Key Stage 1 standards achieved in these tests by pupils in the mainstream classes are in line, when compared with similar schools, and below at the end of Key Stage 2.
2. Trends in achievement over time are very erratic, varying from year to year, and are related to the number of pupils with special educational needs in a particular year group. At Key Stage 2, results in 1998 improved by at least two average points in all subjects but declined again in 1999. At Key Stage 1, the trend is one of slight improvement in attainment in reading but of decline in standards from 1997 to 1999 in both writing and mathematics. Targets set by the school anticipate an improvement in standards in the tests and assessments in 2000. These are realistic targets.
3. When children first come to school, their levels of knowledge, skills and understanding are, overall, well below average, except in the area of personal and social development where they are below average. Both in the nursery and reception class children make good progress, although attainment is still below the average in all areas of learning. During their time in the nursery, children show an increasing ability to concentrate and persevere. They become more independent and are aware of expectations for good behaviour. By the age of five, they have made good progress in early reading, writing and numeracy skills. They know how a book is organised, search for meaning in the pictures and some identify familiar words. A minority of children recognise letters and are beginning to associate them with initial sounds. The children recognise their own names, but a number are unable to consistently write recognisable letters. In the reception class, children count and match accurately to seven. The more able children are beginning to write recognisable numbers and draw the correct number of shapes to match written numbers.
4. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy successfully. An additional teaching group for the older pupils at Key Stage 2, enables teachers to give them closer attention. Pupils at both key stages usually listen carefully to each other and to adults. At Key Stage 1, some pupils' speech is immature for their age. As they move through the school, they develop confidence when speaking in front of the class. However, many pupils find it difficult to express their ideas and understanding because their vocabulary is very limited. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have enthusiasm for reading and talk knowledgeably about the books they have read. They are developing a range of strategies for tackling unknown words. By the time they are eleven, most pupils in the mainstream class read fluently and talk well about their favourite books and authors. They understand how to find information from reference books. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in writing. By the time they are seven, the majority of pupils write simple logical narrative pieces. However, only the more able are punctuating their work accurately and few attempts are made to use language for effect as well as meaning. Writing is printed clearly. Most pupils spell short common words correctly, but are not so confident with longer or more complex words. At Key Stage 2, pupils' written work is presented

carefully. Pupils write poems, narratives, play scripts and, as they move through the key stage, begin to use punctuation more accurately. Handwriting is usually neat and joined and the spelling of most common words is accurate. However, many of the older pupils find it difficult to produce accurate pieces of independent writing of a reasonable length, and there are insufficient opportunities for using literacy skills in other subjects.

5. The school places considerable emphasis upon mathematics and ensures that pupils develop a sound understanding of mathematical principles. It has implemented a number of improvements since the last inspection. The numeracy strategy has been introduced successfully. This gives pupils the experience of daily whole-class teaching, challenging mental number activities, and group tasks, which are matched to their learning needs.
6. Although pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the two key stages, standards are below national averages at the ages of 7 and 11. However, the proportion of pupils who are beginning to understand place value, use multiplication tables, and understand fractions, is below the average, as is the number of pupils who understand and use standard and non-standard measures. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding of shape. By the time pupils are eleven, the proportion of pupils who use numbers with expected competence, and accuracy, is below the average. Pupils' understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages is less sound than expected. Pupils collect and interpret data and to use a range of graphical representation, but the depth and range of analysis is below expectations. Pupils have too few opportunities to use their numeracy skills in other subjects.
7. In science, pupils attain standards that are below national averages at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science in Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing early investigative skills. However, the majority lack the necessary skills to respond to questions of "why?", or "how?" They identify the use of batteries and electricity, but find it difficult to explain how a bulb lights up. They are aware of different materials and how they can be changed but are only able to make basic observations. At Key Stage 2 progress is inconsistent as sometimes pupils repeat work that they have covered earlier. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils explain the necessity for a fair test and begin to hypothesise. They have some understanding of forces and of life processes, but make generalisations in their explanations rather than confidently discussing cause and effect. Their understanding is below what is expected for their age.
8. Although progress in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory, standards have not been maintained since the last inspection. At that time, attainment of children, at the age of five, was found to be in line with the nationally expected standard, however, current pupils started from a lower base so their attainment, when they begin work on the National Curriculum programmes of study, is below that standard.
9. Pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in information technology because they have had too few opportunities to use computers to cover the whole range of the curriculum. Consequently, their attainment is below the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 and well below at the end of Key Stage 2.
10. Standards in religious education are below what is expected by the Local Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of Christianity. However, their understanding other major faiths, and their ability to reflect on how faith affects peoples' attitudes, is less well developed.
11. Pupils make good progress in music. The provision ensures that whether pupils are working in classes, or whole key stage groups, they are covering all the required elements. Progress in art is also good. Throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to work with a wide range of media and produce some imaginative work. They take great care with their finished pieces, which are well presented.

12. Progress in geography, physical education, and design and technology, is satisfactory. Progress in history is slow because the curriculum does not ensure that pupils develop the range of historical skills to enable them to make sense of their historical knowledge.
13. There is no significant variation in the attainment or progress of boys and girls, or of pupils of different ethnic origin. The school provides appropriate support to pupils who speak English as an additional language to enable them to make suitable progress in acquiring English. They make similar progress to other pupils in all subjects. Higher-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, although, in some subjects, the work they are set is not always sufficiently challenging.
14. Pupils who have special educational needs in the mainstream classes, work hard to achieve standards which match, or exceed, the targets they are set in their individual education plans. Since the introduction of the additional literacy support scheme a year ago, standards have been raised in Years 3 and 4. Improvements in literacy and numeracy have been observed in pupils who receive additional support at the computer suite at the local sports stadium. Since the last inspection, standards in work, and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs throughout the school, have greatly improved.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Children under five are very well behaved and respond positively to the high expectations and caring environment of the nursery and reception classes. They settle into school quickly and show good levels of concentration. However, they show less ability to co-operate and communicate together. They are happy to work independently in their chosen activity, and show confidence.
16. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. Generally, they respond well in lessons, with responsible attitudes towards their learning. For example, during a lesson in the nursery, where children were taught to make biscuits, they listened well, and followed instructions readily. In a Key Stage 2 singing session, pupils showed pride in performing together. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. On the rare occasions when teachers do not challenge the most able, those pupils begin to fidget, but behaviour remains acceptable. In the playground, around the school, and in the dining hall it is often very good. Teachers know their pupils well, and use this knowledge to stimulate individuals in their work by effective use of praise.
17. Pupils are presented with many opportunities to develop socially through being given responsibility as monitors and in doing jobs for their teacher. The rewards and sanctions available are used effectively and consistently to reinforce the expectations the school has of its pupils. For older pupils, class rules are agreed each year, through the teacher-pupil 'contract', published in the classroom, and pupils have a good understanding of the rules and the reasons for them. This good framework for learning is further enhanced by the very good relationships between pupils and teachers. Teachers set an excellent example in their behaviour towards each other and the pupils. The respect and courtesy shown by teachers is reflected in pupils' response to teachers and visitors. No instances of bullying were observed in the school; pupils say that oppressive behaviour is rare, and they know that it will be dealt with effectively if it occurs.
18. Pupils are caring and respectful towards each other and the staff, and they value the concern that is shown for them by teachers and support staff. Relationships, bullying, and caring issues, are discussed with pupils in assemblies, and the meaning of other people's religions are taught in religious education lessons. Pupils show a good level of respect for those who have other beliefs or cultures. For example, in Year 4, pupils showed great interest in and respect for the rituals of Islam during a religious education lesson.
19. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes towards their learning. The majority try hard to improve their skills. They show respect for their teachers and work well with their peers. They are willing to share materials and wait their turn. Personal

development is good. Pupils with special educational needs are fully and successfully integrated within the school. They enjoy their time in and out of class, and show a sense of self-control in their manner. Pupils with behavioural and emotional problems make good efforts to overcome their difficulties.

20. Pupils are supportive of those who have special educational needs in the school. Older pupils understand that others can have learning or behavioural difficulties. In Year 6, pupils say that they enjoy the responsibility given to them as monitors, and pupils in Year 5 are proud to 'stand in' when those in Year 6 go on trips.
21. Attendance in the school was unsatisfactory last year: it was well below the national average, with unauthorised absence well above the average. Pupils are generally punctual. At the time of the last inspection, attendance was in line with the national average. Attendance has declined since that inspection. However, the attitudes, values and behaviour have improved. This is largely due to the behaviour policy with its clear system of rewards and sanctions system now in place. The 13 exclusions from the school last year was higher than the national average, but ten these related to one pupil with severe behavioural problems who is no longer at the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching is good overall. Nineteen per cent of teaching was judged to be of very good or excellent quality. For pupils in Key Stage 1 it is generally satisfactory, although there is the occasional unsatisfactory lesson. For the children in the nursery, and those who are under five in reception, and for pupils in Key Stage 2, it is good overall. Whilst no direct teaching of information technology lessons took place during the period of the inspection, the impact of teaching over time is unsatisfactory. This is because teachers are failing to ensure that the full programme is delivered, or that every pupil receives their entitlement for the subject.
23. The overall quality of teaching children under five is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Nursery staff are effectively supported by the early years manager, and this ensures that good practice is consistent. All early years staff have a good understanding of the needs of the children. Planning is carefully structured and relates well to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five. In the nursery, there is a good balance of activities directed by the teachers and those chosen by the children. Appropriate emphasis is placed on children's personal and social development and the development of skills in language and literacy, particularly speaking and listening skills. Staff provide an effective range of experiences through which children can develop their curiosity, creativity and knowledge. They assess children regularly and efficiently, and use this information to set achievable targets for each child. However, planning in the nursery does not consistently identify or provide challenges for higher-attaining pupils. In the reception class, the teacher uses effective strategies and methods to promote interest and ensure learning. Lessons have clear objectives, which are appropriate for all abilities. Supporting activities are well organised, ensuring that all children extend and consolidate their learning in a busy atmosphere. The nursery nurse is deployed efficiently.
24. At Key Stage 1, teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subjects they teach whilst, at Key Stage 2, it is good for most subjects. This enables them to identify the key points relating to the lesson and to explain them in a way that is meaningful to the pupils. This was demonstrated in a very good mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 in which the teacher's understanding of the mathematical pattern relating to three-dimensional shapes enabled her to both stimulate and challenge the thinking of her pupils. Good subject knowledge was also evident in a music lesson for some pupils in Key Stage 1, in which the structure, interpretation, and emphasis of a recorded extract, was explored. Pupils' attitudes to the subject, and the quality of their learning, were enhanced by such expertise.

