

INSPECTION REPORT

SANDFORD ST MARTIN'S FIRST SCHOOL

Dorset

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 100136

Headteacher: Mrs S A Symonds

Reporting inspector: Paul Cosway
2734

Dates of inspection: 10 -14 July 2000

Inspection number: 191954

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Type of school: | First School |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 – 9 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Sandford Wareham Dorset |
| Postcode: | BH20 7AJ |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr P Bradly |
| Date of previous inspection: | 17 February 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Paul Cosway | Registered inspector | Design and technology | What sort of school is it? |
| | | Information technology | What should the school do to improve further? |
| | | English as an additional language | How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements |
| | | | How well are pupils or students taught? |
| | | | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students? |
| | | | How well is the school led and managed? |
| Marvyn Moore | Lay inspector | Equal opportunities | How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development |
| | | | How well does the school care for its pupils? |
| | | | How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| Sally Handford | Team inspector | Science | Under fives |
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| Carol Slade | Team inspector | English | |
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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an infant and junior school, educating boys and girls from the age of 4 to 9. It is average in size for a primary school, with 229 on roll. Pupils are drawn mainly from the immediate area, where there is mixed housing: some privately owned, some local authority and rented housing. Almost all the pupils are white. The school has the advantage, however, of drawing some children from a wider ethnic background. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is close to the average nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, just over 10 per cent, is below the national average. The proportion identified as having special educational needs, 26 per cent, is above average. The number of these with full Statements is broadly average. Overall, attainment on entry is average. It is a Voluntary Aided, Church of England school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school in many aspects of its work. Pupils' attainment is in line with or above national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. The very good relationships, the very good management of pupils, the good teaching and the care and concern for every individual create an atmosphere in which all children can grow in confidence and self-esteem and make progress in their learning. The school promotes Christian values in all that it does. Pupils are taught to work hard, to love one another and to take responsibility for the effect of their actions on themselves and others. Very good leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by a caring, conscientious staff, strongly committed to school improvement, is ensuring that the school is improving steadily. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is very good overall: it is very good or excellent in almost half the lessons.
- It is a very caring school, in which pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning, enjoy school and work hard. Almost all behave well.
- Relationships are very good; pupils' personal, moral and social development is very good.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.
- The work the school does, especially the quality of the teaching, is monitored very effectively.
- Assessment systems in English and mathematics are very good and targets are set for pupils to guide their learning.

What could be improved

- Attainment at Key Stage 1 in English and science is improving significantly and this good work needs to be extended to raise the proportion of pupils who attain the higher grade, level 3, as has been done successfully in mathematics.
- Assessment systems, very well developed in English and mathematics, are not as effective in other subjects in tracking the progress that pupils make and in setting them targets for their learning.
- Some health and safety monitoring requirements are not being met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's last full inspection was in February 1997. At that time, the quality of education it provided was requiring some improvement. Teaching was satisfactory overall and very good or excellent in 15 per cent of lessons. Standards were low in design and technology and National Curriculum requirements were not met in this subject. Long-term financial planning was weak.

There has been good progress. The quality of teaching has improved from 86 per cent being satisfactory or better to 100 per cent and in a high proportion of lessons, 48 per cent, there is very good teaching. Financial planning is now good and monitoring has improved. The provision for the under fives has improved considerably. Design and technology is now strong in the school. All statutory requirements for the curriculum are now met. The rise in the quality of teaching, especially in the last two years, means that those pupils who have recently entered the school have benefited most and a tide of improving standards is moving through the school. Reception and Year 1 pupils

have made particularly good progress. This augurs well for the future of the school as they move into Year 2 and Key Stage 2.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|--|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 | |
| Reading | C | D | D | E | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E* |
| Writing | C | E | E | E* | |
| Mathematics | B | D | A | B | |

Over the past three years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in the national tests has varied widely from year to year, partly because of variations in the numbers with special educational needs in each year group. There has been a decline in the results in reading and writing, which the school has recognised and acted to address. Girls have performed better than boys in the tests. In 1999, they were slightly above average overall, whereas boys were below, about a term behind the average for the age.

The inspection team found that attainment is currently better than that indicated by last year's test and examination results at the end of Year 2. Attainment is close to average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science. Pupils attain above the national expectations for their age in information technology. At the end of Year 4, attainment is below average in English, because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and literacy problems in these classes, but close to average in mathematics and science. They have made satisfactory progress from the end of Year 2, where they were below average overall, and are achieving satisfactorily for their abilities. Around a third are above average and achieving well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good: pupils enjoy school and work hard. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good: behaviour is generally good both in lessons and around the school, apart from a small number of boys in Year 4, some of whom have only recently been admitted. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good: pupils learn to relate very well to each other and to adults. There is a mutual respect that helps to reinforce the caring ethos of the school as well as creating a good ethos for learning in all classrooms. |
| Attendance | Good: unauthorised absence is below average. |

The positive attitudes to school that the teachers work so hard to foster ensure that almost all the pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. They enjoy their lessons and show great interest. Older pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions and help the younger ones to learn to do so.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-9 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Very good | Very good | Good |

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

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good overall.

There are many strengths in teaching. Teaching is good or better in around 86 per cent of lessons and is very good or excellent in about 48 per cent of lessons. It is always good or very good in reception classes. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. These are very high figures. The strengths in teaching are in the very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils and the quality of their lesson planning and preparation. They work hard to make the lessons interesting and exciting for their pupils, who appreciate this and respond well. As a result, learning is generally good and pupils concentrate and work hard in class. Basic skills are taught well. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good for the under fives, good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. It is a broad curriculum that prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Satisfactory: the provision for these pupils is managed well, but there is a relatively low number of learning support assistants to provide individual and small group help. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good: the very few pupils this affects make good progress in learning English, because of the good teaching and the concern for their needs from all teachers. |
| Provision for pupils' personal - including spiritual, moral, social and cultural - development | Very good: there is very good provision for social and moral development. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development has improved since the last report and is now good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school cares for its pupils well, although the child protection policy is not yet fully in place. |

The school works well in partnership with parents. The information it provides for parents is good. The curriculum is generally broad and appropriate, enhanced by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including educational visits. However, the balance of time for the non-core subjects, such as music and history, needs to be reviewed in order to meet new guidelines and the length of the taught day is shorter by over an hour a week than the recommended time for Key Stage 2. The school cares well for its pupils and offers equal opportunities to all, including the high proportion with special educational needs. There is very little inappropriate behaviour, apart from minor incidents amongst younger pupils. The school deals with this very effectively. Older pupils have learnt to be very aware of the impact of their actions on others and help to counsel younger ones.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Leadership and management by the | Very good: very good leadership from the headteacher provides clear direction for the work of the school, setting high expectations of both |

| | |
|--|---|
| headteacher and other key staff | pupils and staff. There is very good support from her deputy. Good management has been a key factor in the school's recent improvement. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good: the governors are supportive of the school. They give of their time willingly to help the school and fulfil their responsibilities appropriately. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good: at a whole-school level, the school evaluates its performance well and uses this information to guide the priorities for further development. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good: the school allocates resources well to meet the needs of the pupils. It uses the funding available to it appropriately and wisely to ensure that it can provide a good quality of education for the pupils in its care. The accommodation is good and is used well, though there are weaknesses in the outdoor facilities for the reception children. |

The headteacher has set a clear direction for the work of the school and promoted high expectations of what the pupils can attain. The governing body and all members of staff work well as a team to ensure that policies are put into action and there is a very strong, shared commitment to bringing about improvement. Appropriate priorities have been set for the school's development. Good progress has been made and the school is well placed to improve further. The effective monitoring of teaching at a whole-school level has led to significant improvements across the school. There is a good number of teachers, providing small classes in Key Stage 1, but sustaining these levels of staffing means that there are relatively few teaching assistants. Overall, this has slightly more benefits than disadvantages but should be kept under review. The school successfully seeks best value in the use and deployment of all its resources and in the use of its budget.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <p>The large majority of parents who responded indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like coming to school; • behaviour is good in school; • the school expects its pupils to work hard and is developing responsible attitudes in them; • the teaching in the school is good; • they would be comfortable approaching the school with any questions or problems they may have; • their children are making good progress. | <p>Of the parents who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 per cent of parents think that the school does not provide enough activities outside of lessons; • 26 per cent of parents are concerned about the amount of homework that is set. • 21 per cent do not feel well informed about how their children are getting on and 16 per cent do not feel that the school works closely enough with parents • 18 per cent are not satisfied with the quality of leadership. |

The partnership with parents is generally strong and many parents make a significant impact on the work of the school by helping in classes. The homework provision is satisfactory. There is an adequate range of clubs at lunchtime but only pupils in Years 3 and 4 can attend. Leadership in the school is very good at all levels, firmly committed to the raising of standards and the good of the children. Some parents are concerned about the progress children are making in the mixed age classes, especially in Year 4. The inspection found that teaching in these classes is good, often very good, but there have been problems because of the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including a significant though small group of boys in Year 4 with behavioural problems. This has slowed down the pace of lessons and learning on occasions. The inspectors agree with the positive points made by parents, finding that pupils behave well and develop a sense of responsibility. Their good attitudes to school and good behaviour, with very positive support from home in many cases, are positive influences, helping them to attain well and benefit from the good teaching.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in the school. Their attainment on entry is average. The proportion of pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need is above average and the highest proportions of these are concentrated in Years 3 and 4, including some pupils with behavioural difficulties.
2. Baseline assessment results indicate that children's attainment on entry is generally in line with that expected for this age in language and literacy and mathematics, with a quarter of the children being below average, particularly in language and literacy. The majority of pupils have well developed personal and social skills. Reception provision gives children very good access to the experiences recommended in the Desirable Learning Outcomes and prepares them well for entry to the National Curriculum. The children make very good progress. The findings of the inspection are that most children are exceeding the recommended outcomes by the time they reach the age of five and their literacy and numeracy skills are, overall, slightly above the expectation for children of their age.
3. Pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. In 1998 and 1999, test results in reading and writing dropped to below and well below the national average. This was partly because of relatively high proportions of pupils with special educational needs in these Year 2 cohorts but there was also some underachievement. The school recognised this and responded well. Additional curriculum time was allocated to the teaching and practice of writing. A system of target-setting for pupils has been introduced and this is leading to a greater awareness at both key stages of the steps that pupils have to take to reach their next National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics. These targets are shared with parents or carers so that they can be helped at home. Pupils are reminded of their targets for improvement regularly; individuals' targets are on display on the walls in classrooms. The pupils have responded positively and are now succeeding in moving forward in their learning more rapidly than has been the case before.