25. Throughout the school, teachers attach particular importance to the teaching of the basic skills associated with literacy and numeracy. The recommendations of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are properly followed, although, at both key stages, there is not enough emphasis on the need for pupils to develop their speaking skills. There are too few opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning in mathematics. The teaching of basic skills such as phonics, spelling and computation in English and mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2.
26. At both key stages, teachers plan conscientiously and develop the programme for the subject logically and sequentially. In some subjects, such as information technology, more detailed guidelines are required so that teachers can build the necessary skills more systematically. A sharp focus on exactly what pupils are expected to learn in a particular lesson has a productive impact upon the effectiveness of the lesson, and this is especially true when these objectives are shared with the class. This was demonstrated in a religious education lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 where the regular revisiting of the objectives brought a sense of achievement and provided the teacher with objective measures when evaluating the success of the lesson.
27. The methods teachers use are good overall, but rather more effective at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Lessons are prepared carefully and the elements of the lesson are varied so that pupils' interest is sustained. The parts of the lesson reinforce each other so that pupils are given a better insight into the subject and learning is consolidated. In a Year 4 science lesson, for example, visual aids, pupil participation, strong links with other areas of the curriculum and the expertise of a visiting speaker were combined to promote very effective learning. In some lessons, pupils are not given sufficient time to consolidate their work. In a science lesson, for example, the teacher moved the work on before the pupils had time to reap the full benefit of their investigation.
28. Teachers' expectations of their pupils are good overall, especially at Key Stage 2. Where teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work, pupils usually respond well. This was illustrated in an English lesson for pupils in Year 6, during which a penetrating discussion relating to 'The Listener', by Walter de la Mare, promoted effective learning. The same was true of a mathematics lesson for pupils with special educational needs. Here, the rapid pace of the lesson, and the demands made upon the pupils, stimulated their interest and led to very good progress. In a small number of lessons, the slow pace fails to stimulate pupils and the work set is too easy. This results in a loss of interest and learning not being as fast as it should be. Occasionally, teachers fail to exercise sufficient flexibility with their organisation of the lesson and remain focused on a small group, whilst other pupils are experiencing difficulties and are unable to proceed with their work.
29. The management of pupils is good overall and at Key Stage 2 it is very good. Teachers have established warm and productive relationships with their pupils, and their desire for them to do well is clearly conveyed. They are consistent and fair in their application of the class rules. Resources and pupil groupings are organised efficiently.
30. Teachers work hard, throughout the school, to integrate pupils with special educational needs successfully into all areas of the curriculum. Useful and appropriate individual education programmes of work, and careful lesson planning, contribute positively to the advancement of pupils' learning. Teachers are aware of pupils' individual needs and respond to them well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their individual targets.
31. Time is generally used effectively, however, the practice of holding a drinks break for some classes, although introduced for good reasons and having a beneficial social effect, erodes the productive teaching time. Support staff are extremely competent and are used well to ensure that pupils are helped at the earliest possible moment. Resources are generally used effectively, with the exception of those for information technology, which are not employed systematically.

32. The quality of the assessments teachers make of their pupils' work is satisfactory in all parts of the school. Teachers know their pupils well and this allows them to make helpful evaluations of their progress as the lesson proceeds. Effective questioning is often used to ascertain whether points are understood clearly as well as to ensure that all pupils are attending to the lesson. The sharing of the objectives of the lesson is particularly telling in providing pupils with a clear focus. The use of the group discussion session, at the end of the lesson, also provides teachers with much useful information as to how successful the lesson was. Marking is diligent throughout the school, it often contains encouraging comments and, less frequently, suggestions for improvement. At Key Stage 2, teachers make good use of 'target boxes' in which they set short term precise targets. Evidence from the examination of pupils' work in English, indicates that, generally, pupils respond well to this strategy and work conscientiously to achieve the targets set.
33. Pupils take their reading books home regularly and the setting of spellings and tables, to learn at home, usefully supports their work in school. Older pupils are set occasional tasks, including research, to do at home. The use of homework is satisfactory, but there is some inconsistency in the regularity with which it is set, and not all parents are clear about the school's policy relating to homework.
34. The inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, which were identified in the last inspection and related to planning, assessment, and teacher expectation, have largely been addressed successfully.

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

35. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and is satisfactory, overall, at both key stages. This is a similar picture to that seen at the last inspection.
36. The curriculum, and the range of learning opportunities for children under five, is good. Provision for most subjects is satisfactory, except for information technology and history. The school meets local requirements in religious education and provides an appropriate range of themes for pupils at both key stages. In information technology, not all pupils receive the same experiences, and pupils at Key Stage 2 do not cover the required range of activities. The learning opportunities provided, at both key stages, are not broad enough in history. The current planning of history does not ensure a proper balance for pupils to acquire satisfactory knowledge historical skills. Many of the subject schemes of work need updating. There is a particularly good scheme of work for art which is especially effective. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound generally across the school. Provision for pupils who attend the special needs units is very good. The Code of Practice is followed closely.
37. The curriculum for children under five is linked well to the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Children are well prepared for the work of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for children under five has greatly improved since the previous inspection. The range of learning opportunities in the special educational needs units is good. All areas of the curriculum are well covered.
38. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. Lessons are organised efficiently with good planning and understanding of subject areas. Since the last inspection, there has been closer liaison between year groups which has helped to improve planning, and create realistic targets
39. There is a sound policy for equal opportunities. The school provides equality of access for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. In lesson planning, there are often separate tasks for pupils of different abilities. These are usually appropriate and matched carefully to ability. The setting

arrangements for older pupils are having a positive impact upon curricular provision for pupils of varying ability.

40. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated across the whole curriculum and this remains a strong feature of the school. They have equal opportunities within the curriculum. They are welcome to join clubs and to take part in all school functions, such as school productions. Speech therapy is available for pupils who need this help. An initiative allows for 12 pupils in Year 6, who need extra help with their literacy and numeracy, to use the computer suite at the local sports stadium once a fortnight. This has given these pupils a considerable boost to their learning and morale.
41. Sex education is dealt with under the health programme and involves the school nurse. This is initiated in Year 5 and reinforced in Year 6. The school highlights healthy living and incorporates a policy on drugs awareness into health education. In Key Stage 1, pupils have recently had a talk from a dental hygienist.
42. There is satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities. These include games, art and craft, chess, athletics, drama, dance and choir practice. At Key Stage 2, pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the clarinet. Visits to the local shops, museum, art gallery and library, enhance various aspects of the curriculum. Pupils in the special needs units have experienced a residential stay at Stanley Head Outward Bound Centre, and, in Key Stage 2, there are plans for pupils in mainstream classes to go camping. The school has links with other schools in the area and has twinned with a rural school in Rocester. In Year 4, pupils have visit a country park and, in Year 6, they go to Jodrell Bank. In Year 1, pupils visit an animal park and in Year 5 they visit a Tudor house. The school takes advantage of the skills of artists in residence at the local art gallery. Pupils from the learning difficulties unit, for example, constructed a tapestry, *'Annanci and Mr Dry Bones'*, with the artist's help.
43. Links with the wider community make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning and they have good contact with people in the community. For example, there are regular visits by the local police officer, whose talks include citizenship for pupils in Year 5, and drugs problems for those in Year 6. An audiologist has given the input on sound, and a mechanic has visited the reception class. Pupils have opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility for the wider community through collecting for charities from time to time. They have raised money for the Blue Peter premature babies' appeal, for example, and collected gifts at harvest-time for the charity *'Shelter'*, and the local elderly folk.
44. The school has recognised which are the areas of the curriculum for improvement, and steps are being taken to rectify inadequacies. The school has formulated ongoing plans for the development of literacy and numeracy, and is already in the process of improving plans for the non-core subjects.
45. Pupils' personal development in terms of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural aspects is good. Improvements since the last inspection have raised standards considerably.
46. Spiritual development is good. The daily act of worship meets statutory requirements. The emphasis on Christian values is supported by the local vicar and members of religious communities. Religious festivals are celebrated in school and in church. The daily act of worship plays an important part in pupils' lives. Themes are carefully chosen to promote spiritual and moral values in particular. Pupils are given time to reflect and respond and to become aware of the difference between right and wrong. Music is carefully chosen to create the opportunity for contemplation. Hymn singing at each key stage, as witnessed during the inspection, holds a strong spiritual quality. Hymns were beautifully sung, conveying something of a magical quality to the proceedings. Clarinet players presented music, which contained thoughtful, lingering phrases, enhancing the experience of the audience
47. Opportunities to experience awe and wonder are given in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 1, for example, gazed with a sense of wonder at the gentle light of an oil lamp during a history lesson. Pupils, across the school, show appreciation of paintings and value

them for their own sake. The aesthetic nature of art is very well emphasised. Photographs of pupils show them enjoying the feeling of space in the hills and looking at flowers and trees with interest and deep concentration.

48. Moral and social development is very good. Behaviour was a key issue in the previous inspection, so this is a major improvement. There is now an effective behaviour policy. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, to help others and to respect the belongings of others. They are taught to care for the environment and to consider the opinions of other people. The pupils respond very positively to discipline and work hard to achieve house points, stickers, and certificates for good behaviour, as well as good work. Weekly, termly, and annual awards are made for effort, attendance, and attitudes. Pupils are made to feel special and this helps their self-esteem. Pupils are encouraged to try harder and do their best. The school celebrates important events in each pupil's life, such as birthdays, achievements, and transition to another class or another school.
49. Monitors are appointed for classroom tasks. Older pupils are expected to help younger children. They show a sense of responsibility in their undertakings. Training in citizenship is good. Older pupils help to organise fund-raising events and everyone takes part in social occasions such as concerts, Christmas Fayres, and Sports Days. Pupils, parents, carers, teachers, governors, and friends, work together to make these events socially important and successful.
50. Cultural development is good. It is apparent across the school in English, music, history and geography, with links to design and technology. There is some evidence in drama and dance. Religious education makes links through the study of other faiths, such as Islam, with examples of artefacts to support ideas. Younger children are given an awareness of our own and other cultures through nursery rhymes, songs and traditional stories. The learning of traditional songs and hymns continues throughout the school. At present, there is no policy on multi-cultural awareness though the school is mindful of the need to identify multi-cultural issues which may arise.
51. Pupils at Key Stage 2 learn about the traditions and cultures of Greece and Egypt in ancient times, comparing them with life now and contrasting them with their own. Pupils link art, design and technology, and literacy, to these topics. Field trips to areas outside Stoke-on-Trent encourage pupils to look at lives in other settings, such as a rural village. In Year 4, pupils have been looking at everyday objects from Victorian Times and, in Year 2, pupils know about the styles of painting of Kadinsky and Klee.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. All staff are caring and sensitive to individual pupil's needs. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in the school. Parents are pleased with the high standard of care, and those of children with special educational needs were particularly supportive of the efforts made to raise their children's self-esteem and independence. Child protection procedures follow the guidelines of the local area child protection committee, with the acting headteacher as the designated person. She has a very good working relationship with all the appropriate statutory agencies, particularly Social Services. However, there is currently no one in the school formally trained in child protection. Arrangements have been made for the acting headteacher to attend training in the near future. Staff are aware of the necessary child protection procedures, and are vigilant in monitoring their pupils.
53. The school does its utmost to provide the pupils who have special educational needs with the education they deserve. The school follows a clearly defined process to identify and assess pupils needing help, as recommended in the Code of Practice. This involves early initial assessment and liaison with learning support agencies and regular reviews of individual education programmes to ensure that targets are suitable. Regular testing of academic subjects occurs, with ongoing assessment of behaviour and personal development.

54. Assessments of children who are under five are undertaken when children enter the nursery and the reception class. These findings provide a clear picture of what children can do. Overall, the results of the assessments are used well to match work to the individual needs of each child, and to set targets. Children are assessed regularly through the year against these targets in order to evaluate their progress, and plan for the next stage of learning. Targets are frequently shared with parents and clear records are kept of pupils' learning. However, in the nursery, the results of assessment are not consistently used to ensure positive challenge for higher-attaining children. Teachers assess pupils' attainments and progress carefully in English and mathematics, but procedures are not so well developed in other subjects. Information is gathered through National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and through the use of other voluntary tests, as pupils move through the school. However, the data collected is not used to set individual targets to promote further progress, except for the oldest pupils towards the end of Key Stage 2. The school is aware of this weakness and has recently appointed an assessment co-ordinator to lead development in this area. The school has begun to monitor the attainment of pupils by gender. There is a very small minority of pupils with English as a second language and, as yet, there is no separate system for monitoring the achievement of these pupils.
55. Many external support agencies visit the school to help pupils with particular difficulties. These include speech and language therapists, an educational psychologist, school nurse and occupational therapists. All necessary procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are in place and they are taught safety matters, such as road safety, and water safety. Outside speakers, including the police, are often used to support this teaching.
56. Pupils' personal development is monitored well by teachers who know and value each individual. Pupils are encouraged to report instances of bullying, and they say that teachers are responsive when they do this. Bullying is discussed in assemblies and parents are involved at an early stage when it does occur. Teachers apply the rewards and sanctions system consistently; this means that pupils are clear about the rules and the boundaries for good and poor behaviour.
57. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and following up absence are unclear. There is no attendance policy and the lack of follow-up has resulted in high level of unauthorised absence, since some parents do not notify the school of the reasons for their child's absence. Attendance has deteriorated since the last inspection. The school is aware of the need to improve attendance through monitoring and promotion, and is putting measures in place to do this.
58. Since the last inspection, the high standard of pastoral care has been maintained, but the monitoring of attendance has deteriorated and is now unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. Parents are generally satisfied with the education and care provided by the school. There is an active Parent-Teacher Association, which raises money for resources through social and fund raising events. These are generally well attended. Money raised by the association is currently supporting the building of an outside garden area and improvements to the playgrounds. The school has held literacy evenings for parents, and regularly invites them to assemblies when pupils receive certificates. Parents of children with special educational needs are very pleased with the twice-yearly reviews of their child's progress to which they invited. However, parents say that information on the work their children are required to do is not normally provided, and that homework is 'spasmodic'. This formal communication with parents is only adequate. The inspection evidence bears out parents' views, since there is no homework policy, and little written information is provided on the work children are to do, including topics. Pupils' reports, while giving details of what has been taught, give limited information on pupils' strengths and weaknesses. There are few targets or areas for

development. The home-school agreement is not yet fully in place, although parents have recently received a draft agreement for their comments.

60. The school has good induction arrangements for children and their parents when children enter the nursery and reception classes, and when moving from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. Induction meetings are held with these parents and information given about school routines. There is a good quality draft prospectus for 1999-2000, which contains all the necessary information on curriculum and school procedures.
61. Newsletters and letters to parents about events in the school are regular and informative. Informal communication with parents is very good. They find teachers welcoming and available and ready to discuss concerns about their child's progress at almost any time. They say that the school is very sensitive to pupils' needs, and the acting headteacher, or class teacher, will contact them if concerned about their child's progress or behaviour. A useful notice board in the nursery ensures that parents are kept fully informed on current topics for learning. They are invited to support their children at home, and to share books with the children. Teachers are welcoming to parents and ensure that parents know and share the targets set for their child. There are sound procedures to ensure a happy transition from home to school for children under five. Parents are invited to the school and receive useful information booklets about the nursery and reception classes.
62. A small number of parents help in school with resources and in the library. Parents' involvement in pupils' work at home is limited. The inconsistent provision of homework and information on what homework is to be set may contribute to this. Overall, the school's relationship with its parents makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. The school is aware of the improvements which are needed, and plans to address the issues identified by the inspection.
63. The school works closely with parents and values their views, experience and belief that the child's needs will be met. Parents, who have transferred their children from other schools, find an improvement in this school's management of their children, with the raising of self-esteem and much less frequent problems. Parents of pupils with special educational needs support the school well and are appreciative of all efforts made to educate their children.
64. There are no formal systems for ensuring that parents of children whose first language is not English are informed of what is happening in the school. However, staff are accessible and parents are contacted individually by teachers, when necessary, to ensure that they receive essential information. These arrangements are satisfactory.
65. The inspection findings give a similar picture to that established in the previous report. Pupils' reports were then judged to contain too little guidance on how pupils might improve, and this aspect has not been addressed.
66. Parents' views on the spasmodic and insufficient homework are borne out by the inspection, as are their concerns over the lack of information on the work and projects their children are required to do.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. During the term prior to the inspection, the school has been led by the deputy headteacher as acting headteacher due to the long-term absence of the permanent headteacher.
68. The acting headteacher has provided firm leadership during the headteacher's absence. She has a clear and realistic perception of what the school needs to do to improve standards and is building well on what has already been achieved. She has developed the roles of the senior management team effectively. As a result, there is a clear sense of educational direction in the school and staff and governors are very aware of the need to raise standards. However, the role of curriculum co-ordinator is under developed.

69. Since the last inspection, curriculum co-ordinator roles have been clarified. Some staff who held co-ordinator roles in recent years have left the school and the subsequent assigning of their roles to current staff has not been managed logically. At the present time, the headteacher is required to oversee four National Curriculum subjects. This is too much of a burden in a school of this size. Currently, the allocation of additional payments to teaching staff does not properly reflect curricular responsibilities, or support a clear management structure. The acting headteacher has undertaken professional interviews with all members of the teaching and support staff, with a view to identifying, more closely, their professional strengths, ambitions and needs, and it is intended that this will lead to a rationalising of roles of responsibility. She is delegating increased responsibilities to the curriculum co-ordinators but, these key staff do not yet have sufficient responsibility for standards in their subjects.
70. The acting headteacher has ensured that school development initiatives build logically on earlier achievements. After the previous inspection, actions to be taken were set out in a clear plan and acted upon, in most cases, effectively. The previous inspection identified several major areas in need of improvement, and the school has made good progress in tackling these key issues, with subsequent improvements in the standard of education provided. Since the last inspection, there has been marked improvement in the management of pupils' behaviour and personal development, in teaching, and in the standard of education provided by the special educational needs units, as well as that for children under five.
71. The priorities for school improvement are established after extensive discussions between the acting headteacher, and teaching and support staff. Progress in meeting development targets has been evaluated by acting headteacher, staff and governing body. The introduction of a further school development plan, last autumn, has built sensibly on the earlier plan and identifies realistic priorities for further school improvement. For example, the school recognises the need for further development of policies and schemes of work, such as in information technology, science, writing, and speaking and listening. The initiatives reflect a desire to promote higher standards and the school development plan provides a useful structure for implementing such objectives. It is helping to ensure that a manageable programme of improvement is instigated and that staff energies and financial resources are targeted efficiently. The plan does not always include sufficiently objective measures for ascertaining whether the priorities are successfully completed.
72. The governing body is more involved in the life of the school than at the time of the last inspection and fulfils most of its statutory requirements although, currently, the appraisal of teachers is in abeyance. There are several recently appointed governors who have all attended training to enable them to be more effective. There are a number of committees meeting regularly that oversee finance, curriculum, premises and the appointment of personnel. Some governors have an overview of a particular National Curriculum subject and liaise with the co-ordinator of that subject in order that they may be more informed about the work of the school. The governors are reasonably involved in monitoring the day-to-day work of the school.
73. The governing body finance committee has a properly defined role. Governors are fully meeting their responsibilities in relation to budget setting, and they monitor spending commitments regularly throughout the year. The governing body is beginning to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of major spending decisions through the reports of the headteacher and through discussion, but there is insufficient use of closely defined measures to ascertain the degree to which priorities have been completed. Thus, whilst the governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and takes a keen interest in the use of the school's resources, the tools for establishing whether they are achieving best value are not sufficiently precise. The acting headteacher is very aware of these factors and is in the process of introducing a number of measures to strengthen such evaluation. The governing body is conscious of longer-term spending patterns and plans carefully for the future.

74. The co-ordinator for special educational needs works very hard, in a part-time capacity, to address all issues that may affect those pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes. There is close co-operation with all staff. Provision is successful across the school. Classroom and support assistants play a major part in individual or group work with these pupils. Their support is of a very high standard. Individual education plans are carefully structured and maintained. Outside agencies support the work in the school effectively. In this school, the area of special educational needs is very well led and managed, and is supported strongly by all members of staff, who welcome pupils with difficulties into their classes and support their development fully.
75. Arrangements for the monitoring of teaching are unsatisfactory overall. The acting headteacher visits all classrooms regularly, but there is no formal focus for the monitoring of teaching. Although curriculum co-ordinators scrutinise half-termly planning there is little direct monitoring of teaching. The English, mathematics and science co-ordinators undertake regular book trawls to monitor the quality of pupils' work and, in discussion with inspectors, were all aware of inconsistencies in provision and progress in their subjects. The literacy co-ordinators have been trained to monitor teaching and have observed literacy lessons, providing feedback and necessary support. This is having a good impact on teaching of English, which has improved since the last inspection.
76. The school has a commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, and all staff provide good role models. However, there is no named person to ensure the consistent implementation of the policy.
77. The school has clear aims that are set out in the school's prospectus. These demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of education, raising the self-esteem of pupils, enabling the 'maximum academic achievement', and the promotion of a secure environment. These aims are being well met by hard-working staff who demonstrate, daily, considerable concern for the achievements and welfare of all the pupils they teach.
78. There is a good match of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum and support staff are well used. The support given to newly qualified teachers properly reflects the 'package' provided by the local education authority, but there is no explicit documentation or procedures in place which would help staff new to the school to settle in quickly. Supply teachers are, thus, not always fully informed about what is expected of them or the curriculum they should offer the pupils. The resulting inconsistencies of provision have slowed the progress of pupils in Year 5 in the recent past, although this has now been addressed by the appointment of a permanent member of staff.
79. Accommodation is generally adequate to support the demands of the curriculum and is used efficiently. The exception is the outdoor area for children under five which does not provide them with an attractive or stimulating learning environment. The learning resources are sufficient to support the curriculum in most subjects although there are serious deficiencies in information technology where the lack of computers, software and equipment significantly limits the planned programme. The school is taking steps to address this issue. There is an attractive library area, but it is currently under used as a teaching resource.
80. Funds allocated for specific purposes, such as staff training, and the support of pupils with special educational needs, are properly targeted. They have contributed positively to standards although the use of computer analysis to monitor such expenditure is insufficiently accurate. The school is awaiting the installation of a suite of computers financed by a grant. The specific grant to support the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been effectively spent to promote standards and learning.
81. Most pupils enter school with knowledge and understanding which is well below that expected for their age. The school engenders a very positive ethos and pupils' attitudes are good. Progress in art and music is good and in most other subjects it is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching is good. When the additional money which is designated for the pupils in the special educational needs units is set aside, the financial allocation for educating each

pupil is close to the national average. In the context of all these factors, the school is judged to provide satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. The inspection team recognises the school's work to improve standards. We acknowledge that the school has already identified the improvement of standards in the core subjects and the further development of information technology and religious education within the development plan. To continue this work the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- raise attainment in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. In all these subjects ensure that:
 - subject co-ordinators take a leading role in monitoring the quality of teaching more rigorously, particularly through direct lesson observations, (*paragraph 75*);
 - share the good practice evident in classes in the main school, and in the special units, to the benefit of all pupils, (*paragraphs 23, 24, 88, 96*);
 - update and implement policies and schemes of work to ensure consistency in the delivery of the curriculum, (*paragraph 36*).

- In English:
 - devise and implement detailed schemes of work for speaking and listening, (*paragraph 128*);
 - agree an approach to the teaching of writing at both key stages, and produce and implement written guidelines that are disseminated to all staff, (*paragraph 128*).