Key Stage 1

4. At Key Stage 1, there has been a decline in performance in the National Curriculum tests over the last three years, against the trend nationally. Attainment in the national tests for reading and writing has fallen from being in line with the national average in 1997 to well below average in writing and below average in reading in 1999. Performance in mathematics has dipped and then risen, from above average in 1997, to below the national average in 1998, to well above in 1999. Over the past four years, girls have performed better than boys. They have been above the national average in reading and mathematics and below in writing. Boys have been below the average nationally in reading and writing but above it in mathematics. Attainment in 1999 was well below that in similar schools in reading and very low in writing, in the bottom five per cent of schools with a similar intake. Attainment was above average, however, in mathematics, where low levels of literacy had less impact on attainment.
5. The Teacher Assessments for science at the end of 1999 indicated that the proportions of pupils who were attaining level 2 or above were below the national average and that pupils were well below average in their understanding of life and living processes. The proportions of pupils attaining level 3, however, were above average, overall. The evidence seen during the inspection showed that again it was problems with literacy amongst a significant proportion of pupils that were responsible for the generally low attainment; problems especially with the ability to record findings and express their knowledge and understanding.
6. The findings of the inspection are that attainment is higher at the end of Key Stage 1 in the three core subjects than that indicated by last year's end of Key Stage 1 test results and Teacher Assessments. Attainment is above the national average in mathematics. It is average in English and science, overall. In the other subjects of the curriculum, performance ranges from in line with expectations nationally to above. Pupils attain close to the expected level in

music, geography and history. Attainment is above expected levels in information technology, art, physical education and design and technology.

7. In mathematics, almost all pupils in Year 2 are meeting at least the expected level of attainment for pupils of their age and over a quarter are attaining at the higher level, level 3. Almost all pupils have a good range of skills in mathematics across the subject, including number, space and measure. In English, attainment is higher in both reading and writing than that indicated by the National Curriculum tests last year. Over 80 per cent of pupils are reading and writing at a level at least appropriate for their age. The proportion of pupils working at higher levels is smaller than in mathematics. About eight per cent are at level 3 for writing and about 15 per cent for reading. It is a similar picture in science. Again, almost all pupils are assessed as reaching the average level for pupils of their age but relatively few are attaining above this. The proportion working securely at level 3 is about 15 per cent of the whole cohort. Pupils have a sound, often good, knowledge of science and they build on their knowledge in greater depth as they move through the school. A weaker area is the ability to record their understanding and present the information in a variety of ways.

Key Stage 2

8. Attainment at the end of Year 4 ranges from below average to average in English, mathematics and science. This represents improvement for this year group since they took the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, when they were below average in mathematics and reading and well below average in writing. Girls are attaining better than boys, overall, because the majority of pupils with special educational needs in Year 4 are boys.
9. The finding of the inspection is that attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 is below average, because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group who have literacy problems. A small proportion of pupils attains well and some have reading ages well beyond their chronological age. Attainment overall is best in speaking and listening, where it is close to average. Almost all pupils are articulate and can address adults appropriately using standard English. Almost all pupils listen well. Despite the progress they are making in English, most are below average in literacy skills, especially in writing. They have weaknesses in spelling and punctuation and tend to write as they speak, having a limited range of styles. Attainment is average in mathematics. The good opportunities they are given in the Numeracy Hour and in the time following registration periods to develop mathematical skills are ensuring that most have an at least adequate understanding and ability with number. In science, attainment is close to average. They have built successfully on the knowledge of science that they acquired in Key Stage 1 and extended their understanding of scientific principles, such as fair testing. Weaker areas are their abilities to use investigation and exploration to extend their knowledge and their abilities to communicate their knowledge through graphs, written accounts and diagrams.
10. In some of the foundation subjects, pupils achieve well. Despite the numbers of pupils with special educational needs, their attainment is close to that expected for pupils of this age and sometimes above. Pupils are achieving above the expected standards in art, information technology and physical education, largely because their literacy problems are having a less detrimental effect in these areas. They are attaining in line with expectations in history, geography, design and technology and music.
11. Pupils with special educational needs are in the main achieving satisfactorily within their abilities and within the targets set for them in their Individual Education Plans (IEP's). The quality of these plans, however, is variable. Sometimes they are insufficiently narrow in their targeting for clear successful achievement to be measurable. At present, pupils are not regularly involved in their own target-setting for their IEP. The IEP's written by members of the peripatetic support service for statemented pupils are of good quality. Pupils with statements who have regular individual support make good progress.
12. Pupils receiving additional literacy support are making good progress in their language development as a result of the good support they receive from a very capable learning support assistant.

13. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire believe that pupils make good progress at the school and the inspection finds that progress is generally good. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress because of the skilled, patient teaching they receive from their class teachers and from learning assistants - where these are available. Other pupils make good progress in the core subjects but in foundation subjects, such as art and physical education, in some classes the high-attaining pupils are not set work that is challenging enough to enable them to attain well. The quality of teaching is good in the school and teachers work hard and plan well. However, it is difficult in classes with a wide range of need - especially where there are two year groups in the class - for the teachers to cater for everyone in every lesson and the pace of learning is sometimes slowed by the need to include everyone in the learning.
14. In the last report, it was said that children, by the age of five, were broadly meeting the Desirable Learning Outcomes for their age. There has been improvement. They are now securely meeting these objectives and most exceed them. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils were, previously, attaining in line with expectations or above in all subjects except design and technology, where work was unsatisfactory. Again, there has been improvement - especially in design and technology, where attainment is now above expectations. At the end of Year 4, attainment was again in line with or above expectations or national averages, except in design and technology. Despite the high proportion of pupils in Year 4 with special educational needs, attainment levels have been sustained and standards in design and technology have improved, being now satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Since the last inspection, the pupils' very good attitudes and good behaviour have been maintained. Pupils of all abilities in Key Stage 1 have very good attitudes to school and this is also true of all pupils in Key Stage 2, apart from a small number of boys in Year 4 with learning and behavioural difficulties. Almost all pupils are eager to come to school. They participate with enthusiasm and enjoy their lessons. They respond well to adults and to each other and have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are, in general, well motivated and work with enthusiasm. They are very good at co-operating with each other and this results in their valuing each other's work or contribution to the lessons. The majority of pupils sustain very good levels of concentration and can work well individually.
16. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall and has a positive impact on their work and concentration. Apart from the very few older boys already mentioned, pupils behave very well and respond well to the expectations of teachers, support staff and adults for their behaviour. School rules and conventions are clearly understood by pupils and by parents. The result is a positive climate for learning, with no evidence of aggressive or racist behaviour. Misbehaviour is infrequent and when it occurs it is dealt with promptly. Only on rare occasions does it affect learning in lessons. Only one pupil has been excluded in recent years and this was for two short periods of time.
17. From an early age, pupils establish very good relationships with staff, with adults and with each other. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are included as part of a well cared for community that copes confidently with their daily work and play. Pupils have some opportunities for personal development and they engage in these with enthusiasm and confidence. A very good example of this is way that the older pupils counsel young pupils in order to help them to understand the importance of good behaviour and being kind to one another.
18. Attendance and punctuality at the school are good. This year's attendance figures show an improvement on those for last year, which were broadly average overall, with below average levels of unauthorised absence. Registers are marked at the beginning of each session and comply with legislation and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. At the time of the last report, teaching was described as being satisfactory or better in 86 per cent of lessons. There was unsatisfactory teaching in 14 per cent of lessons. Teaching was very good or excellent in a small proportion of lessons - 15 per cent of the total. Teaching was best in Key Stage 2. There has been significant improvement. Weak lessons were characterised by low expectations and a lack of challenge. In these lessons, planning was poor and lessons were not interesting. There has been considerable improvement in these areas. More effective planning, with clear aims for the lessons, ensures that teaching is purposeful and the pupils commented on how much they enjoy their lessons. The improvements have come about as a result of the effective monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and the deputy. The outcomes of this monitoring have been used to set targets for teachers and to help plan professional development for individuals or the whole staff as appropriate.
20. As a result, there is now no unsatisfactory teaching in the school. Whereas 46 per cent of teaching was good or better at the time of the last report, the proportion is now over 80 per cent, with 48 per cent of teaching being very good or excellent. The proportions of good and very good teaching are highest in Reception and Key Stage 1. Parents indicated in their questionnaire returns that they believe teaching to be good in the school. Teaching is now very good overall - a significant strength of the school that makes a major contribution to the quality of education and the standards attained.
21. There are many strengths in teaching. A significant one is the very good planning and preparation by all teachers. Lessons are well organised and structured so that pupils can build on their learning and succeed. Resources are used well to help pupils to achieve and to make learning interesting for them. In a very good English lesson with Year 3 and 4 pupils, for example, the teacher had spent considerable time in advance preparing interesting resources. She turned what could have been a dull lesson on words containing the letter string *ough* into an exciting one. She began it with an amusing poem that included a wide variety of such words, in all of which the letter string had a different pronunciation, and continued with a card game. All the pupils worked hard in small groups to find as many similar words as they could from the card sets and checked them in their dictionaries for spelling and meaning. They worked very hard – the competitive edge to the game increasing their work rate – learnt a great deal and had lots of fun. When inspectors spoke to a group of Key Stage 2 pupils and asked them about school, they all said that one of the many good things about school is the quality of the lessons, because they are always interesting.
22. Almost all teachers sustain high standards of behaviour and expectations in their lessons. In only one lesson observed were the behaviour and attitudes of pupils unsatisfactory. Pupils know what the expectations are, from the moment they enter the classroom, of their work rates and behaviour. No time is wasted bringing them to order or settling them down. This helps to establish a very good learning ethos in the classrooms and very good relationships. There is mutual respect and liking and this leads to pupils wanting to succeed and work hard to please their teachers. Over time, as a result of hard work by senior managers and all other staff, these expectations of behaviour and attitudes have become embedded, consistently reinforced in lessons and throughout all the activities of the school day. This is a major factor in the progress that pupils make.
23. Most lessons taught in the school are good or very good and other factors that are strengths in almost all teachers' work are good subject knowledge, which gives teachers the ability and confidence to extend and challenge even the most able pupils, and good endings to lessons, when the learning objectives are revisited to consolidate their learning. The pace of learning is brisk in the good and very good lessons. Lessons are structured so that skills and knowledge are built gradually and progressively over time. This is a strong feature of all lessons. In an art lesson with Year 2 pupils, for example, the teacher began with a whole-class session in which she helped them to recall all they had done previously in preparation for their collage work, went over with them the skills they would need and reminded them of work they had done previously on great artists. She showed them again examples of works of art they had studied and this helped to stimulate their own enthusiasm and ideas.
24. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, there are many of the strengths that are consistent across almost all lessons. The lessons are planned well but the pace is slow. This slows down the learning and means that some pupils do not make as much progress as they should.