- In science:
 - make more rigorous use of assessment to track pupils' progress and set them individual targets for improvement. (*paragraph 146*)

- In information technology:
 - devise and implement detailed guidelines that ensure that pupils' skills are built on systematically, (*paragraph 182*);
 - put into place a procedure for checking pupils' progress that ensures that every pupil receives their full entitlement to this subject, (*paragraph 178*).
 - improve the quality and quantity of hardware and software, (*paragraph 181*).

- In religious education:
 - monitor lesson planning closely to ensure that the curriculum is taught systematically, (*paragraph 203*);
 - ensure that religious education is timetabled regularly throughout the school year, (*paragraph 203*);
 - give pupils more opportunities for considering the impact of faith on people's lives, (*paragraph 203*).

- Rationalise the allocation of curriculum co-ordination responsibilities to ensure that co-ordinators have time to lead and manage their areas of responsibility efficiently, (*paragraph 69*).

- Continue to implement recently introduced strategies to improve attendance. Reduce the level of unauthorised attendance by instigating an attendance policy

whose requirements are made clear to parents, and monitor the success of these procedures, (*paragraph 57*).

- Further develop the monitoring role of the governing body by devising systems to evaluate the success of spending decisions more precisely, (*paragraphs 73*).
- Improve the provision for outdoor play for children under five, (*paragraph 79*).

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- ensure that temporary and supply teachers are provided with sufficient relevant information to enable them to follow schemes of work and school routines appropriately, (*paragraph 78*);
- ensure the school library is used regularly as a teaching resource, (*paragraph 79*).

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNITS

83. There are two separate units in the school funded from different sources, though they remain an integral part of the school. These are identified as the Speech and Language Unit, with two classes covering Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and the Learning Difficulties Unit, where there are three classes covering Key Stage 1, lower Key Stage 2 and upper Key Stage 2. Each of the twenty-three pupils in the learning difficulties unit has a Statement of special educational need. This applies to eighteen pupils in the speech and language unit, with five others undergoing assessment.
84. Pupils come from a wide area and most travel by taxi each day. Distance from the school often prevents these pupils from taking full part in after-school activities. Whenever possible, parents agree to pick up their child later. Pupils in each unit have full access to the National Curriculum and are integrated well into the life of the school.

THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT

85. The teachers in the speech and language unit, together with the visiting speech therapists, share their expertise to provide the best possible education for the children with speech and language problems. This extends to giving advice and training to staff across the school. Pupils are screened for language and speech difficulties on entry to the school to ensure early diagnosis. Individual education plans are well-constructed, with suitable targets set. These are regularly revised.
86. Many of the pupils who are admitted to the unit have learning difficulties as well as specific speech disorders. Those who require intensive speech therapy, have three sessions a week with the therapist, and other pupils once a week, where necessary. The approaches used are working well and enabling pupils to make good progress towards their individual targets.
87. Standards of attainment have improved since the previous inspection of 1997 at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, some pupils are achieving standards in literacy and numeracy that are similar to those seen generally. This is closely linked to the positive impact of the work of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 2 generally remain below the usual standard although standards for some in numeracy reach average levels in terms of identifying and constructing two-dimensional shapes. Pupils make good progress at each key stage in relation to their individual targets. Reading is hampered by poor articulation, though pupils often know the words. Listening skills are good and there is plenty of practice in speaking.
88. The quality of teaching in the speech and language unit is very good at both key stages. Lessons are prepared thoroughly, with careful attention to detail and consideration of individual needs. Teachers show very good subject knowledge in all learning areas. Pupils are constantly urged to make maximum effort. They are offered praise, encouragement and understanding, coupled with firm control. All explanations are clear and appropriate. The teachers have high expectations. Teachers are supported by the exceptionally good work of the classroom assistants and the expertise of the speech therapists, who contribute, in turn, to the important levels of learning for these pupils. Class management is excellent at both key stages.
89. Pupils display very positive attitudes towards learning. They try hard with their work and behaviour, and respond well to the stimulation provided by the teachers. In lessons, they concentrate well, are keen to answer questions and are enthusiastic about tackling new goals. Their standard of behaviour is very good, and they are aware of the needs of others. Pupils settle well in groups and work co-operatively with each other. Their personal and social development is very good.

90. The manager is a very skilled and knowledgeable practitioner. She attends numerous courses covering all areas of development in education, and consistently updates the work of the speech and language unit. She, regularly, provides training for students and teachers in other schools. Regular meetings with the teacher at Key Stage 2 and the speech therapists ensure continuity and understanding.
91. Accommodation in the speech and language unit is adequate, although the Key Stage 1 classroom is rather cramped. The insulated room provided for work with the speech therapist is good. Resources are generally good. Pupils are taken regularly to visit places of interest and into the local community, and older pupils have the chance to experience an Outward Bound residential venture in the summer. The curriculum is planned carefully to incorporate all aspects of education and it shows interesting approaches. For example, pupils at Key Stage 1 in a numeracy lesson decided on quantities of food for their wedding feast, and linked this with reading and writing. Social occasions, such as inviting parents to the wedding party, and regular coffee mornings, provide good home contacts.
92. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection of 1997. Areas of weakness have been fully addressed. The quality of provision and standard of teaching are very good across the key stages and the curriculum continues to be varied and stimulating. Staff have taken the initiative and have attended appropriate courses to gain new insights. The school has set out to tackle problems previously raised and has succeeded. There is a very good ethos in the unit. The speech and language unit is a strength of the school.

THE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES UNIT

93. Standards have improved greatly in the learning difficulties unit since the last inspection. The appointment of a new co-ordinator, who has tremendous enthusiasm and knowledge of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, has largely contributed to the success the unit has had. All staff have co-operated to make the unit workable as a means to help children extend their education. Although standards of attainment remain below what is expected, pupils make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.
94. A small proportion of higher achievers are achieving at the expected level in literacy and numeracy. This was observed at Key Stage 1, where a child was working at Level 2.
95. The co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to produce full and comprehensive documents covering the policy and schemes of work for the unit. These documents have been constructed with the co-operation of the other teachers in the unit. They are impressive and encompass all areas of learning and social development. Records of achievement are carefully kept and reports are up-to-date. The co-ordinator attends courses on a regular basis, disseminating information to the other teachers.
96. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was very good, overall, at each key stage. Two lessons at lower Key Stage 2 were excellent. The usual class teacher of upper Key Stage 2 was absent during the inspection and her place was taken by a supply teacher, whose experience and expertise meant that the pupils in this class benefited from the skills and knowledge he brought to the school. Teachers show excellent awareness of pupils' individual needs. They explain things clearly and have high expectations. Lesson plans are very well constructed. Ongoing assessment of pupils' progress is well used to inform further lesson planning. Preparations and organisation are very thorough.
97. Pupils in the learning difficulties unit enjoy their lessons. They are highly motivated to learn and take delight in their own achievements. They 'glow with success'. Pupils work very hard indeed and are able to sustain concentration throughout a lesson. They show confidence in expressing themselves. Behaviour is very good. Older pupils generally work independently. All work happily in a group. Provision for social development is particularly good. For example, the unit plans a selection of visits for the children including a residential stay at an Outward Bound Centre in the summer.

98. Accommodation and resources are good. All aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. The pupils in the learning difficulties unit particularly enjoy, and succeed in subjects such as art and music. Some very fine art work was seen during the inspection at both key stages. The learning difficulties unit has made great strides since the last inspection. There is a more positive ethos about the work and general attitude in all rooms. Pupils have developed a sense of enquiry which will help overall learning. Work is set more appropriately, although some of the reading material is not suitable for pupils at upper Key Stage 2 in terms of suitability for this age group. There has been very good development in this unit. The learning difficulties unit is a strength of the school.
99. Development planning, record keeping, reports, and reviews, are all well documented in both units. Careful monitoring of attainment and progress takes place. The school has regular contact with necessary outside agencies. Contacts with parents and families are strong. The majority of parents are very pleased with their child's progress. The school is to be congratulated on the success of both units.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	16	40	36	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	253
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		49
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		92

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	92.8
National comparative data	94.1

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	2.3
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	25	20	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	14
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	28	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	62 (56)	64 (80)	62 (81)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	18
	Girls	14	15	16
	Total	26	29	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58 (78)	64 (83)	76 (83)
	National	82 (82)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	26	11	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	8
	Girls	4	6	4
	Total	10	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	27 (38)	32 (48)	32 (64)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	37	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	27 (48)	32 (38)	32 (64)
	National	68 (65)	89 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	275
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	13	
Other minority ethnic groups	13	

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	21

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	260

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
	£
Total income	521,920
Total expenditure	527,102
Expenditure per pupil	2,015
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,500
Balance carried forward to next year	20,318

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	279
Number of questionnaires returned	111
Percentage of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	23	8	1	3
My child is making good progress in school.	58	32	4	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	39	5	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	42	13	12	8
The teaching is good.	54	38	2	4	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	36	13	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	27	6	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	45	37	10	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	43	34	11	4	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	32	6	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	40	9	1	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

100. Children under five are provided with a good start to their education, both in the nursery and in the reception classes.
101. The attainment of most children under five, on entry to the nursery, is well below average, and this is confirmed by the school's most recent early assessments. The children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress overall. However, few of them reach the national targets in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development, by the time they are of statutory school age. In their physical development, they reach the standard expected.

Personal and social development

102. Although children make good progress in the nursery and reception class in their personal and social development, by the age of five they are below the expectations of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The children come into school happily and settle down quickly at the start of each session. In the nursery, the children enjoy the security of well-established routines. They listen attentively, learn to follow instructions and relate well to adults. They make independent choices when using nursery equipment, and become absorbed quickly in their chosen activity. In this, they show quiet concentration and perseverance. However, many independent tasks happen with limited communication between the children. They show little ability to play together, to respond to each other or to co-operate their play. In the reception class, children are interested in the activities offered. Behaviour is good and children abide by class rules and routines. They work individually, in small and whole-class groups and concentrate well on their tasks even when not under direct supervision. They use school equipment with care, and help to tidy up at the end of the session. There is more evidence of co-operative play, such as in role-play, but children are happier in pairs rather than larger groups. Many continue to use equipment with limited communication with others, and few show an ability to initiate new ideas.
103. The quality of teaching in this aspect of children's learning is good. It enables children's confidence and learning to develop within a secure and friendly environment. Staff in the nursery and reception class know their children well and respond to their individual needs. In the nursery, every opportunity is used to extend their personal and social skills, encouraging children to co-operate together and respond, positively, to social circumstances. In the reception class, there are high expectations for the development of independence, responsibility and good behaviour.

Language and literacy

104. Children enter the nursery with skills in literacy and language which are well below average. They make good progress in both the nursery and reception class, but by the age of five their attainment remains below the Desirable Learning Outcomes for this area of learning. In the nursery the speech of a significant number of children is very indistinct, and single words only are used. They find it difficult to talk about what they are doing or communicate experiences through activities such as role-play. Their listening skills are better. Children enjoy listening to stories and listen carefully to the teacher. They are at a very early stage of development with early writing and reading activities, although some recognise their names on flash cards. They share books with adults, and some attempt to tell the story of the book through looking at the pictures. Only a small minority of children know any letter sounds, can write their names and recognise familiar text. In the reception class, children show more confidence with speaking skills, but frequently are not able to construct logical sentences. When engaged in role-play, they concentrate on the activity rather than using speech to

communicate together. They listen attentively to the teacher, and respond appropriately to stories, recognising repetition in text. They know how a book is organised, search for meaning in the pictures and some children identify familiar words. A minority of children recognise letters and are beginning to associate them with initial sounds. Children recognise their own names, but a number are unable to consistently write recognisable letters.

105. The quality of teaching of language and literacy is good. Relationships between staff and children are good, therefore, children are motivated to persevere and give of their best. In the nursery, strategies for shared reading are effective in helping to develop early reading skills. Staff take every opportunity to encourage children to speak about what they do and learn. This is particularly well demonstrated by the use of guided role-play. In the reception class, planning for lessons with a literacy focus is effective and there is a clear understanding of what children are to learn. Lessons are organised efficiently so that children have maximum opportunity to develop literacy skills. The nursery nurse provides useful support in the group tasks. The progress of all children is assessed regularly and efficiently. Appropriate targets are set and clear records are kept. However, in the nursery, limited attention is given to planning activities which consistently provide appropriate challenges for children of higher ability. Although all teachers place necessary emphasis on the development of children's speaking and listening during lessons, there is no specific planned programme to ensure structured focus on the development of these essential skills.

Mathematics

106. Children are making good progress in many areas of mathematics, and there are examples of the sound understanding of number expected for the age group. However, the majority attain standards which are below the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. In the nursery, only a few can count by rote, but some children can count with help in realistic situations. This was demonstrated when children counted the number of spaces required before programming the programmable robot to move forwards. Some identify written numbers to five by counting and matching. They develop their understanding of shape and pattern through games, and of capacity through sand and water play. However, children lack the necessary mathematical language to talk about what they are doing. In the reception class, children count and match accurately to seven and some go higher. More able children are beginning to write recognisable numbers and draw the correct number of shapes to match written numbers. They use simple positional language correctly and previous work shows they are able to order a small number of objects by size. Children are beginning to recognise two-dimensional shapes, but progress overall is hindered by their lack of the necessary language skills. Children sing and use actions in number rhymes and songs.
107. The teaching of mathematics is good. In the nursery, effective methods, such as lively games, are employed to interest and stimulate the children and to develop their understanding of mathematical language. Good opportunities are taken to add to this through discussion during other activities, although planned challenges for higher-attaining pupils are limited. In the reception class, assessment is used effectively to match learning objectives and activities to the needs of the children. Whole-class learning is made fun and realistic through strategies such as stories and the use of puppets. Activities chosen to support this learning in individual and small group tasks are appropriate and effective in developing understanding and consolidating learning. Questions are used skilfully to extend children's understanding. The nursery nurse is effective in providing help and guidance to children in small group tasks.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

108. Children enter the school with a very limited awareness of the world in which they live. Attainment by the age of five is below what is expected nationally, but their progress is good. In the nursery, many children are hesitant when talking about their homes or where they live. Children increase their knowledge and understanding through the many opportunities presented to them. Through activities such as cooking they learn to observe, to mix and stir, and to recognise the ingredients and tools they use. They explore the properties of sand, water and play dough, but few have the ability to make simple observations or to ask why

things happen. With help, they use information technology to support their learning. They program the robot to move forward and back, but only the small minority of higher-attaining children can explain how and why it is operated. They explore and select materials and equipment and use simple cutting and joining skills. By the time children are in the reception class, they have developed a livelier and wider curiosity of the world, and this reflects the positive progress they make. They explore simple forces such as pushing and pulling by experimenting with moveable toys. Children predict which objects will float or sink, and make simple observations. Their skills for cutting and joining have developed so that they are able, with help, to make simple teddy faces and crocodiles.

109. The quality of teaching in this area is good. The worthwhile experiences provided by the nursery staff are successfully built on in the reception class so that children systematically increase their awareness of the world they live in. In the reception class, the teacher's use of questioning to encourage deeper thinking, and the good quality conversation, are contributory factors in extending children's knowledge. The careful planning and organisation ensures efficient time and pace to the lessons. The involvement of the nursery nurse helps to ensure that the large number of children in the reception class receive sufficient attention.

Physical development

110. By the age of five children's level of attainment is appropriate for their age, and they make good progress. In the nursery, children develop their skills through activities such as cutting and sticking. They fix components together with an appropriate degree of dexterity when using construction apparatus. They use the school hall for more formal physical education, during which time they show an increasing awareness of space. In the reception class, children use a variety of tools, such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors, safely and carefully. They make wheeled toys from construction kits, manipulating small pieces well. This aspect of their physical development shows particularly good progress. They demonstrate sound co-ordination and accuracy when bouncing, sending and receiving large balls. When running and jumping in the playground they show good co-ordination in their movements
111. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of physical skills in the classroom, so that children can handle small tools and apparatus successfully. The good relationships and sound class control creates a secure atmosphere in more formal physical education lessons, so that confidence and skills can develop. However, in the reception class, the large number of children restricts movement and this has an adverse effect on learning. Staff endeavour to give the children supervised opportunities in the playground to extend their awareness of space and develop their co-ordination, but a weakness in provision is the lack of a suitable outdoor play area and an appropriate range of equipment.

Creative development

112. By the age of five, children's attainment is below the expectations of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, but, overall, they make satisfactory progress. In the nursery, children have a limited range of imagination. They are unable, for example, to develop their own ideas for role-play, and spend little time in this area unless encouraged. Their participation is hampered by their lack of communication skills. Their efforts in using paint, colours and other materials are limited and they need positive guidance. Their participation in musical activities is better. They sing with enjoyment, are familiar with the songs they have learned, and use appropriate actions with gusto. In the reception class, the progress children make is seen in their ability to experiment with material, although many continue to need a positive lead. For example, one of the children, after making a picture with glue and glitter, created a colourful picture frame through the use of coloured tissue. Others then eagerly followed this idea. They paint bold pictures, and in examining the work of famous artists, explore various skills in pattern, shape and texture to create their own attractive pictures.

113. Staff in the nursery effectively provide stimulation and guidance for the development of children's creativity, although there are insufficient planned opportunities for children to experiment and develop their own independent creativity. For example, they successfully encourage children to participate in role-play by playing their part, alongside children, in the role-play corner. This is successful in stimulating children's enjoyment, confidence and ideas, but children are not then given immediate opportunity to build on this independently and co-operatively. This results in children losing the momentum of the useful experience, and the opportunity to use the vocabulary they have gained. In the reception class, the teacher introduces a wide range of techniques so that the children can develop their creative skills. This is effective in promoting children's knowledge and awareness of how different pictures and effects can be created, alongside the development of their own independent creativity.
114. The school and early years staff have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery since the last inspection, and, in this, they have been successful. Children in the nursery receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which is carefully and effectively linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five. Learning takes place in a well-organised environment, where relationships and interactions between children and adults have a positive impact on children's progress. There are positive links with the reception class, which ensure a smooth progression in children's knowledge and where the good practice of the nursery is maintained. Children with special educational needs receive effective support.

ENGLISH

115. Attainment in English is below national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. This represents an improvement in standards since the 1999 National Curriculum test and tasks when attainment was found to be well below the national average in both reading and writing. Although pupils' attainment in the reading and writing tests was well below that of pupils from similar backgrounds, if the test results of pupils who attend the special educational needs units are omitted, results in these tests are in line with those of similar schools. Taking the tests of the last four years into account, attainment is well below the national average and the trend for the last three years has been one of slightly declining standards. However, the groups are small and the difference in points scored by pupils from year to year is not significant. Findings from the inspection show the positive impact that the National Literacy Strategy has had on the improvements made.
116. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English is below the national average for all pupils. This is better than the standard seen in the 1999 tests. Pupils in mainstream classes in 1999 tests achieved standards below the national average and below those achieved by similar schools. However, there was a high number of pupils with Statements of special educational need in the Year 6 class and the group taking the tests was a small one. Taking the scores of the last four years into account, the trend is very erratic, with improvement in standards one year and decline the next. Results are effected by the variable numbers of pupils with Statements of special educational needs in each group. The size of the Year 6 groups in the mainstream classes is too small for the variation in standards to be significant.
117. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve similar standards and progress at similar rates to other pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards achieving the targets in their individual education plans.
118. Since the last inspection, standards in reading have improved at the end of Key Stage 1 whilst standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 remain the same. Standards in writing remain the same at the end of Key Stage 1 and have declined at the end of Key Stage 2.

Speaking and listening

119. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening at the end of Key Stage 1 is below the national average. This is higher than the standard reflected in the teacher assessments of 1999 which take account of all pupils including those in the special educational needs units.
120. Many of the younger pupils show confidence when speaking in front of the whole class, but their answers to teachers' questions are frequently in the form of one word answers. Some pupils talk to each other during practical activities, but others say very little. Pupils make steady progress in speaking and listening and older pupils answer in sentences. However, their vocabulary is limited and some pupils' speech is immature for their age. Although they listen carefully to teachers, they do not always pay sufficient attention to other pupils' responses in whole-class sessions. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make progress that is at least satisfactory and, for the older pupils, it is sometimes good. They benefit from opportunities in the literacy hour to discuss the quality of the texts they are studying and make correct use of technical language they are acquiring. They listen with concentration and show this by their spoken responses. They increasingly demonstrate understanding of the main points of discussion. However, the vocabulary of many pupils is still limited for their age and, when responding in informal conversations and in lessons, they struggle to find the appropriate word to express their understanding and ideas. By the end of Key Stage 2, they understand that it is necessary to adapt their style of speech to suit the audience and the occasion.

Reading

121. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is in line with national averages. As they move through the key stage, pupils are acquiring a reasonable range of strategies for reading unknown words, such as using the sounds at the beginning and end of words and the sense of the surrounding text to help them. At the end of the key stage, many pupils read simple texts accurately. Some are able to read aloud expressively. During a literacy lesson in Year 2, a number of pupils were able to demonstrate to the class how to read direct speech with appropriate changes in intonation. Older pupils understand how to use the contents and index to find information in their reference books. In conversation with pupils about their current reading, they were able to identify the favourite part of the story and give reasons for their points of view.
122. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading is in line with national averages. Pupils make good progress in reading. Throughout the key stage, pupils demonstrate an interest in reading. Their insight into the literature they read has increased because of the work undertaken in the literacy hour. For example, in Year 3 pupils identify the moral of the stories they discuss and, in Year 5, pupils understand how alliteration and imagery is used in the poetry of Wordsworth to create a certain effect. Pupils' progress has benefited by teachers' close monitoring of their understanding in group reading sessions. By Year 6, most pupils in the mainstream class are able to read reasonably demanding text with understanding. They discuss the content of the books they are reading and make comparisons with other books that have similar themes. However, the limited range of fiction they have to choose from restricts the reading of older pupils. As they move through the key stage, pupils acquire reasonable skill in locating the words and information they need from dictionaries and other reference works.

Writing

123. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment in writing are below national averages. By the time they are seven, the majority of pupils are able to write simple narrative pieces which have a logical structure. However, only the more able are punctuating their work accurately, and few attempts are made to use language for effect as well as meaning. The spelling of the most common words is usually accurate. There is a marked improvement in handwriting as pupils move through the key stage and older pupils print legibly and consistently.

124. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in writing is below national averages. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making good progress in writing. They are learning to punctuate their work systematically and, by the time they reach Year 4, most are writing for a wide range of purposes such as story, play scripts and letters. The more able pupils produce interesting well-structured and carefully presented work. The use of language and accuracy of punctuation, in independent writing, is showing the benefits of word and sentence work in the literacy hour. Many pupils are producing work with complex and accurately punctuated sentences. Less able pupils are developing the confidence to tackle written work and use interesting vocabulary. Progress for some pupils has slowed in Year 5 because work set for them, earlier in the school year, did not build logically on their earlier achievements. However, this situation has recently been rectified and pupils are beginning to make up for lost time. In Year 6, pupils' progress accelerates. Their written work is usually well presented, with accurate spelling and punctuation. Handwriting is legible, even, and joined. The more able pupils write interesting pieces of prose, but some pupils find it difficult to produce extended pieces of writing that sustain a reasonable standard of expression and punctuation to the end.
125. The response of pupils to English is good at both key stages. Pupils are usually keen to work hard, and listen carefully to the teacher. Sometimes, at Key Stage 1, when the pace of the lesson slows, or pupils are unsure about what is expected of them, they become fidgety and restless but once they are clear about the purpose of the task they settle down and work hard. At both key stages, pupils work co-operatively in groups and this allows their teacher to give attention to other pupils. Most pupils are enthusiastic about reading and read at home regularly.
126. The quality of teaching is good overall. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The literacy hour is used effectively, throughout the school, to develop skills across the English curriculum. Teachers use a good range of strategies to engage the pupils' interest. For example, at the beginning of the lesson the objectives are displayed and discussed. The teaching of reading is organised well. Teachers keep careful records of the reading that takes place in literacy sessions and monitor pupils' reading diaries carefully. Teachers have positive relationships with their pupils and exercise firm class control. The marking of pupils' work acknowledges pupils' efforts and sets short-term targets for improvement.
127. Where lessons are less successful, it is usually because the pace of lesson is slow and pupils become restless. Teachers plan appropriate writing activities but sometimes fail to make their intention clear to the pupils.
128. The school has introduced effectively the National Literacy Strategy, and the literacy hour is established securely in all classes. The school wisely supplements the hour with other sessions for writing at Key Stage 2. The skills of literacy are underused in other subjects. The two co-ordinators are hard working and committed to raising standards of attainment. The subject policy is in need of updating. There is no agreement on the approach to the teaching of writing, nor are there detailed schemes for the teaching of speaking and listening. The co-ordinators are well supported by the senior management team and are aware of the need to continue monitoring teaching and learning in classes to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress.

MATHEMATICS

129. The National Curriculum tests undertaken in 1999 by pupils near the end of Key Stage 1, show that the proportion achieving the national average was very low in comparison with all schools. It was well below average when compared with similar schools. The test results have been variable over the past four years. The number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 who achieved the national standard in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was also very low when compared with all schools. The proportion achieving this standard was also very low when compared with similar schools. During the four years to 1999, results in mathematics have been variable at the end of Key Stage 1, and below the national average at the end of Key

Stage 2. The test results include those pupils who are based in the special educational needs units who have Statements of special educational need. This reduces the scores at Key Stage 1 by approximately ten per cent, and 20 per cent at the end of Key Stage 2.

130. The majority of pupils enter Key Stage 1 with mathematical skills which are lower than those expected for pupils of this age. Most make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 1, although the proportion achieving the national standard remains below average. This satisfactory progress is maintained at Key Stage 2, leading to a below average percentage of pupils in Year 6 achieving both the national standard and the higher grade. In all parts of the school, pupils with special educational needs are sensitively and effectively supported, and such pupils make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils
131. The school places considerable emphasis upon mathematics and there is proper attention to the development of sound understanding of mathematical principles. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils count to 100 and can mentally add and subtract numbers to ten, and beyond. Some pupils are beginning to understand place value, use some of the multiplication tables, and employ the appropriate operation when calculating. They understand halves and quarters. However, the proportion of pupils with this level of understanding is below the average. A majority can identify the common two-dimensional shapes and can describe some of their features and properties. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of solid shapes. Many require additional support in order to collect information systematically, and to construct simple graphs to illustrate their findings. Pupils are beginning to use standard and non-standard measures of weight, capacity, and length, but their understanding and skills are below average. An insufficient number of pupils are able to make independent decisions as they use and apply their mathematics to solve problems.
132. By the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide, with expected competence and accuracy, is below average. Pupils' understanding of decimals, fractions, and percentages, is less than expected. Most can name a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and have an appreciation of their various features and properties. The higher achievers understand the concept of angle as a measurement of turn. Pupils collect and interpret data, and use a range of graphical representation, but the depth and range of analysis is below that expected. The number who can apply mathematics to different situations is below average.
133. In both key stages, pupils are competent in their application of mathematical knowledge to other subjects but the use of information technology to support learning is unsatisfactory in both key stages. There is some emphasis upon importance of mathematical pattern, although opportunities to extend this aspect of the subject into an aesthetic appreciation, and to generate excitement through the exploration of such patterns are insufficiently developed.
134. At both key stages, the response of pupils to mathematics is good. The majority enjoy the subject and, with some exceptions, have a positive attitude. Most pupils, including the youngest, collaborate productively. They work hard, sustain concentration and often become absorbed in the task. Most will persevere to overcome problems. The majority present their written work with care. Many pupils display interest in the subject, and the majority are keen to discuss their work.
135. The quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers are conscientious in the support which they provide and display awareness of the individual needs of their pupils. Teaching generally focuses upon promoting the underlying mathematical understanding, and teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge. Most lessons contain interesting and relevant activities. The recommendations contained in the National Numeracy Strategy material are properly reflected in the structure of lessons. There is some good teaching which is characterised by more sharply defined learning objectives, tasks which provide a stimulating challenge, and lessons conducted at a purposeful pace. These qualities were particularly well demonstrated in a very good lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 relating to three-dimensional shapes in which the mathematical expertise of the teacher, the exciting

tasks, and the very positive attitudes to learning which were created, combined to promote good progress.

136. The school has satisfactorily implemented the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and this is having a positive impact upon learning and standards. All teachers have a clear understanding of the strategy, although some teachers give pupils insufficient opportunities to discuss their ideas and understanding in lessons.
137. Teachers know their pupils well and this enables them to assess day-to-day progress accurately, and to respond meaningfully. Teachers assess progress and evaluate lessons periodically and this has a satisfactory influence on day-to-day planning. Formal tests are analysed so that the strengths and weaknesses of the programme can be identified and the need for greater emphasis upon mathematical terminology is an example of how this has affected the programme. The procedures for assessing pupils' work are used satisfactorily to inform further lesson planning.
138. The broadly favourable findings of the previous inspection have been sustained and the criticism relating to uneven progress and variation in teaching standards have been addressed successfully.

SCIENCE

139. The 1999 results of teachers' assessments and National Curriculum tests show that pupils achieve standards that are well below average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This is including the results of the pupils with Statements of special educational need who are based in the two special educational needs units. When the scores of pupils in the special educational needs units are omitted, results in these tests improve by 20 per cent. Over the last four years, trends in standards in the national tests have been very variable, declining one year then improving the next. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' attainment in science at the end of both key stages is below the nationally expected level, but there are signs of improvement within the lessons observed, particularly in Key Stage 2.
140. Pupils start at Key Stage 1 with knowledge and understanding that is below what might be expected for their age. Their experiences are restricted, and their lack of wide vocabulary and literacy skills hinders their development in science. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the key stage. In Year 1, pupils explore the seasons and sources of light. In talking about their work on a need for a balanced diet, some pupils know which foods are good for you. The majority, however, understand only in simple terms that humans need food to stay alive. By the end of the key stage, pupils are developing early investigative skills. They identify the use of batteries and electricity, but find it difficult to explain how a bulb lights up. They are aware of different materials and how they can be changed. They talk about the effect of pulling and stretching on materials, but make only basic observations. The majority lack the necessary skills to respond to questions of, "why?" or "how?" They attempt to use simple sentences and charts to record their findings, but need much guidance for this. Their attainment is below what is expected for the age group.
141. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 are accustomed to using a fair test for investigations. They make reasonable predictions and are beginning to analyse their findings before reaching a sensible conclusion. They have sound knowledge and understanding of light and dark, and how shadows change. They successfully link previous knowledge with current queries, and use this in their testing to learn about thermal insulators. This good practice is developed in Year 4, where pupils' planning for investigations is concise and sensible. They use scientific vocabulary and write of "not controlling variables". Their knowledge of the functions of the human body is good. The overall achievement and progress within these year groups is good. Work completed earlier in the year by pupils in Year 5 is unchallenging, and topics covered lack the necessary depth for good scientific learning; much of the work consisting of factual information. However, recent work and teaching shows that pupils are beginning to develop investigative skills and are learning to observe and predict. Progress is now more positive.

142. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils explain the necessity for a fair test and begin to make suggestions for carrying this out. This was demonstrated by a group of lower-attaining pupils during their work on magnetism. Pupils know that friction is a force and the effects of rough against smooth, but make generalisations in their explanations rather than confidently discussing cause and effect. Their understanding is below what is expected for the age group. They have acquired sound knowledge and understanding of some aspects of life processes through their work on the human body. This knowledge is linked effectively to investigations, such as the effect of exercise, and the use of charts to record a fitness file. However, aspects of pupils' recent work are very similar to current work in Years 3 and 4. For example, a piece of written work on the solar system was identical in Year 3 and Year 6, indicating that planning for the development of knowledge is not carefully built on, and a lack of independence and originality in their work. While there are examples of good progress in lessons and in the detailed topics covered in year groups, there is inconsistency in the building of progress systematically from one year to the next.
143. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively to enable them to make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.
144. The attitudes of the majority of pupils are good. They are particularly good in Years 3, 4 and 5, where pupils show a lively curiosity and a desire to learn. Pupils enjoy practical work and participate well in discussions, particularly when sufficiently stimulated and challenge. They co-operate well in pairs, or in groups, when undertaking investigative work. They are less interested when lessons proceed at a slow pace, and the recording of work depends on the unchallenging use of worksheets or published material.
145. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good overall at Key Stage 2. In the best lessons, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are able to set appropriately challenging activities. This ensures that pupils' learning is comprehensive and that pupils of all abilities can progress. Lesson plans state clearly what pupils are required to learn, and teachers' use of questioning techniques is skilful in developing pupils' sense of enquiry and testing their understanding. Teachers have the necessary expertise to ensure there is an effective blend of investigation and acquisition of knowledge, and this is a strength of the subject. Lessons proceed at a good pace, ensuring maximum opportunity for learning. Where lessons are satisfactory, aspects of class management and organisation are less secure, and this slows the pace of the lesson. This has a direct impact on the concentration and motivation of the pupils, and their ability to extend their knowledge and understanding.
146. There are weaknesses in organisation that impede the efficient development of the subject, and this impacts negatively on pupils' attainment and learning. The co-ordinators for science have had little opportunity to monitor and evaluate the science curriculum by scrutinising teachers' planning or observing teaching. However, they have recently looked at pupils' work and, through this, have identified weaknesses in the teaching of the curriculum. There are established procedures for assessing pupils' work, but inconsistent use is made of the results to plan the next stage of pupils' learning. The co-ordinators have recently developed a new scheme of work, but this has yet to be implemented. It provides a sound basis for ensuring that the programme for science promotes coverage and progression efficiently. The co-ordinators have sufficient expertise and are committed to improvement in all aspects of the subject, and to raising standards.
147. Literacy skills are not consistently developed through written work. Mathematical skills are developed through the use of graphs. Insufficient use is made of information technology, although there was a positive example of it being used for research in the topic on the human body by groups of pupils.
148. Standards achieved in science have declined since the last inspection, although pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. This was a weakness identified in the last inspection, and shows little improvement. The results of teacher assessments and National Curriculum

tests are not closely analysed to help improve pupils' learning or to set targets for improvement.