The Quality of Teaching in Subject Areas

25. Teaching is very good for the under fives. The teachers plan activities to make them accessible and fun for the children. Where children are ready, they are encouraged and challenged, so that many children are reaching standards within level 1 of the National Curriculum. Children benefit from the teachers' skilful use of questioning, which encourages them and gives them confidence to participate. Group activities are well organised and teachers provide an excellent range of games and other materials that are appropriate to the age group of the children and stimulate their interest. Teachers give good support for the group activities but the limited availability of additional adult support means that there are times when some children find it difficult to complete tasks.
26. In English, teaching is very good in both key stages. The planning and organisation of lessons are areas of strength and ensure that time is used effectively. The Literacy Hour has been implemented well and the recent emphasis on the need to raise standards of writing and reading has led to increased monitoring of teaching, which has helped to raise standards further. In mathematics, teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and very good in Key Stage 1. The numeracy strategy has been implemented well. Teaching in both key stages is thoroughly planned and classes are well managed, to ensure that there is a good learning environment. Teachers in Key Stage 2 sometimes have to deal with isolated incidents of inappropriate behaviour and this can slow down the pace of the lesson. Teaching in science is good overall in Key Stage 1, characterised by good subject expertise, good coverage of all attainment targets and effective use of first-hand experience. Expectations are not always high enough of the older pupils in terms of the writing up and recording of experiments and teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2.
27. The quality of teaching is a strength in many other subjects. The teaching was very good in the one art lesson seen. The teacher's own interest and expertise motivated the pupils to reach high standards. In geography, teaching is good in both key stages and teachers use resources well to make the subject interesting and relevant. The pupils respond by concentrating well and working hard to try to reach their teachers' high expectations of them. In the two history lessons seen, teaching was good. Again, the teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject is passed on to the pupils and helps to make it enjoyable. Teaching in music is good across both key stages. Teachers are inventive in their choice of themes for the lessons and this imaginative approach makes learning interesting. Pupils learn well as a result, showing high levels of enjoyment and energy. Teaching is good overall in physical education. Activities are well structured to enable the pupils to learn skills progressively. They give clear instructions, so that pupils always know what is expected of them.
28. In design and technology, teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. This shows a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when teachers were criticised for a lack of understanding and knowledge of the subject. Teachers now show very good subject knowledge and understanding. They engage and sustain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. This leads to very good learning at Key Stage 1 and good learning at Key Stage 2, where the level of special educational needs and pupil turnover is greater than in Key Stage 1. The teaching of information technology is good in both key stages. Teachers demonstrate well the skills they want the pupils to learn. Having set high expectations and motivated the pupils well by their own explanations and enthusiasm, they then move them into the computer suite so that all pupils are able to practise the required skills for themselves. In all cases, teachers' lesson plans, knowledge of the subject and management of pupils leads to good learning. However, ongoing assessment is not yet sufficiently systematic to provide good information on which to base future planning.
29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory where no additional help is available. All pupils, whatever their abilities, have personal targets set for them. The planning for varied abilities is particularly good in English and mathematics. In foundation subjects, the tasks set are mostly for the whole class but expectations and outcomes vary with pupils' needs and abilities, as does the teachers' support during independent working. Statemented pupils receive high levels of good quality support from their trained, assigned support assistants and make good progress as a result. Pupils receiving support in withdrawn, small groups for

language development are taught well by members of the local authority's language support team and so make good progress during these activities. The learning support assistant who manages literacy activities teaches well and has been specially trained. There are fewer learning assistants than would normally be found in a school with this proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register. The governors decided that the school policy is to have classes as small as possible in Key Stage 1 and the costs of this have reduced significantly the number of classroom assistants that they can employ. As a result, pupils lower down the stages of special educational need are not always supported well in their learning.

30. Overall, the high quality of teaching is a very significant strength of the school. It leads in most lessons to pupils developing good, often very good, learning skills. They respond well to the expectations of them and work hard in class, concentrating well on their work and making considerable intellectual and, when appropriate, creative effort. The clear instructions they are given always ensure that they know what is expected of them. In English and mathematics lessons, teachers use assessment very well to help pupils improve, by ensuring that they know what they have to do to raise the level of their work.

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

31. The curriculum for the under fives is good, offering a rich range of well-planned experiences and designed to allow the children good coverage of the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age. The curriculum at Key Stage 1 is good, with a good breadth of provision that gives due weight to the importance of literacy and numeracy but also provides support for the other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Some natural links between the subjects are recognised and developed, so that artwork, for example, arises from lessons in history and science. Half of all curriculum time is devoted to literacy and numeracy and, by contrast, a relatively small amount of time - five per cent - is available for science. The school has been following recent guidance in the distribution of time to literacy and numeracy but, if standards are to be raised across the whole curriculum, then it will be necessary to review both the balance of time and ways in which work in literacy and numeracy can be used to support learning in other subjects. The school day is relatively short and the non-core subjects, such as history and art, are each taught for only two and a half per cent of the time available. This is also true of Key Stage 2. Here, the curriculum breadth is satisfactory but the balance of the curriculum is not. Almost 60 per cent of time is given to literacy and numeracy, whereas music gets two per cent.
32. The provision for some subjects is organised into separate blocks of time, so that geography and history, for example, are taught in different terms. The coverage of history suffers particularly, because in some years of the planning cycle only one unit of the history programme is taught. The weaknesses in the coverage of the curriculum are compensated for to a large extent by the quality of the teaching and the provision when the subjects are taught. The units of work on history topics are of a good quality and the pupils produce work of a high standard. The long length of time that passes before the skills and knowledge they have learnt are revisited has an adverse affect on their progress over time, however. A very positive aspect of the curriculum is the very good use of the time at the beginning of the day, when 20 minutes is set aside for activities ranging from quick mathematics to silent reading. Pupils work at a brisk pace in this work, which is well planned and resourced in all classes, and it makes a significant contribution to standards across the curriculum.
33. There has been good improvement since the last report. At that time, two of the three key issues for the school's future development were related to shortcomings in the curriculum. The provision for design and technology was inadequate, failing to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for the children under five was unsatisfactory, because it failed to address the Desirable Learning Outcomes for this age group. These weaknesses have been addressed very well. The teachers now have a good understanding of the requirements for design and technology and teach the basic principles well. The curriculum for the under fives is planned to take full account of the desirable outcomes.

34. All subjects, at both key stages, meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the requirement to teach religious education is met. Both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well in both key stages. Overall, the curriculum prepares pupils effectively for the next stage in education. There are schemes of work and guidance for all subjects. Teachers meet regularly to review the work that has been done in each key stage and to plan the next round of work so that it builds on what has gone before. The outcomes of assessment are used well to aid planning at a whole-school level. For example, analysis of the outcomes of recent statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 1 has been used to modify the curriculum in English.
35. The curriculum is inclusive and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to it. This is partly because equality of opportunity for all is a strength of the school. It is an essential part of their ethos, an explicit aim, and one that they meet well. The school seeks to offer the same opportunities to take part and succeed to all, irrespective of academic ability or physical disability. Teachers plan in most of their lessons to provide appropriate work for the lower-attaining pupils and there is good support from teaching assistants (where they are available) usually targeted at the pupils with special educational needs, in order to help them to make progress. Individual Education Plans enable pupils to have full access to the curriculum, with their special needs being met through their personal targets. The provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is also good and their progress is carefully monitored. Pupils with statements receive good support from outside agencies. For example, the pupil with Downs Syndrome in Year 1 receives regular, good quality help from a speech therapist.
36. Health education and sex education are provided appropriately and adequately as part of personal and social education (PSE), as is drugs awareness teaching. There is a satisfactory range of additional activities, including clubs for information technology, football, rugby, gardening and indoor games, choir and recorders. Because many pupils need to catch buses after school, these activities take place in the lunch hour. They are only available to pupils in Key Stage 2 because of the timing of the lunchtime arrangements. A strength of the school's provision is the access it gives pupils to instrumental tuition. The school meets the costs of this to ensure that no pupil is unable to learn an instrument because of home circumstances. Eight pupils are learning to play an instrument at present. The school takes part in the sporting programmes available locally and the pupils have good opportunities to play football, rugby and netball and to represent their school against others.
37. The local community makes a satisfactory contribution to the curriculum and pupils' learning. Links with the nearby middle school extend the opportunities for pupils in physical education and music. Subject co-ordinators from the two schools meet regularly to discuss the curriculum, to ensure that work in Years 3 and 4 is developed further in the next school and not repeated unnecessarily. Fire, police and railway personnel give health and safety talks to support work in PSE and there are visits to support work in history, science and drama.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL CULTIVATES PUPILS' PERSONAL - INCLUDING SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL - DEVELOPMENT

38. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and shows a significant all-round improvement since the last inspection, particularly in its moral and cultural aspects.
39. The school makes very good provision for its pupils' spiritual development. There is a pervasive Christian ethos in the school, strongly supported by the leadership of the headteacher, governors and staff. The beautiful, small Victorian church, attached to the modern school building, is a rare and much valued provision that is regularly used by the school. Teachers work hard to make learning enjoyable and to extend it beyond the material into a spiritual dimension whenever appropriate. Through many aspects of the curriculum, such as art, music and poetry, pupils gain a sense of the wonder of life. After a science-focused educational visit to an oceanarium, a Year 1 pupil described excitedly how she observed a baby shark being born. Classrooms and public spaces around the school have attractive displays that celebrate pupils' work, reminding everyone of the value and uniqueness of each individual. The school building is sited within an attractive, well-cared-for landscape of mature trees and pupils and parents have helped to establish flower gardens, nature walks and a wild area within the outside environment. The beauty of the site encourages reflection and wonder. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Music is used well both to create a sense of special occasion and to teach children to appreciate the wonder and beauty of great music.
40. The Christian ethos also has a strong influence on pupils' moral development. Issues of right and wrong are posed and discussed through stories from The Bible. The way in which rules contribute to a sense of belonging within a community is highlighted by the school's own 'code of conduct' icon - a cross with a direction for harmonious living at each of its four points. Forgiveness is discussed in a meaningful way for young pupils in assemblies. Teachers are very good role models for caring and respect. On occasions, challenging behaviour from a very small number of pupils disturbs the flow of lessons. When this happens, whilst teachers are generally very patient and understanding, they also help pupils to be aware of the responsibilities they have for their own actions.
41. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. There are very many occasions when pupils work together as a whole class, discussing, listening and responding to each other very well. Such interactions are a crucial part of all numeracy and literacy lessons. They are the times when pupils contribute their thoughts to the pool of ideas and where individual and group learning successes are celebrated, through plenary gatherings towards the conclusion of lessons. In circle time, worries placed anonymously in a worry bag are openly discussed and many pupils make supportive suggestions as to how the concerns and anxieties of their friends may be overcome. Regular celebration assemblies value achievements in personal and social development as well as intellectual success. Teachers clearly explain to the whole school why a pupil is being rewarded. For example, during the inspection, pupils were praised by the headteacher for their country dancing skills and for their successful representation of the school at the local town's recent millennium celebrations. Pupils sing lively songs in unison and sign the meanings of the words symbolically together. Key Stage 2 pupils have many opportunities to participate in lunchtime activities that include successful choir, recorder and nature clubs. Older pupils feel responsible for the welfare of younger ones. Every pupil is involved in performances for parents and the community as part of the school's annual Christmas celebrations.
42. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Through many subjects of the curriculum, pupils become increasingly aware of their cultural heritage. Pupils have regular access to a wide range of literature, including poetry, from popular writers, as well as traditional folk tales. They begin to recognize the styles of famous painters in art and are exposed to fine displays of historical objects in some classrooms. Their own church is a major cultural resource, with its vernacular structure of local Portland stone and wood and its impressive, large pipe organ. Multicultural provision centres largely on religious education and the geography curriculum. Pupils have an early introduction to world faiths. They learn, for example, of the symbolism associated with artefacts from the Jewish faith and in a topic on

India explore traditional designs and music. Every year the school devotes a whole day to the cultural traditions of a particular country. Last year, the Caribbean heritage was celebrated and this summer the traditions of the United States of America were the focus.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school continues to provide good levels of care for its pupils overall, sustained from the time of the last report. Staff and adults in the school are vigilant: sensitive and supportive of the pupils, although some procedures need to be more formalised and secure. The school uses outside agencies well whenever a child protection issue is detected. Outside agencies are always used well to support pupils with special educational needs and to encourage good attendance and punctuality. The school's arrangements for the monitoring and promotion of attendance are good. The assessment, monitoring and guidance of pupils by staff are established and satisfactory.
44. The school does not have its own Child Protection Policy but has adopted the policy of the Local Education Authority. There is no formally named Child Protection Officer and some members of staff are not entirely clear who is undertaking this task. No members of staff have received recent, up-to-date training in child protection. The school does, however, liaise fully with appropriate agencies when it is thought to be appropriate. Procedures to monitor and record attendance are good. Parents are contacted immediately a child is absented if the school has not been notified of a reason. The Education Welfare Officer visits the school regularly and visits families when necessary. The levels of attendance, at over 95 per cent in the week prior to the inspection, are good as a consequence.
45. Teaching and non-teaching staff are very caring towards pupils and the guidance, personal support and help that the school provides for its pupils are of a good standard. Care of pupils during the lunchtime and playtime periods, by care assistants, is good and the minor incidents of rough play observed during the inspection were dealt with promptly and appropriately. Some members of staff have attended appropriate first-aid courses but the school's arrangements for the recording of accidents do not require all incidents to be recorded, as they should. The last health and safety audit was carried out some two years ago and there are no procedures in place to carry out regular health and safety checks.
46. The school's policies for eliminating and monitoring oppressive behaviour and for the promotion of good behaviour are effective. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. Teaching and non-teaching staff dealt promptly with all instances of challenging and disruptive behaviour, all minor, observed during the inspection week. The provision for the care, support and guidance of pupils with special educational needs is good and parents are fully involved with staff in the drawing up of Individual Education Plans. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well integrated into the school and the other pupils befriend them and help them in many ways.
47. The school has good policies for supporting and monitoring pupils' personal development. Teachers know their pupils well and are responsive to their needs. They provide caring learning opportunities where all pupils feel equally valued. All members of staff work successfully to help individual pupils, both academically and pastorally, and are quick to recognise when additional help and attention are needed. Class teachers work hard to ensure that pupils with special needs receive all the help that is available to them.
48. Relationships between pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff are very good. Pupils learn to relate very well to each other and to adults. There is a mutual respect that helps to reinforce the caring ethos of the school as well as creating a good ethos for learning in all classrooms. This contributes to the good learning and progress that pupils make in lessons.

Assessment

49. Arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall. They are very effective in English and mathematics, where they have helped to raise standards. The school uses the results of annual tests well to help with the planning of work for classes and teachers monitor individual pupils' achievements effectively on a regular basis. Class teachers have a clear picture of pupils' strengths and areas for development. This information is used well to set targets that are shared with parents and their children. These are recorded in detailed end-of-year reports that meet statutory requirements. These targets encourage pupils to be self-critical and understand what they need to do to improve.
50. The progress of all pupils in achieving targets in literacy and numeracy is monitored closely. However, the consistent and systematic approach used in these subjects does not yet apply sufficiently in other subjects. The school recognises this and the further development of assessment and the use of assessment information across the curriculum is a priority in their School Development Plan. There are good arrangements for assessing the achievement of children in the reception classes. Pupils' academic achievements are acknowledged in assemblies and teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils receive recognition of their efforts.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school has good and effective links with parents, who are, in the main, very positive about the work of the school and its links with the community. The quality of the school's work in partnership with parents has been sustained since the last report.
52. Parents feel able to come into school at any time to discuss their children's progress and are encouraged to come into school to help in a variety of ways. A significant number of parents provide voluntary support in lesson times. They help, for example, with reading, sewing and accompanying children on school trips. Their contribution is much valued by the staff.
53. The school provides good quality information to parents about their children's progress. Annual reports are informative, parent-friendly and provide information to parents regarding targets that have been set and ways that their children can improve their work. The school holds regular parents' evenings to provide opportunities for parents to come in and discuss their children's progress and these are well attended. In addition, the school runs several courses a year for parents to advise them on current trends in education being adopted by the school. The Home-School Agreement, which is fully in place, is extremely successful and parents are fully involved and are kept fully informed about their children's academic and pastoral progress.
54. Communication with parents is excellent. The school brochure is well prepared, parent-friendly and gives parents all the necessary information to plot their children's progress throughout their school life. Newsletters, bulletins and other sources of information are regularly supplied by the school to parents and the school has made strenuous efforts to involve parents in all aspects of their children's learning. Questionnaires are sent to parents on a regular basis to see how the school can improve liaison with them and the parents' response is very positive.
55. Parents are enthusiastic to come into school to work and pupils of parents with special needs are fully involved in Individual Education Plans prepared by the school. The concerns felt and expressed, by a small number of parents, particularly regarding homework provision, the number of extra-curricular activities and the progress and achievements of higher-attaining pupils in Year 4, are recognised and are being addressed by the school.
56. The Friends of Sandford First School (PTA) organise many successful social functions, such as film nights for children, firework displays, barbecues and discos; and the financial help that these events gives to the school is much appreciated. It makes a significant contribution to the resources available for the pupils, having helped, for example, towards the costs of additional computers and playground equipment.

57. The school has excellent liaison with the local church and is much involved with the community. Pupils deliver Harvest gifts to the elderly and invite elderly residents from local homes into school to entertain them. Pupils help to organise very many charity events and visitors from outside the school give talks on the work of the Fire Brigade, Police and other services.
58. Many parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed very positive views about the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. They felt that support was excellent and that the school is very good at identifying needs. Significant numbers of parents regularly help teachers in the classroom, working with small groups and individuals, freeing teachers' time so that they can give the pupils with special educational needs additional support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. At the time of the last report, the school was managed well and provided satisfactory value for money. The headteacher was providing good leadership and had a clear vision for the future. The school development planning was detailed but there was no long-term financial planning. Governors were playing an informed and supportive role in the running of the school. There has been satisfactory improvement since then.
60. Overall, the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are very good. The governing body is fulfilling its responsibilities well in almost all its areas of responsibility. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is very good and very effective action is taken as a result. The principles of best value are applied well in all financial decisions and the strategic use of resources is satisfactory.
61. The headteacher, supported very well by the deputy, is ensuring a very clear educational direction for the school. She has, as a result of very effective monitoring of teaching and attainment, identified the key areas for development and put in place appropriate and effective strategies to bring about improvement. For example, she was aware, through the monitoring of National Curriculum test results, that the quality of pupils' written work at the end of Year 2 was low. She allocated more time to the teaching of writing, involved the Local Education Authority in a review of practice and arranged additional professional development opportunities for staff. The test results this year reflect the significant improvement in standards that has come about as a result.
62. The subject co-ordinators provide good leadership in their subject areas. They produce the long-term planning for each subject, give useful advice and guidance to teachers and monitor the medium-term planning to ensure that the coverage is satisfactory. Delegation is used effectively and all members of staff who have additional responsibilities carry them out well.
63. The aims of the school are reflected very well in all of its work. Pupils are reminded of them in assemblies and act out short plays to show how they can put the aims into action - a very good strategy for making the aims real to children of this age. Different aims are used as weekly themes for assemblies. The philosophy and aims of the school are set out at the beginning of the School Development Plan and planning is related to them. The main aims are fulfilled well in practice, including that to create a strong Christian ethos in the school and the value that should be given to every child in the way that she or he is treated.
64. The governing body is well informed about the work of the school and has a satisfactory understanding and knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governors carry out most of their statutory duties well but it is two years since the annual risk assessment was carried out. They are involved in setting the budget, ensuring best value from financial decisions, school development planning and the monitoring of finances. Through this involvement and the 'Way Ahead' conferences that all staff and governors attend every four years when the future direction of the school is discussed and long-term development plans agreed, the governors have a strong say in the shaping of the school's future direction.
65. The governors are also involved in the monitoring of the work of the school, not only through the monitoring of National Curriculum test results but also through regular visits to classes and

invitations to subject co-ordinators to talk to the curriculum committee about progress and policies. Every governor has a curriculum responsibility and is required to visit the school at least once a year for a day of observation, centred on their subject interest. At the end of this, a report is prepared and then shared with fellow governors. As a result of this, the governors are on the whole well informed about the curriculum provision and are coming to a good understanding of teaching aims and objectives.

66. The quality of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, by the headteacher, deputy and co-ordinators for the core subjects, is high and has made a significant contribution to the standards of teaching now seen throughout the school. There is a very good programme, linked to a very effective appraisal system, that is thorough and constructive. The school's success in this area has led to an 'Investors in People' Award. The school's strategy for performance management is developing well. Regular reviews of the work of the school, backed up with two-yearly questionnaires sent to parents, ensure that priorities are identified correctly and that prompt and appropriate action is taken.

Finance

67. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure. The senior managers and the Governing Body allocate major funding decisions according to the priorities outlined in the School Development Plan. Governors and all members of staff are involved in the determining of these priorities. A key element in the process of decision-making is the 'Way Ahead' conference. The decision made at the last conference, to concentrate the school's financial resources on low class sizes in Key Stage 1, has meant that teachers' salary costs now represent a relatively high percentage of the total budget. In so far as there is scope for governors to make decisions about how the rest of the budget is spent, they always seek best value in the allocation of contracts. Curriculum co-ordinators have responsibility for their own budgets and similarly seek to maximise the value they can get from their funding in terms of the effectiveness of the resources they purchase. Overall, the quality of educational provision has benefited from the careful management of the budget. Funds have been allocated successfully to areas of educational priority. These have proved to be successful in raising standards and the quality of educational experience for pupils. The continued support for the open-air swimming pool, for example, has led to sustained high standards in swimming. The resources the school has added to the national funding for information technology have helped to raise standards in that subject area by widening the opportunities for pupils to have access to computers and use them to help their work across the curriculum. The quality and rigour of financial management is good: the last auditors' report was satisfactory and the recommendations it made were minor and have been addressed.
68. The school makes effective use of new technology. It is used appropriately for administration and in many subject areas. Special grants, for educating pupils with special educational needs, are used appropriately. Overall, taking account of the progress made by pupils, the quality of teaching, the good personal development of pupils and the relatively low costs of the school, value for money is good.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

69. Accommodation in the school is satisfactory, overall. The site is attractive and offers a generous amount of playground space for the pupils in the school to all play outside safely. The play area for reception classes, used during lesson time, is not securely fenced, however, and slopes steeply, restricting the use of large, wheeled toys. There is good access to the large grassed areas shared with the adjacent middle school, marked out for sports and athletics. This greatly enhances the facilities available for physical education. Classrooms are of a good size and a long central area has been used well to create a large library space, equipped with two modern computers and a good range of books. A medium sized room that was once the kitchen has been adapted very well to create a valuable and functional information technology room. The display spaces around the school, in classrooms and corridors, are used well to celebrate pupils' work.
70. The school building is of architectural interest: parts of it are old and have considerable character. The village church forms part of the accommodation and is used regularly for small

group withdrawal work and, on occasions, for acts of collective worship. The beauty of the building adds considerably to the spirituality of such occasions.

71. The standard of cleanliness in all areas of the school is good and there is no litter. The site manager and the cleaning staff worked hard during the inspection week to support the teachers in maintaining a difficult building as a teaching environment of quality.
72. Learning resources are satisfactory in most departments and good in physical education. Resources for information technology are good in the school, the central facilities being extensive, with a variety of appropriate software. Information technology is used well overall, including the use of computers for school administration. The library is stocked satisfactorily, with a variety of books, including a range of reference books and computer software.
73. The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified teachers to meet curriculum needs. The governing body decided, as its stratagem for supporting pupils with special educational needs, to allocate a significant proportion of its special needs budget to the reduction of class sizes. Money is not, therefore, available to provide for support staff in many classrooms. The special needs co-ordinator is a full-time teacher in Year 1. She took over the role last September and is working hard to improve the level of provision. She is forging good links with the peripatetic learning support team from the Local Education Authority and is using them increasingly to give guidance to her and to individual teachers. She has satisfactory contact generally with outside agencies. The special needs governor is a retired teacher who has regular contact with the school. She helps with the additional literacy support work. Over the last few months, she has been monitoring special needs provision in classes. She has produced a report for governors that shows a strong awareness of the implications of the lack of learning support assistants in some classes, particularly in Years 3 and 4 where there are high levels of special educational needs.
74. The programme of professional development for all staff is thorough and well organised and includes good provision for performance management. The support for newly qualified teachers is generally good. The teaching assistants are appropriately trained and, though relatively few in number, they give good levels of support, as does the clerical and administrative staff. All other adults who work in the school, including the office staff, make a valuable contribution and help to ensure that the work of the school proceeds smoothly.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to continue to improve and to raise levels of attainment and the quality of education in the school, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff, with the support of the Local Education Authority, should:
 - continue to develop the improved strategies for the teaching of reading, writing and science in order that more of the higher-attaining pupils reach level 3, above the expected level for their age, by the end of Year 2. This entails:
 1. encouraging teachers to have higher expectations of pupils' reading and writing skills;
 2. providing greater challenges for the higher-attaining readers in order to further extend their skills;
 3. improving the presentation and recording of science in both key stages by giving the pupils a wider range of formats for recording and setting higher standards of presentation; (paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 7, 26, 90, 91, 92, 94, 96, 105, 108)
 - build on the very good practice that exists in English and mathematics to develop strategies for tracking the progress pupils make in the foundation subjects and science, with a clear focus both on what the pupils are capable of achieving and what is expected in terms of National Curriculum levels; (paragraphs 28, 50, 110, 122, 125, 128, 132, 141)
 - ensure that the annual risk assessment is carried out and that the procedures for child protection are shared with all staff. (paragraphs 44, 64).

Other areas for development that have been noted by the inspection team, but not picked out as key issues, that the governors may wish to include in their action plan, are:

- the balance of the curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 2. In order to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000, the school will have to review the allocation of time to the non-core subjects and consider extending the school day, which falls short of that recommended for pupils in Years 3 and 4; (paragraphs 31, 32, 123, 126)
- the number of support assistants available to help in classrooms. The school's budget is fully stretched meeting its present commitments but there is a need for more support, especially for low-attaining pupils and in Reception, and the school should continue to review regularly the number and deployment of teaching assistants available; (paragraphs 29, 67, 73, 81, 83, 87)
- some deficiencies in the outdoor provision for children under five. (paragraphs 69, 87)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 58 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 27 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 7 | 41 | 38 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | Y R – Y4 |
|--|---------|----------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 0 | 229 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 0 | 23 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0 | 60 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 18 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 8 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.3 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.2 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 1999 | 21 | 20 | 41 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 15 | 19 |
| | Girls | 16 | 16 | 17 |
| | Total | 29 | 31 | 36 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 71 | 76 | 88 |
| | National | 82 | 83 | 87 |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 19 | 18 |
| | Girls | 16 | 17 | 16 |
| | Total | 29 | 36 | 34 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 71 | 88 | 83 |
| | National | 82 | 86 | 87 |

Ethnic Background of Pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 2 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 227 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 2 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 10 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22.9 |
| Average class size | 25 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 4 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 100 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 15 |
|--------------------------------|----|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999-2000 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 339452 |
| Total expenditure | 331643 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1370 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -69 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 7740 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 198 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 74 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 58 | 35 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 50 | 38 | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 41 | 49 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 28 | 43 | 22 | 5 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 53 | 30 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 39 | 39 | 14 | 8 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 69 | 20 | 9 | 0 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 59 | 35 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 43 | 39 | 11 | 4 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 45 | 36 | 12 | 4 | 3 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 47 | 41 | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 28 | 42 | 11 | 5 | 14 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

76. All children enter the reception class at the beginning of the autumn term of the year in which they will be five. They attend part-time for the first half-term to ease their entry and help them to settle. At the time of the inspection there were eight children aged under five in the two reception classes. Most children have had pre-school experience, with the majority having attended the on-site nursery. Baseline assessment results indicate that children's attainment on entry is generally in line with that expected for this age in language and literacy and mathematics, with a quarter of the children being below average, particularly in language and literacy. The majority of pupils have well developed personal and social skills.
77. Reception provision gives children very good access to the experiences recommended in the Desirable Learning Outcomes and prepares them well for entry to the National Curriculum. The children make very good progress and, at the time of the inspection, most children were exceeding the recommended outcomes by the time they reach the age of five. This is an improvement since the previous report. The scheme of work now provides a curriculum that is appropriate for children of this age very effectively and prepares them successfully for their entry into the next stage of their education. At the time of the inspection, there were a small number of children on the register of special educational needs, or who were being monitored prior to being entered.

Personal and social development

78. Children make very good progress in their personal and social development. The reception unit provides a welcoming and bright environment that helps young children to settle in and feel part of the school. By the time they are five, they show confidence and relate well to adults, to one another and the older pupils. They develop a good level of independence in selecting an activity, dressing and personal hygiene. They are expected to take on class responsibilities, such as taking the register to the office and helping to tidy up. The teacher, sensitively, encourages them to participate in circle time activities. They were observed sharing their feelings about worries, listening carefully to each other and making sensitive suggestions to help those who, for example, felt lonely at playtime. They generally attend acts of collective worship with the rest of the school.
79. Teaching in this area is very good. The teachers provide for a good range of social experiences, such as role-play activities, sharing news and stories and taking turns in circle time sessions. The children are encouraged to become independent when working in small group activities and learn to concentrate and persevere in their learning. Teachers are consistent in their expectations of behaviour and, very sensitively, help children to learn to respect others.

Language and literacy

80. Children develop their literacy skills very well. They are given very good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, so that many are exceeding the required outcomes. They enjoy sharing books during the Literacy Hour session and listen well to their teacher and to one another. They contribute to discussions confidently and share their ideas and experiences. They are beginning to acquire new vocabulary and their speech is gaining in fluency and expression. Children of all abilities are reading simple texts, using the pictures and letter sounds to help their understanding. They all enjoy reading, and can talk about what stories they enjoy. They are developing good writing skills, through planned activities that are part of the Literacy Hour. These activities help to develop their spelling skills and introduce them to simple punctuation. The "writing area" provides the opportunity for more informal activities, such as writing invitations. The lower-attainers are beginning to form letters independently and copy sentences, while those of average and above average attainment are able to produce simple sentences, with some appropriate use of capital letters and full stops.

81. The quality of teaching is mainly very good. The teachers gradually introduce the Literacy Hour, but they modify the independent activities to make them accessible and fun for the children. Where children are ready, they are encouraged and challenged, so that many children are reaching standards within level 1 of the National Curriculum. Children benefit from the focus on word and sentence level work and from the teachers' questioning, which encourages them and gives them the confidence to participate. Group activities are well planned and teachers have prepared an excellent range of games and other materials that are appropriate to the age group of the children and stimulate their interest. Teachers give good support for the group activities. However, the limited availability of additional adult support means that, at times, children find it difficult to complete tasks.

Mathematics

82. Children develop their mathematical skills well so that, by the time they are five, many are exceeding the outcomes for children this age. They can sort, order and match objects and complete jigsaws. They can recognise and recreate patterns, such as bead necklaces. Most children can count to ten and many can recognise numbers to one hundred. They learn to match the correct number of objects to a numeral and are learning to record their work effectively. Older and more able children are beginning to learn about subtraction and can handle simple coins and give change. Water and sand play experiences extend their understanding of size and capacity. They are encouraged to develop their understanding of position and direction in other areas of learning, such as following instructions in physical education lessons.
83. The quality of teaching is generally very good. The teachers provide the children with regular mathematical experiences, through the Numeracy Hour. Work is well planned to meet the needs of the different ability levels in the class and teachers provide for the more able to have opportunities to attempt work found within the Key Stage 1 Programmes of Study. Materials and resources are selected well, so that children's learning is based on appropriate practical activities. Number lines are provided to help children with counting and subtraction. Games, such as adding and subtracting scales to the "Rainbow Fish", help the less able children achieve well. Additional adult help supports children well in their learning. However, some children find it difficult to achieve the objectives of the task when they are unsupported in small group activities. There are planned opportunities for children to explore, think and develop their mathematical understanding through water and sand play, construction sets and sorting games.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. Children make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn about themselves and the importance of a healthy diet. The visit to a local farm teaches them about animals, their diet and their habitats. They investigate taste and smell and explore the touch and feel of different materials. A sense of history is developed through learning about teddy bears and old toys. Their parents help them to make a book about themselves, so that they have a record of how they were as babies and how they have developed. They learn about the seaside and the rocks, shells and creatures to be found there. They use computers confidently, controlling the mouse to move the cursor around the screen.
85. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers provide, in the scheme of work, for a good range of opportunities for the class, with an emphasis on science. A science table is provided in which children can investigate different kinds of material independently. Teachers introduce the children to relevant scientific vocabulary and provide them with very good opportunities for experimentation, as when observing the effects of heat on materials, such as chocolate, play dough, jelly and ice. Children's knowledge and understanding of the seaside is developed through play in a stimulating role-play area, which is extended to the water play area, where children fish for pebbles, stones and seaweed.

Physical development

86. Children make good progress in physical development and most children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. There are good opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills and they handle pencils and crayons, paintbrushes, scissors and other

tools and materials safely. They use construction material or bricks and wooden blocks. Most children can change their clothes independently, ready for physical education lessons. They understand the need to “warm-up”. They move safely and show imagination and skill in moving in different ways and following instructions. They learn the rules of team and relay games and work well in team groups, although not all can follow the rules of the game.

87. Teaching is good. Teachers provide good opportunities for physical activities. The outside play area is organised satisfactorily and provides an environment in which children can run and climb and develop gross motor skills. However, the lack of an additional adult who could supervise these activities means that children are not always supported to develop these skills. There is timetabled time in the summer for swimming sessions, which the children enjoy and which helps them develop confidence in the water. The curriculum planning allows them to have physical education lessons in the school hall, so that they can develop their physical skills, including confidence on apparatus. The outdoor play facilities for Reception children are restricted because of the sloping site.

Creative development

88. Children make good progress in their creative development. They play imaginatively in the home corner and the “sea adventure” area. They are provided with a good range of materials and activities, including paint, play dough, and recycled material. The children plan their models and produce effective results. They learn to make working parts, using a variety of methods, select colours carefully and enjoy the effect of painting over their own waxed sea scenes. Some children experiment with mixing colours. Children enjoy and participate in making music and singing.
89. The quality of teaching is good. Art activities are matched well to the children’s interests and stage of development. The teaching allows for experimentation and the teachers use demonstration well to help the children to develop their techniques. There is a good emphasis on developing skills as well as providing for creative and imaginative work and play.

ENGLISH

90. Attainment in English is average overall at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 4, because of the relatively high proportion of pupils in this particular cohort with special educational needs, attainment is below average overall but a significant proportion of pupils are in line with, and some above, the average nationally in Year 3 and 4 classes. Attainment is best in the skills of speaking and listening. At least average levels are attained by a large majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4 in Key Stage 2. Attainment in reading and writing is broadly average for most pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 but is below average overall at the end of Year 4. Small numbers of pupils are attaining better than the average in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well for their abilities where they are receiving regular classroom support. Where extra support is unavailable, they make satisfactory progress.
91. Improvement since the last inspection is good overall, although during the three years since the previous inspection, with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, attainment in English in both Key Stages 1 and 2 declined to well below the national average in reading and writing. During the last year, this position has been reversed by effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and improvements in the quality of teaching. Through a strong commitment to improvement, the school has returned this year to a position of near parity with nationally expected levels of attainment at Key Stage 1, where the large majority of pupils now reach the benchmark of Level 2. The number of children reaching Level 3, however, whilst rising, is still below the national average. Whilst the downward trend has also been reversed at Key Stage 2 and some good attainment was evident during lessons seen during the inspection, the attainment for pupils at the end of Year 4 remains below the national expectation in reading and writing for this age group.
92. The latest available national comparison figures for 1999 show the percentage of pupils attaining the national standard of Level 2 or above at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading was

below and in writing was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was slightly better when compared with attainment nationally but was still below the national average. Results compared very unfavourably with those of schools of similar social context, except in the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 or above in writing though these were still below the national average.

93. A large majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills as they move through the school. There is a strong, caring and respectful ethos. Teachers make their introductions and teaching points compellingly and they strongly promote speaking and listening skills in their pupils. Pupils of all abilities have many opportunities to express their opinions and explore their feelings, and those of others, through lessons, in assemblies and at playtimes. Most do so quite confidently, knowing that their ideas will be valued and respected. Teachers frequently provide exciting, enjoyable speaking and listening opportunities in lessons. For example, through the group writing of poetry, everyone's contribution is valued and has an impact on the final result. Teachers make very good use of whole-class gatherings at the beginnings and endings of lessons, where pupils share their learning experiences with their peers. Small numbers of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, have short concentration spans and poor listening skills, which significantly inhibit their ability to learn.
94. Satisfactory progress is generally made in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of reading in Key Stage 1. Most pupils enjoy books and have an effective understanding of book conventions. They have a good understanding of phonics - pupils have a good knowledge of the alphabet and increasingly understand the connection between visual forms of letters and their common sounds. Alliteration and rhyming are used well to make learning of letter patterns enjoyable. This helps pupils to understand word blending in reading and aids accurate spelling. Whole-class reading forms a major part of the Literacy Hour. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 experienced an excellently designed "big book" made by their teachers, which prepared them for a field trip and subsequently helped them to evaluate their experiences. There is a suitably structured reading programme, based on a variety of published reading schemes. However, some more able readers, who are allowed to choose their own books, select ones that are not sufficiently challenging to extend their skills.
95. Progress in reading at Key Stage 2 is generally satisfactory overall. There is a statistically significant number of pupils in both Years 3 and 4 with learning difficulties who had relatively low attainment on entry to school at 5 years of age when compared with the most recent intake. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their reading at all levels of ability. An extra half hour of daily reading in addition to the Literacy Hour is improving reading progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their research skills for investigative study and know how to access books efficiently in the school library.
96. In Key Stage 1, most pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing. They begin to see the relationship between spoken and written words, to form letters with increasing skill and to organize their thoughts into interesting, readable writing. As they pass through Key Stage 1 their spelling becomes more accurate, benefiting increasingly from the word skills taught effectively during the Literacy Hour. The foundations of punctuation are being secured. For example, pupils use full stops and capital letters with greater accuracy. They interpret the question mark and appreciate its implications in written language. Pupils also begin to develop an understanding of writing for different purposes. They address a card and prepare a detailed design specification in design and technology accurately, as well as writing descriptively and imaginatively, when constructing their own limericks, for example. Handwriting is practised regularly but joined writing is not taught until Year 2. The lack of this skill inhibits some mature Year 1 writers' abilities to record ideas with the fluency of their thoughts. Moreover, the use of joined handwriting is still inconsistent amongst many pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 pupils are appropriately challenged to write with a growing sense of audience and perspective in a variety of styles. They write letters, with empathy for the recipient, and book reviews, to give the reader a clear understanding of genre and characterisation. Some pupils are beginning to develop independent research skills and to accurately summarize their findings. The quality of spelling, handwriting and presentation of work in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent.
97. Satisfactory use is made of information technology in the development of word processing and spelling skills across the school.

98. The quality of teaching is very good overall at both key stages: very good in all lessons except for one lesson in Key Stage 2 being satisfactory and one at Key Stage 1 being excellent. The high standard of teaching has a significant impact on the quality of learning. Teachers now have a very broad understanding of the teaching of literacy. They work very hard to make lessons enjoyable, interesting and meaningful for their pupils.
99. Literacy lessons are usually planned in detail and, in the best, learning intentions are shared with pupils. Most teachers are skilled in the timing of lesson elements. They have a good understanding of their pupils' abilities, are sensitive to the limits of their concentration and adapt their timing and vary activities accordingly to gain optimum learning. Most teachers are very well informed about their pupils' progress and are usually diligent in circulating, questioning and observing how pupils are progressing during lessons. Each pupil has individual targets set, frequently aimed at raising the quality of aspects of literacy.
100. The leadership and management of English are good. The co-ordinator has successfully steered staff through the training for, and implementation of, the Literacy Hour. Together with the rest of the Key Stage 2 teaching team, she has revised the planning for literacy for Years 3 and 4. The new planning implemented this term clearly identifies how the needs of Year 4 pupils will be differentiated from those of Year 3 in mixed-age classes in a two-year rolling programme. She has managed the development of suitable resources to meet the changed requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. A wide variety of reading scheme books is available for the teaching of reading but some of these are worn and outdated. The library was used effectively by small groups of pupils during the inspection. It has a satisfactory range of books for teaching the National Curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

101. In the 1999 national assessments, standards were well above the national average at Key Stage 1 and above that achieved by similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level, level 3, was also well above the national average. The finding of the inspection is that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. At the end of Year 4, standards are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. Analysis of the school's register of pupils with special educational needs indicates a higher proportion of pupils with specific learning needs in Year 4 and this affects the overall level of attainment in Year 4, as does the number of pupils who joined the school after the end of Year 2. The last inspection reported that standards were average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. As a result of good monitoring, carefully planned developments to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and a focus on raising attainment, there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and in the standards attained.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils explore number patterns successfully and solve problems involving addition and subtraction up to 20 and beyond. Most pupils recognise odd and even numbers and identify halves and quarters in numbers and area. They use quick and efficient methods of mental calculation. Pupils classify two and three-dimensional shapes by their properties. Pupils discuss and explain their strategies in problem-solving tasks well. They understand how bar graphs work and use them effectively to record their observations. By Year 4 at Key Stage 2, pupils use a range of mental strategies for adding numbers, such as doubling, adding ten and then adjusting. They show a good understanding of how numbers may be combined or subtracted in different ways. Examples of previous work show that pupils are developing an appropriate understanding of simple fractions, decimal notation and percentages. They are able to estimate and measure accurately. They have a good knowledge of regular shapes and can identify different kinds of angles. Those with special educational needs and English as an additional language reach appropriate levels of attainment, particularly when helped by a learning support assistant.
103. Pupils make good progress in learning the skills of numeracy across the school. Pupils in Year 1 develop a good knowledge of number facts to 20. Year 2 pupils increase their speed of recall of number bonds and develop simple strategies for solving problems. Year 3 pupils add two-digit numbers to three-digit numbers mentally and develop a good ability to explain how

they arrived at the answer. Year 4 pupils increase their understanding of fractions and use a good range of mathematical vocabulary. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as history and science.

104. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was found to be satisfactory across the school. Overall, it is now very good at Key Stage 1. It is good at Key Stage 2. The teaching observed at Key Stage 1 ranges from satisfactory to excellent and from satisfactory to very good at Key Stage 2. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have a good understanding of mathematics, which means they make clear teaching points and answer pupils' questions accurately. There is a sharp focus in lessons on precisely what is to be learnt. In many lessons this is shared with the pupils, so they know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers expect pupils to concentrate in lessons and this has a positive effect on the quality and quantity of the work produced. Very occasionally, the presence of a small number of boys in Year 4, who entered the school late, can disrupt the group and there can be a loss of focus in the learning for some pupils. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well and use a variety of strategies to keep pupils interested, such as mathematical games and puzzles. A feature of the best lessons is the effective use of questioning to challenge pupils of all abilities and to check pupils' understanding. Generally, the activities provided are adapted to the needs of the range of ability within the class. Teachers manage pupils well. They treat them with respect and value their contribution. As a result, pupils pay very good attention to the teacher. A feature of several lessons was the way in which pupils enjoyed and rejoiced in the achievements of others, underlining the good relationships within classes. Many opportunities are created for pupils to reflect on their learning and to explain their thinking, particularly in the whole-class session at the end of each lesson. The new assessment and recording systems for the subject are very good and provide for the planning and setting of targets for individual pupils, but they are not yet fully in place. The teachers receive good support from the scheme of work and the acting subject co-ordinator and he is beginning to ensure that work is carefully monitored.

SCIENCE

105. The results of National Curriculum Teacher Assessment for seven year olds in 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level, level 2, was below the national average, but it was above the national average for the higher level, level 3. The overall results were better than the national average, with a significant improvement over the results achieved in 1998. Standards in science achieved at the time of the previous inspection were said to be in line with the national average at Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, by the time they reached Year 4, pupils were achieving above the standards expected for pupils at that age. The finding of this inspection is that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are achieving standards broadly similar to those achieved in the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils attaining levels 2 and above is higher than the national average but the proportion attaining the higher level, level 3, is relatively low. By the time they reach Year 4, they are achieving standards broadly in line with national expectations. The standards achieved by this year group are lowered, however, by the large proportion of children with special educational needs in the classes and their weaknesses in presentation skills.
106. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of science and the teachers ensure a good development of knowledge and skills, as well as ensuring that key vocabulary is taught. Pupils are adept at practical investigations. These capture pupils' interest and provide the basis for good discussion, which allows for the development of good skills of enquiry and prediction. They experiment with different ways to move a ball and identify different man-made and natural sounds and the volume of sound made by different instruments. They know about life processes and learn about the life cycles of birds and insects. They learn about themselves and their bodies and what is needed for healthy growth. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils showed that they had a good understanding of how to identify medicines and the dangers of using these unsupervised. The teacher provided them with a very good opportunity to analyse the packaging of medicines and to identify the instructions and warnings. Pupils are very clear about their tasks and know that their ideas and suggestions are valued. They make simple recordings of their experiments and use drawings, charts and labelling effectively.

107. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, which runs over two years to take account of the mixed age classes. There is a structured approach to a build up of skills, so that pupils apply previously learnt knowledge to new learning. There is a good emphasis on direct experience and experimentation. By the time they are nine, pupils understand what a fair test is and know why it is necessary. There are good, supportive opportunities in which pupils can make informed suggestions and they show good skills in asking questions and sharing their predictions. They set up tests well to check the effect of friction on the speed of a vehicle travelling over different surfaces. They experiment carefully to find out how materials are changed by heating. They study rocks and produce useful charts to record their observations. Pupils were observed sifting soils to determine their make-up and to identify the constituents. They work well and methodically and are guided by a common framework to record the investigation and results. They record their results effectively in chart form. Pupils are encouraged to work independently. However, there is less evidence of their being given the opportunity to organise their own experiments, to assess the results and discuss how the experiment could be improved.
108. The behaviour of pupils and their attitude to their work are good. Pupils of all ages enjoy their science lessons and work hard at their tasks. Younger pupils work well together and share their observations with their classmates and teachers. The majority of older pupils respond well to the opportunities to carry out investigations and observations, collaborate well and use equipment carefully and safely. In discussion, they were able to recall previous work using correct terminology. Finished work is not always well presented and this is particularly the case with older pupils in Key Stage 2.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory, with some very good teaching observed in Key Stage 1, where it is good overall. Lessons are well planned, with a clear structure and learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. Teachers are also very careful to use and emphasise the correct scientific terminology. There is good attention to giving pupils good practical experiences and the good provision of resources enables pupils to work independently. The lesson planning provides for a tight structure, in which, following the initial introduction, group activities are planned so that the teacher is able to support and assess the work of the pupils. Support assistants, where available, provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. However, at Key Stage 2, while the opportunities provided for good quality experimentation are good, the opportunities the subject provides to enhance pupils' literacy skills are more limited. Teaching is satisfactory. However, scrutiny of the work in books indicates that pupils are not being given a satisfactory opportunity to develop the skills of recording their experiments in a variety of ways, including the use of information technology for research, or for the processing of data to produce graphs. There is some evidence that higher-attaining pupils are provided with additional challenge and are beginning to use a framework to organise their accounts of experiments. The subject is well supported by classroom displays that provide good and attractive records of current themes and also provide areas for continued experimentation.
110. The management of science is effective. The school is now using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance to provide a basis for a science scheme of work. This ensures that there are clear learning objectives and that there is continuity and progress in the acquisition of scientific knowledge and understanding. The assessment procedures are satisfactory, although they are not yet effective in tracking the progress of individual pupils or for setting target for classes and year groups. Resources are good and selected to provide effective support to thematic work. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' work and has had some opportunities to observe teaching and learning. There is now a need to strengthen teachers' confidence in using the new scheme of work, so that they can provide for the full range of skills related to the experimental and investigative side of science. Visitors contribute to pupils' learning effectively. The chair of governors brought in two motorbikes and led an assembly with a focus on forces; the school nurse gave a talk on dental health; and a science workshop was run by a local education group. There is a good programme of visits for pupils in all year groups. Pupils in Year 4 attend an environmental studies centre in the autumn, where they can observe animal habitats; pupils in Key Stage 1 visit an oceanarium to investigate sea life and habitats and have recently visited the Streetwise Safety Centre to learn about health and safety in the environment.

ART

111. Art shares timetable provision with design and technology. Only one lesson in art was seen during the inspection as design and technology is the focus for this half of the term. Evidence was also gathered from the policy and scheme of work, from an analysis of pupils' art that is well displayed around the school, from folios of previously completed work and from discussion with the art co-ordinator.
112. Standards in art have improved since the previous inspection and are now generally above the levels expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and for pupils at the end of Year 4 in Key Stage 2.
113. Pupils usually develop their investigating and making skills systematically as they progress through the school. They have a variety of opportunities to express their creative and imaginative ideas and their observational skills through a range of media and cross-curricular themes. In Key Stage 1, pupils experiment interestingly with various forms of textured weaving. Others produce lively dog characters in collage to match rhyming phrases such as "Herculese Morse as big as a horse". Working in pastels, pupils skilfully produce mature landscapes. They also use watercolours to create soft landscape backgrounds with bold, dark tree silhouettes in the foreground. In the only lesson observed, as pupils carefully manoeuvred collage elements on the theme of "Mother Nature Designer", some pupils used their knowledge of the work of Mondrian to guide and influence the choice of fabrics and the design and construction of the pictures.
114. Skills learned in Key Stage 1 continue to be refined in Key Stage 2 as pupils' observational skills and hand-to-eye co-ordination mature. Pupils experiment with reproducing texture, using chalk pastels. They then produce sensitive seascape pictures in miniatures the size of postcards. As part of a topic on India, pupils emulate typical designs by carefully screen-printing simple shapes onto natural or brightly coloured plain fabric with very pleasing results. Some design Rangoli patterns using computer-aided design technology.
115. The quality of teaching in the only lesson seen was very good. The teacher used her own high interest and expertise to provide a stimulating well-structured learning experience that took pupils step by step through the designing and planning skills. The result was that they made interesting collages in which they can take pride. The fabrics she had carefully selected for them provided a wide variety of surface texture and design and were stimulating in themselves. She circulated round the class, giving encouraging, open support that helped pupils to think independently about how they could improve their ideas. She had high expectations of pupils' learning and this led to their taking care and persevering with the task. Pupils were highly responsive to her teaching and showed high levels of visual awareness and creativity in manipulating the layout of their pictures.
116. The leadership and management of art are good. The co-ordinator has gathered a good range of accessible resources together in well-organized media boxes that provide a useful basis for developing skills across the school in, for example, observational drawing. Each box has good examples from the history of art as additional resource material. This term the school has been trying out the new scheme of work produced by the QCA in readiness for the implementation of the revised National Curriculum in September.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above expectations. At the end of Year 4, attainment is in line with expectations overall, with about a third of pupils attaining above expectations. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection when both standards and provision were unsatisfactory.
118. Year 2 pupils show a very good understanding of the processes of design and technology, from investigation to design and making. Their design books show that they have, in the production of individually designed bags, for example, looked at existing products, evaluated them and looked at the materials used along with the range of fastenings and handles. They have then

worked to a design brief to plan and manufacture their own, some to a high standard, and have then evaluated their finished products. Many of the bags they have made are attractive and functional. They are well made using a range of skills including pattern making and sewing and have appropriate individual decorative themes and emblems. They have thought carefully of the purpose of the bag, for toys, for example, or pencils, and the final products are appropriate to the function for which they are planned. Similar work of good quality has been done on producing a dish suitable for a children's party. Different fruits were assessed and analysed for their usefulness and all the children have a colour photograph in their design book of the dish they produced. Again the designs are attractive and individual; suited to the purpose.

119. The work done in Year 4 shows the same qualities. In their work on designing and producing bags, the same processes were followed and the resulting bags, still incomplete, are attractive and fulfil the requirements of their original design brief well. These pupils had more responsibility for every stage of the making process and so had to demonstrate a wider range of skills but overall their products are of a similar standard to the better ones in Year 2. Most are in line with the standard expected from pupils of their age but about a third are of a higher standard, showing particularly well executed designs and skilful sewing. Year 3 and 4 pupils have also designed and built models of Saxon carts. The designs are imaginative but functional. They show a good understanding of wheels and axles. Many have been made to a good standard and have been decorated attractively with detailed model loads of sacks or timber. Comparison with wheeled vehicles made in Key Stage 1 shows clear evidence of a progression of skills.
120. In both key stages, pupils have used their mathematical skills to aid them in their designs, measuring carefully, for example, when making their patterns. The subject makes a good contribution to numeracy skills. Pupils' literacy skills are developed well in the written design descriptions and evaluations that they do and in the development of their technical vocabulary, such as pulleys and levers. In their work on food they learn about healthy snacks.
121. The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. This shows a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when teachers were criticised for a lack of understanding and knowledge of the subject. Teachers now show very good subject knowledge and understanding. They teach the basic skills well. They plan very well and make the objectives of the lesson clear to pupils. They manage pupils very well and make good use of time, support staff and resources. They engage and sustain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. This leads to very good learning at Key Stage 1 and good learning at Key Stage 2, where the level of special educational needs and pupil turnover is greater than in Key Stage 1. Pupils' creative effort, productivity and pace of working, backed up by very good attitudes and behaviour, helps them to achieve very well at Key Stage 1 and satisfactorily at Key Stage 2. All pupils very much enjoy and value the creative opportunities that the subject offers them. They behave very well in lessons and handle equipment, including needles and scissors, with care and a great sense of responsibility. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress overall, with focused support. The learning support assistants and parent volunteers make a very valuable contribution to pupils' support and learning.
122. The curriculum is based upon a scheme that is currently being reviewed in the light of the guidance sent to schools by the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. It is a very good curriculum for Key Stage 1, covering all parts of the design and technology curriculum, including some aspects from the programme of study for Key Stage 2. The Key Stage 2 curriculum is satisfactory but needs to be revised to ensure that the work set is different for each year group and that there is a clear progression in the expectations of teachers of the skills and knowledge that will be taught to and expected of pupils as they move through the school. This year, for example, pupils in every year from Year 1 to Year 4 have done the same project on designing and making bags. Pupils' work is valued, as evidenced by the very good displays throughout the school. Resources are adequate and are used well. The co-ordinator, who has worked hard and effectively to promote the subject in the school, is aware of the need to develop the recording and use of assessment information, which is currently unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

123. The standards achieved by Year 4 pupils at Key Stage 2 are in line with the expectations for their age. The oldest pupils at Key Stage 1 achieve the expected levels for their age. Standards in geography are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Whilst achievement in individual lessons is often good, achievement over time at both key stages is sound, because of limited curriculum time available to the subject.
124. The oldest pupils at Key Stage 1 have a good knowledge of their locality and competently concluded traffic surveys near the school. They have good ideas for improving the problem of the busy main road, which they sent by e-mail to the local planning officer, to which he replied. The pupils achieved high standards in this work. They reported that they enjoyed this very much and found it exciting. Year 4 pupils undertake a study of an Indian village. They are able successfully to compare and contrast life in India with their own country.
125. In all the lessons observed, teaching was good. The quality of learning is good. Teachers use a good variety of resources to enhance learning. A good example is the 'Seaside Museum' in a reception class, which enabled the youngest pupils to investigate features of a coastal environment. Good use is made of field trips and visits. The teachers often link work successfully in geography with work in other curriculum areas, such as history and literacy. The teachers are supported well by good subject guidance from the subject co-ordinator. The school has plans to improve the assessment procedures, which at present are underdeveloped and used insufficiently to guide the planning of future work.

HISTORY

126. During the inspection, only two history lessons were seen, both at Key Stage 1. Additional evidence was obtained by discussion with teachers and pupils and the analysis of pupils' completed work. Currently the attainment of the oldest pupils at both key stages is in line with expectations for their age. Achievement overall is sound. However, for some topics the standards attained exceed expectations. Examples include the study of artefacts from the past at Key Stage 1 and the study of the Anglo Saxons at Key Stage 2, both of which show good levels of historical investigative skills and understanding. At the time of the last inspection standards at Key Stage 1 were in line with the national expectations and those of in Year 4 above. Standards at Key Stage 2 have declined, partly because of limited time available to the subject, but also because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 4.
127. At Key Stage 1, pupils find out about aspects of the past by making comparisons between objects from the past and present and from pictures, for example. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 4 show a sense of chronology when they study and write about the invasions and settlements of the Romans, Anglo Saxons and Vikings.
128. Teaching, in the lessons observed, was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for history that they pass on to the pupils. The teachers provide a good variety of learning activities, supported by good resources. The quality of learning is good. The pupils show interest and ask questions to further their understanding. They concentrate well, quickly learning facts. In one good lesson in Year 2, pupils enjoyed writing with pens and ink that their grandparents might have used and comparing these with the writing implements available today. Pupils' experiences in history are much enhanced by trips and visits to places of historical interest. Formal assessment is insufficiently used - being still at an early stage of development - and there are plans to improve this.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

129. At the time of the last inspection, standards were broadly in line with national expectations at the ages of both seven and nine. There is evidence that standards dropped after the last report because it was necessary to redirect teaching resources to other subject areas. However, this year a new information technology suite has opened and the school has now very good

computer resources. The new room has enough machines, networked together and connected to CD-ROMs and internet facilities, for a whole class to be taught at once. The equipment is up to date, in good condition and backed up with a very good range of software. There has been an improvement, not only in provision, but also in teaching, since the last report. The new co-ordinator has worked well to improve teachers' confidence and competence in the subject. Attainment is now slightly above expectations in both key stages and the capacity for further improvement is good, because pupils are now making good progress.

130. Standards are now above what is expected by the age of seven. All pupils use the mouse accurately to click onto areas of the screen. They can log on to the system and open and operate the programs they need without adult help. They can control a range of programs to draft and write, to save data and to support their work in other subjects. They can access information from computers, use databases and create attractive artwork, using art packages. They can present information in simple graphs, using pictographs. In many aspects of the subject, standards amongst older pupils are above average. They are making good progress in acquiring the skills needed to understand and use databases. They know how to save and retrieve their own work, print and access information using CD-ROMs and the Internet. They use word processing programs well for a wide range of purposes. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language make progress at similar rates to other pupils and attain standards that are close to national expectations for all pupils.
131. Pupils enjoy the subject and their behaviour in lessons is nearly always good. They co-operate well when sharing a computer, tackling tasks as genuine partners. They display very good relationships by offering suggestions and taking turns. These good attitudes contribute strongly to the quality of learning as they share their knowledge and help each other. Pupils treat the computers with care, using them sensibly and looking after them well.
132. Generally, teaching in the lessons seen was good. Teachers often show pupils how to use programs by instructing the whole class. There were examples of good lessons across the school. A typical Year 3/4 lesson illustrates many of the good qualities. The teacher gathered all the pupils into a position where they could see a computer screen in their own classroom and demonstrated how to use a program in order to produce graphs to show how many children have fair, dark hair or differently coloured hair and the range of their heights. Having set high expectations and motivating the pupils well by her own explanations and enthusiasm, she then moved them into the computer suite so that all pupils were able to practise the required skills for themselves. Similar examples of teaching skills to whole classes are common and the use of the new resources for whole-class teaching has improved the progress pupils make and the range of skills they are acquiring. In all cases, teachers' lesson plans, knowledge of the subject and management of pupils leads to good learning. However, ongoing assessment is not sufficiently systematic to provide good information on which to base future planning.
133. Co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge of what is required to teach the subject effectively and is able to offer strong leadership and advice. He cares for the computers well, so that they rarely break down. As a result, general levels of confidence amongst the staff have recently improved rapidly.

MUSIC

134. Pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and is in line with standards expected by the end of Year 4 at Key Stage 2. There has been an improvement in singing since the last inspection. It is now satisfactory overall, whilst the choir's singing is good.
135. Although some very good and excellent learning took place in lessons observed during the inspection, pupils make good progress in the development of performance and composition skills and in listening to and appraising music as they move through the school. Most pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress in their musical understanding. Statemented pupils, who receive good learning support, make good progress.

136. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils chose appropriate un-pitched percussion instruments to capture sounds made in an action story. They then practised, using their instruments with delicacy to produce sensitive sounds, which they matched imaginatively to the story as it was read by the teacher. A Year 2 class used parts of their bodies as percussion instruments. They did this well and accurately and, as they sat in a circle, a lively wave of rhythmic sound was transmitted around the class. Pupils can echo a rhythmic pattern and vary its pace from fast to slow. They practise this same technique using percussion instruments but find the task more difficult to achieve. In an outstanding lesson in Key Stage 2, as part of a topic about India, pupils listened attentively to some Ragar music. They then chose instruments and practised composing their own versions of Ragar. These were then carefully recorded on audio-tape. One by one the group compositions were replayed and pupils listened sympathetically as a class, then carefully evaluated each group's performance. Compositions were then performed live again, with appropriate modifications.
137. The levels of interest and creative energy that is applied to music lessons are often high. Most pupils are very keen to experiment with the newly acquired musical instruments. They listen with a good level of concentration that is usually maintained throughout the lesson. Only where the teacher's management of behaviour is less effective does concentration lapse in Key Stage 2.
138. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory but is good overall. In the best lessons teachers have secure musical knowledge and highly effective communication techniques. Very good management skills facilitate the smooth organization of pupils and musical instruments so that teaching sections of the lesson are calm and orderly but pupils have sufficient time to experiment noisily with musical ideas as they compose and practise. Teachers are inventive in their choice of lesson themes to promote musical ideas. They give pupils adequate opportunities to perform to their peers.
139. The music co-ordinator has been in post for less than a year and is very keen to promote her subject and raise its profile across the school. She manages the choir with great enthusiasm, which is reflected in the pupils' tremendous joy in their singing. She also teaches lunchtime recorder clubs. The music policy is comprehensive and is inclusive, containing as it does explicit statements on equal opportunities and special educational needs. It also makes a clear statement of the subject's contribution to spiritual provision for pupils. Eight pupils have peripatetic violin lessons provided by the Local Education Authority's music service. Guitar lessons are also available. Pupils perform at a variety of public events in school, in the church and with groups of schools at the local area's arts centre. Multicultural music is satisfactorily represented in the school. Music forms an important aspect of the school's national multicultural days. Music is played as an introduction to assemblies. There are good opportunities to extend pupils' musical appreciation through the daily act of collective worship and this is done well.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. During the inspection, athletics and swimming lessons were observed and evidence indicates that the oldest pupils reach above average standards in athletics in both key stages. The majority of pupils can swim unaided for at least twenty five metres by the time they leave the school. It is not possible to make comparisons with the previous inspection report where the focus was on games and gymnastics. Year 2 pupils have above average skills in running and retrieving objects whilst on the move. They know the importance of warming-up before energetic physical activities and wearing suitable clothing. Year 4 pupils demonstrate good skills in running and sprinting. They run with good control, co-ordination and style. They understand the effects of exercise and know it improves their health, strength and endurance. In all aspects of physical education observed during the inspection, attainment is above the expected levels at both key stages.
141. The quality of teaching is good overall. Activities are well structured and developed to improve pupils' skills. The teachers have good subject knowledge, making useful teaching points, for example, on how to pass and receive a baton in a relay race. They give clear explanations of the task, which means that pupils know exactly what is expected of them.

They plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performance and improve their skills. The pupils have good attitudes to their lessons. They listen well to instructions and work hard to improve. They co-operate well in groups and have a good sense of fair play. The physical education programme provides a comprehensive range of activities, including a satisfactory range of out-of-school activities for older pupils. Pupils achieve some success in 'friendly' matches with local schools in football, netball and 'tag rugby'. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and she leads the subject well. There are satisfactory procedures for assessment in athletics with 'Four Star' awards, which indicate progress and goals for pupils to strive for. A start has been made on the development of assessment in other aspects of the physical education programme.