ART

149. Observations of art lessons during the inspection were limited. Judgements have been based in addition on scrutiny of work and documents and discussion with staff and pupils. The subject has improved dramatically since the last inspection. Progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, is good at both key stages.
150. The youngest pupils at Key Stage 1 experiment with through tracing, finger painting, joining dots and simple drawings. They have opportunities to experience simple modelling and colours in painting and crayoning and this extends their understanding of art. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils learn to use collage materials, to good effect, and experiment with drawing materials such as chalk, pastels and charcoal. In Year 1, for example, pupils had the choice of material to draw an African face mask. The results were interesting and of a good standard for their age.
151. In Year 2, pupils consider how several artists used line and different media. Pupils discuss the work of Paul Klee and talk about two- and three- dimensional shapes. Their work included drawing a range of two-dimensional irregular polygons which, when boldly outlined and shaded in pastel colours, with a background in contrasting colour, proved to be very effective. Clay modelling by pupils at Key Stage 1 showed recognisable representations of animals and trees, and food on a plate.
152. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils become adept in line drawing. Some good work in sketching was observed at the lower end of Key Stage 2, with pupils looking into a mirror to draw a self-portrait in detail, bringing good results. Pattern work becomes regular and more imaginative by the end of Key Stage 2, with greater boldness, expression and flair attached to paintings. Older pupils show good understanding of the works of different artists and talk about styles such as abstract and impressionist with confidence.
153. Pupils at both key stages show imagination, creativity, and a variety of techniques in painting and drawing. A range of techniques is employed to stimulate interest in art, including sponge printing and the use of templates. An example of fabric printing on display during the inspection showed a high standard of achievement at Key Stage 2. All work was very well presented and reflected attention to detail, and pride in the work.
154. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their artwork. They value the end results and take pride in talking about work displayed. Pupils develop their own individual styles and enjoy experimenting with those of famous artists. Their personal development through art is good. Their overall attitude now is very good.
155. Although few lessons were seen during the inspection, the examination of teachers' plans showed good knowledge and understanding, high expectations and the use of ongoing assessment. In the lessons observed, relationships and class management were good. There was effective use of teaching methods and the pace of the lesson set appropriately for the pupils. Teachers are obviously more confident in teaching art now, and have been helped by the construction of a useful new policy and schemes of work since the last inspection.
156. The co-ordinator is skilled in the subject and enthusiastic towards the promotion of art for all pupils. The school makes good use of a commercial scheme that has been adapted to suit their particular needs. In the six months it has been in use, the school has seen the benefits in terms of teaching and learning. Links with other subjects are strong. Pupils in Year 6, for example, are studying the Renaissance period at present. Painting is very popular, but other areas of the art curriculum are given attention. All staff co-operate in the programme of art

development in the school. The co-ordinator has no time to monitor classroom teaching, but is willing to advise and help. The subject is very well led and managed.

157. Resources in art are very good. The recent addition of acrylic material is extending pupils into a new dimension, as is the introduction of pattern and design computer programs. The school has a reward system of certificates for good work in art, with competition for artist of the year, awarded annually, in two categories. The art programme in school is particularly beneficial for pupils with special educational needs. They respond well in this area of development.
158. Most of the artists' work featured, at present, concerns European artists, with very little attention being given to non-European art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

159. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection in design and technology, so judgements have been made largely on scrutiny of work, discussion with pupils and staff, and examination of documents. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. At both key stages, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. In the main, design and technology is linked into topics in other subjects.
160. At Key Stage 1, the younger pupils develop cutting and joining at a reasonable level; older pupils use materials to cut, shape and assemble pieces accurately to produce sliding eyes on a teddy face, or moving jaws on a cardboard crocodile. Pupils select materials for these tasks and explain the end result. More able pupils use a hole punch successfully. Pupils in Year 2 construct a puppet using newspaper, plain paper rolled or in strips, cardboard, and a polystyrene ball. They write simple instructions. In Key Stage 1, pupils experience handling a range of textiles which they use to create pictures, sometimes stuck into place, sometimes sewn. An interesting project at Key Stage 1, based on designing a pair of sunglasses, shows knowledge of the difference between transparent and translucent.
161. At Key Stage 2, this exercise is extended to writing more detailed instructions. There are good links with literacy in this context. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have knowledge and understanding of food technology. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 4 were designing a healthy menu, looking at hygiene and food values. In this context, they went to the school kitchen and talked to the dinner ladies. Pupils in a Years 3 and 4 special educational needs class, had linked with a science lesson on force to construct a toy car which moves when pushed. Other examples seen at Key Stage 2 include the construction of a pyramid and cube shape from cardboard, and the construction of an Egyptian well. Fewer examples of work were seen at the upper range of Key Stage 2 than the lower range.
162. Pupils enjoy constructing things. They show pleasure in the finished product and proudly explain how something was made and how it works. The younger pupils were very happy about their end results, for example, and talked excitedly about the objects with knowledge and understanding.
163. The policy has been re-written since the last inspection. Planning is comprehensive, including all required aspects of the National Curriculum, and emphasising the inclusion of the aesthetic presentation of work. The work, at present, is basic and unexciting. Resources are just about adequate. There are insufficient links with literacy and numeracy. Meanwhile, the school has succeeded in bringing improvements to the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

164. No geography lessons were observed during the inspection. However, an examination of pupils' work, responses from pupils, and scrutiny of subject documents suggest that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in geography. Pupils show coverage of work in geographical skills appropriate to their age levels. Some of the work at the end of Key Stage 2 is good.
165. At Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils gain experiences which give them a good grounding in geographical skills. They are encouraged to explore their immediate surroundings, including visits to a nearby park. Links are made with animals and where they live. Pupils develop ideas of place, weather, and the variety of peoples' lives through stories. An interesting project includes plotting a route for a journey; for example, one based on the story of Little Red Riding Hood. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils explore the framework of journeys to the shops, to home, to the park, and draw simple maps. They look more deeply into environments of animals and other creatures, for example, under the sea.
166. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils enlarge their knowledge of the locality, with an extension of mapping skills. In Year 6, pupils use four- to six-figure grid references on Ordnance Survey maps. Pupils study Egypt and Greece, ancient and modern, and write comparisons. A study of a rural village has brought knowledge and understanding of a contrasting way of life. Progress in geography is satisfactory and in some respects, such as skills in mapping, it is good.
167. Pupils enjoy working on topics, which include elements of the geography syllabus, such as visits farther a-field, and learning about life styles in other countries. A very interesting initiative by the co-ordinator that enhances pupils' knowledge of world geography involves the travels of a teddy bear around the world. Pupils or staff take at least one photograph of 'Travel Ted' in a setting which typifies the area or country visited, and try to send a postcard to school. Photographs are displayed on a world map. Assemblies and displays are dedicated to this project. Between 1997 and 1999, visits include countries as widespread as Canada, Alaska, Budapest, and Cyprus. In addition there is a good connection with the Caribbean. This focuses on the Bahamas, and includes two workshop days for the school given by visiting guests. There is popular interest at Key Stage 2 in taking 'Travel Ted' on holiday and plotting his routes around the world. Future plans are to include this project for Key Stage 1.
168. The geography co-ordinator promotes the subject well. A new policy has been drafted but is in process of being updated in the light of Curriculum 2000. The scheme of work is comprehensive. Resources are adequate. Recent purchases of new atlases and the CD ROM material have enhanced learning at Key Stage 2. The school is a member of the Geography Association, and marks Geography Action Week with displays across the school. The school has maintained geography well in the curriculum since the last inspection. There is insufficient use made of pupils' literacy skills. Opportunities for pupils to study through enquiry have improved since the last inspection, though monitoring and evaluation of the subject are not yet sufficiently used to improve learning.

HISTORY

169. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make unsatisfactory progress in history. There are strengths and weaknesses in what pupils know and understand, but standards have declined since the last inspection.
170. At Key Stage 1, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows few examples of a developing knowledge of people in history, and local history. In discussion, pupils show that they have little recall of stories of famous people and events from the past. However, they are developing a sound sense of the passage of time, together with an ability to compare the past and present.

Pupils in Year 1 examine objects and give opinions as to whether an oil lamp or electric bulb is more effective. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the past by comparing old and new toys. They recognise the differences, and make simple observations on the different mechanisms and materials used.

171. Pupils at Key Stage 2 can sequence the different eras they have studied. They know that the Romans existed before the Vikings, for example. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are confident in their knowledge and understanding of the topics on Ancient Egypt and the Greeks currently being studied. Their knowledge is often satisfactory when historical periods have been taught, but, as some subjects have not been taught in sufficient depth, even more able pupils cannot discuss why things happened, or the consequences of actions. This is exemplified by work on the Tudors, where pupils have only a sketchy knowledge of events of that era. Many pupils' ability to organise and communicate their findings when looking at periods of history is unsatisfactory, as they have not had sufficient opportunity to practise these skills. This represents particularly unsatisfactory progress for pupils in Year 6, where there is a long time between the history they study in Year 5 and their next topic in Year 6. Pupils lack the necessary historical skills of enquiry. This was a weakness identified in the previous report which has not been rectified.
172. Pupils enjoy looking at the past and finding out how people lived. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 show particularly good interest and concentration, and are keen to contribute to discussion. When interviewed, older pupils showed interest and a desire to know more.
173. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with only the occasional lesson being unsatisfactory. When teaching is satisfactory, teachers use effective strategies to stimulate pupils' interest and curiosity. In Key Stage 2, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and they make effective use of questions to promote discussion. Lively strategies are used to help pupils to compare the past and present. However, an examination of pupils' work in Year 5 showed that previous teaching, by temporary staff, was characterised by weak subject knowledge, resulting in wrong information for pupils in their learning of the Tudor period. Where teaching is unsatisfactory teachers' use of pictures to support learning is inefficient, as they are not clear enough for pupils to see and respond to. This results in loss of focus by pupils. Pace is slow, teaching lacks positive direction, and expectations are not made clear to pupils. This has a direct impact on their progress and the quality of the presentation of their work.
174. Insufficient use is made of pupils' literacy skills in history. There are examples of work all of a similar nature in pupils' books, which shows that opportunities to use independent writing and written narrative are limited. History is well supported by informative displays and artwork, but there is little evidence of pupils' own writing. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to capture the vibrancy and excitement of history in their recorded work. Teachers make good use of local resources to support learning. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have benefited from their experiences when visiting a toy museum. Their learning was also enhanced effectively through an assembly for parents, where they displayed their knowledge of toys old and new, using speech and drama.
175. The planned curriculum for history has not been reviewed since the last inspection and the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to monitor teaching and progress. This has had a detrimental effect on the progress of pupils over the past few years. Current planning does not ensure a proper balance for pupils to acquire satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the facts, and appropriate historical skills. The subject shows no improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

176. The proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 who reach the expected standard for information technology is below the national expectation. Pupils at the end of Year 2 do not display sufficiently sound competencies in basic keyboard skills and have unsatisfactory levels of proficiency in word processing. Many pupils do not know how to control programmable devices purposefully and their ability to save and retrieve information, even

with support, is insecure. Most pupils select options when investigating on-screen situations and to use 'painting' programs with appropriate skill. They have only cursory understanding of how information technology is used in the home and their environment.

177. In Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils who are able to work with confidence and independence across most of elements required by the National Curriculum is well below the average. Many are not competent in saving and retrieving stored information independently. Word-processing skills are extended, but the standards are not advanced sufficiently and many pupils are unable to combine text and pictures to a satisfactory level. Most pupils are able to print the finished product. They have little knowledge of how to establish, test, modify and store sequences of instructions to control on-screen events. Pupils' ability to monitor external events, such as temperature is well below that expected. They enter, sort, and classify data and to present their findings, but the range of graphical representations, and the sophistication of analysis, is very limited.
178. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make unsatisfactory progress as they move through both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Whilst the planned programme meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, it is not delivered systematically and the school does not ensure that every pupil receives the same exposure to the subject. These factors impact adversely upon progress and are the cause of standards at the end of Key Stage 1 being below that expected. The continued unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 2 results in the gap between school and national standards being increasingly widened. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, therefore, the proportion achieving the national standard is well below average. Given the positive response and confidence of most pupils many might be expected to achieve higher standards.
179. There is some limited use of information technology to enhance and support other areas of the curriculum and some of this use is productive. The CD-ROM is used productively for research in history and science. More generally, it is not employed systematically or extensively and its use is unsatisfactory overall.
180. Pupils at both key stages display good attitudes to information technology. They behave sensibly and sustain concentration over time. Almost all pupils strive to achieve the desired outcome and interact well with each other and with staff. There is productive co-operation and behaviour is mature and responsible. Pupils talk about computers with animation and enthusiasm. Almost all pupils clearly enjoy their work in relation to information technology, but the lack of opportunities means that the school is not properly harnessing these positive attitudes.
181. Little direct teaching was observed during the course of the inspection but the shortcomings in standards and progress mean that the impact of teaching over time has been unsatisfactory. The limited supply of computers make it difficult for teachers to combine the direct teaching of skills with immediate 'hands-on' experience for their pupils and this has an adverse effect upon progress.
182. The programme for information technology provides a satisfactory overview of what needs to be taught but is not sufficiently detailed. This means that the specific skills are not identified in a way which is helpful to teachers' planning or enables skills to be built systematically as pupils move through the school. Teachers maintain records but these are not part of a whole-school procedure for charting individual experience and progress rigorously and for ensuring that every pupil receives their entitlement. There is inadequate monitoring of the teaching and learning.
183. The co-ordinator for information technology is currently absent on long-term sick leave, but the support co-ordinator, in liaison with the Chair of Governors, has developed major plans for development and for rationalising the existing resources. A successful bid for additional finance will enable the school to create a computer suite in order that there can be direct teaching of information technology skills. Some of the computers in classrooms are nearing

the end of their useful life, and these old machines contribute to the insufficient use which is made of information technology to support learning in other subjects such as English, mathematics and art. In addition, the range of software and equipment is inadequate.

184. The support co-ordinator is committed to improvement and has quickly identified the issues which require addressing. Despite this factor, few of the shortcomings noted in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. There has been unacceptable delay in ensuring that the National Curriculum requirements are met, and the school has made poor progress in addressing weaknesses in attainment, in progress, and in the use of information technology to support other subjects. All of these matters were identified in the last inspection.

MUSIC

185. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are making good progress in music at both key stages and reaching the standards that are expected for their age.
186. At Key Stage 1, pupils sing well in unison, with expression that is appropriate to the mood of the song. They create effective sound pictures with percussion instruments, for example, choosing appropriate instruments to suggest snow falling. They read simple music symbols, following the conductor carefully, and stop and start their performances together, responding well to the conductor's instructions. Pupils at Key Stage 2 build on their previous musical experiences and make good progress. They begin to learn formal music notation and terminology and apply their knowledge well when singing. The quality of their singing improves in tone as they move through the key stage and they have a growing sense of audience, and an awareness of fellow performers. Progress for a few pupils is enhanced by receiving group instrumental tuition on the clarinet. These pupils learn to play accurately in collaboration with others, and follow music notation accurately. All pupils have regular opportunities to listen to music carefully and they discuss the quality of the music they have heard.
187. Throughout the school pupils have positive attitudes to music. They sing with control and expression, work hard to improve their performances, supporting each other well. They gain a great deal of satisfaction from singing, both in lessons and assemblies. They behave well and enjoy the opportunities they have to listen and reflect on music.
188. Overall, the quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Many teachers have good subject expertise. Sessions are carefully planned. Teaching is purposeful and there is a general expectation that pupils will work hard and give of their best. Teachers focus well upon the development of musical skills. For example, a session for the whole of Key Stage 2 started with pupils being required to undertake a range of vocal exercises, and they were able to recognise that the tone of their singing improved because of this. There was an insistence that pupils sang with accuracy and appropriate expression. The pupils responded very well to these demands, concentrated hard, and sang very sweetly, with good understanding of how to breathe correctly. In this session, everybody worked very hard and there was a great sense of enjoyment and unity in performance by both teachers and pupils. In the whole key stage sessions, all staff attend and interact well with the leading teacher to the benefit of all pupils. Pupils from the special learning units are well integrated into music sessions
189. Rates of progress have improved since the last inspection, as has the quality of the teaching. The co-ordination of music is overseen by the acting headteacher in the absence of a permanent appointment for this post. She is very well supported by the staff who, between them, possess a good level of musical expertise. Arrangements for the teaching of music are well organised. There are detailed plans to develop the curriculum further and to up date the school's music policy so that it is in line with the school's current practice.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

190. At Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate the expected range of control and creativity of movement in physical activities. They are able to link their movements and to work individually and with others. They have satisfactory awareness of the changes which happen to their bodies during exercise. They demonstrate appropriate levels of skill and collaboration in group activities. In dance, pupils respond to the mood and feelings engendered by music, with expected levels of expression and creativity. Gymnastics and games were not observed during the inspection. However, it is clear that these elements are properly included in the curriculum.
191. At Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils demonstrate expected levels of co-ordination and balance in gymnastics. They practise, refine, and improve their skills and link their movements appropriately. They work well individually, and with others. Games skills are in line with those expected for pupils of their ages. Pupils display appropriate levels of skill and collaboration in group activities. Most of the pupils are on course to reach the expected standards in swimming by the end of the key stage. Dance and adventurous activities were not observed during the inspection, but other evidence indicates that they are included in a full and balanced programme.
192. The majority of pupils make satisfactory overall progress as they move through each key stage. In gymnastics, pupils steadily achieve greater confidence and control in their movements and become increasingly able to evaluate and improve their performance. They practise and improve skills, and develop creative movement. Satisfactory progress is also made in skills associated with games, and is reflected in pupils' increasing ability to display ball control and tactical awareness. Pupils are not excluded from any activity because of gender, and those with special educational needs, including some from the special units, are well integrated into the physical education programme. Such pupils also make satisfactory progress.
193. Pupils' response to physical education is good in both key stages. Activities are approached with enthusiasm and most pupils work with confidence. The majority consistently strive to attain good standards and there is productive collaboration in team and group activities.
194. Although the number of lessons observed during the inspection was limited, the available evidence indicates that the quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers have productive relationships with their pupils and lessons are well organised. Good teaching was characterised by secure subject knowledge and by the systematic refinement and improvement of pupils' performance.
195. The co-ordinator for physical education is currently absent on long-term sick leave. The school has adopted local education authority guidelines for gymnastics, games, dance, swimming, and outdoor activities. These are of good quality and provide helpful frameworks to support coverage, progression and teachers' planning. Opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in a range of sports including soccer, rounders, athletics, hockey, and netball. The curriculum is further enriched by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs, and by competitive events with other schools. Facilities for physical education are satisfactory overall but the Key Stage 1 hall is of moderate size only and the useable floor area is further restricted by the storage of large equipment. There are occasions when this lack of space impacts adversely upon creativity and movement.
196. The previous inspection was generally favourable but found weaknesses in relation to planning and variation in pupils' progress and in the quality of teaching. Some unsatisfactory behaviour was reported. All these shortcomings have been addressed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

197. At the end of both key stages, the attainment of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, is below the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus. In the last inspection report, attainment at Key Stage 1 was judged to be unsatisfactory, and, at Key Stage 2, attainment was in line with the required standards.
198. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the key elements of Christian faith. They are aware of the significance of festivals such as Christmas and Easter, and have a satisfactory knowledge of stories from the life of Jesus. They understand the significance of prayer as a means of saying thank you. Pupils talk in general terms of caring for the world, but many elements of their conversation relate to what is learned from home. Their overall progress is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not demonstrate a wide breadth of knowledge and understanding over the aspects of the syllabus. Much of their previous work was oral, and pupils have had little opportunity to consolidate and expand their learning and their ability to reflect on what they have learnt.
199. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have further increased their knowledge of the Christian faith. They discuss the life and work of Jesus and explain the significance of some of the parables. They have secure knowledge of current work on the importance of churches. They demonstrate a sense of right and wrong, but their ability to show a perceptive degree of understanding about what they have learned is limited. Their recollection of other aspects of religions, that they have studied in the past, is very sketchy and confused. For example, they are unable to explain the importance of various religious festivals or different religious practices.
200. The range of work seen through the key stage is variable. There are some interesting examples of teachers providing opportunities for pupils to develop awareness of other peoples' beliefs. Younger pupils compare the story of the creation from Genesis with creation stories from Australia and China. Pupils compare the need for rules with the Ten Commandments. Pupils make satisfactory progress during these lessons, but the breadth of coverage has been too patchy to allow for sustained satisfactory progress. Many of the ideas presented to pupils are worthwhile, but some of the written tasks do not encourage pupils to gain a deeper understanding, and to reflect and make a personal response. There are too many identical pieces of writing across the year groups. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through opportunities offered for discussion.
201. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good overall. They show that they are eager to learn, and have an avid curiosity about peoples' beliefs and practices. One group of pupils stayed at the end of the lesson to look more closely at books and resources following a discussion on the Muslim statement of beliefs. Pupils generally, however, find it harder to talk about their experiences in religious education than in other subjects.
202. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 during the inspection, so it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching. However the level of pupils' knowledge and understanding indicates that teaching is inconsistent in providing a breadth of opportunities for learning. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory. Factually, teachers show a sound grasp of the material to be taught. They use a successful range of strategies to hold pupils' attention and motivate learning. Skilful questioning is a good feature, in some lessons, in extending pupils' responses and encouraging speaking and listening skills. Some of the follow-up tasks provide insufficient challenge, and this is reflected in the work seen in pupils' books. Teachers relate well to the pupils and maintain good standards of behaviour. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. It ensures that lessons are well paced, so that pupils gain in knowledge.
203. Currently, there is no permanent co-ordinator for the subject, so there is no positive leadership. The curriculum plan is based upon the Local Agreed Syllabus guidelines and the planning provides an appropriate range of themes for both key stages. Themes in Key Stage 1 are linked with topics in subjects. However, there is insufficient monitoring to ensure that planning is effectively linked to the subject themes, and that teachers' planning allows for

breadth and consistency, with an appropriate allocation of time. There is no whole-school overview of what is happening in religious education in order to maintain progress. In this aspect, there has been no improvement since the previous inspection report. Insufficient attention is given to the reflective aspect of the subject, and the content and quality of pupils' work has not been carefully monitored. The subject contributes little to the development of pupils' skills in literacy.

204. The school realises the need to establish a co-ordinator. The scheme of work for religious education is due to be reviewed in line with the new guidelines of the Local Agreed Syllabus. The school has a satisfactory range of support materials for teachers and books, but a lack of artefacts. Visits and visitors make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in the subject. The contribution to pupils spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory.