

INSPECTION REPORT

Princefield First School

Penkridge

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124173

Headteacher: Mr. B Andrews

Reporting inspector: Mrs. J E Platt
11565

Dates of inspection: 24th January – 27th January 2000

Inspection number: 192080

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Saxon Road Penkridge Stafford
Postcode:	ST19 5EP
Telephone number:	01785 714050
Fax number:	01785 714050
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. C Jones
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. J E Platt	Registered inspector	English	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school.
		Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	School's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning
Mr. N Shelley	Lay inspector		Partnership with parents and carers
Mrs. J Tracey	Team inspector	Mathematics	Leadership and management
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
Mrs. M Leah	Team inspector	Science History Geography	Quality and range of opportunities for learning Pupils' welfare, health and safety Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
Mrs. B Rogers	Team inspector	Religious education Music Art Under fives	

The inspection contractor was:

North West Education Services
Shieling House
Lamberts Lane
Congleton
Cheshire
CW12 3AU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	[]
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	[]
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	[]
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	[]
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	[]
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	[]
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	[]
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	[]
[OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES]	[]
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	[]
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	[]

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Princefield First School is a larger than average school providing education for 257 boys and girls. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (9 per cent) is below average. The number of pupils coming from homes where English is not the first language is low. Currently there are 21 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and four pupils have formal statements of need and this is well below the national average. Economically and socially, the area served mainly by the school is rather more favoured than the overall picture nationally. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is broadly similar or slightly above that seen in most schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school with a number of very strong features. It has good standards of attainment and provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good and the curriculum provides well for the needs of all pupils. Leadership of the school is strong and there are well conceived plans for the future. The school manages its budget prudently and overall the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Enables pupils to attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Reading is very good throughout the school.
- Provides good teaching. All teaching seen was satisfactory or better.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other staff with responsibilities. The governing body plays an important part in leadership and all are committed to providing a good quality of education.
- Ensures there are very good levels of attendance.
- Encourages pupils to display very good attitudes to their work and establish very good relationships with each other and with teachers.
- Provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and is committed to providing equal access to the curriculum for all pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards in some aspects of information technology are not as high as those in other subjects.
- There is limited provision for pupils to learn about design and technology.
- Assessment procedures are inconsistent to provide teachers with sufficient detail about pupils' progress.
- Although teaching is always at least satisfactory some opportunities are lost to encourage independent investigation and not all teachers explain clearly what pupils are to learn in lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Developments since the previous inspection in January 1997 have been effective in raising standards in English and science at the end of Key Stage 1 and science at the end of Year 4. Results of statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained high in reading and writing and are improving in mathematics. The quality of teaching has improved and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. All key issues for action identified in the previous report have received careful attention. Subject coordinators now play a full and important part in the management of their subjects. Action plans are included in a clear and precise format in the school development plan. Most subjects receive an appropriate allocation of time except design and technology and pupils have few opportunities to develop skills in this subject. Overall the school has made good progress since the previous inspection and is well placed to make further improvements.

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	A*	A	A	A*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	A*	A	A	A*	
Mathematics	A	C	C	C	

The information above shows that standards in reading and writing were very high both compared with all schools and schools with similar backgrounds. Attainment in mathematics was average. The school quickly identified this drop in mathematics' standards and adjusted the work provided for pupils. Inspection evidence supports these high standards in reading and writing and judges standards in work seen in mathematics to have improved and to be above the national average.

Standards as pupils leave school at the end of Year 4 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information technology are average at the end of Key Stage 1 but slightly below what is expected at the end of Year 4. The school has plans to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their information technology skills in other subjects. In all other subjects attainment is at least satisfactory except in design and technology where pupils have limited opportunities to develop the basic skills of the subject.

Throughout the school standards in literacy and numeracy are good and have a positive impact on learning in other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work with enthusiasm and confidence. They persevere and try hard to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils of all ages behave well in and around school. Disruptions caused by a few older pupils are managed well by the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Respect for each other and for adults is apparent throughout the school. Relationships are very good and pupils respect the opinions and feelings of others.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are very good.

This is a strength of the school and pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and this has a significant impact on the high standard they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, teaching in the school is good. In 74 per cent of lessons seen teaching was good or better, and in 15 per cent of these it was very good. Teaching in all other lessons was satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in all years but the strongest teaching was in Key Stage 1 when 94 per cent of the teaching seen was good or better. A significant factor in this good teaching is the high expectations teachers have of pupils' work and this results in pupils working hard and producing their best work. Pupils respond well to their teachers and the rate of learning is good throughout the school. Teaching for children under five is good and a stimulating environment is created that ensures children receive a firm foundation to their full time education. In Key Stage 2 some opportunities are missed to allow pupils to plan their own investigations and this would provide more challenging work for some pupils. Throughout the school, teachers plan lessons carefully following the detailed schemes of work. Not all teachers inform pupils of the objectives of the lesson and this makes it difficult for pupils to assess their own learning. Teachers have a good knowledge of teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills and the school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. A wide range of interesting activities are included in lessons and this makes learning enjoyable for pupils. Support staff are used well and make a positive contribution to learning. This is particularly effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs. The introduction of additional literacy support is also ensuring the needs of these pupils are fully met. Resources used are varied and stimulating and the school is extending the use of computers to support learning in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are included in the curriculum. Insufficient attention is given to design and technology. Due attention is given to literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. All pupils are fully included in lessons and receive very good support. The school has introduced additional literacy support and this is having a positive effect on standards.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Not applicable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is good and is apparent in many aspects of the school. Moral and social development is very good and makes a significant impact on the happy and caring community. Cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school puts significant emphasis on the health and well-being of the pupils.

The school has effective links with parents and many help in school and this has a very positive effect on the support pupils receive in lessons. Parents are conscientious supporting their children's learning at home. Parents receive a range of information about school activities. However, the annual report lacks sufficient information about the progress pupils are making.

The curriculum has maintained a good balance between academic, creative and physical activities. This ensures a good mix of activities and includes swimming, dancing and playing musical instruments. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Leadership in the school is strong and there is a clear educational vision for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Supportive and governors are now fully involved in the strategic planning of the school. They ensure all statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school effectively analyses its results and provides prompt action to resolve identified weaknesses. The evaluation of provision is done effectively by the headteacher and subject coordinators.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes effective use of time, money, accommodation and resources to the benefit of pupils. Computers are not always used effectively to support learning in other subjects.

The school has sufficient staff to teach all subjects in this age range. Accommodation is cramped but does not have any adverse effects on the quality of learning. Learning resources are at least adequate and books and resources for children under five are good.

Money is spent prudently and management ensures best value when negotiating any changes or buying resources. Effective management ensures the school runs smoothly.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standards achieved by the children. The high expectations of teaching staff. The quality of teaching and pastoral care provided by the school. The approachability of the school and the caring relationships between school and parents The encouragement for parents to be involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inconsistency with which homework is set. Behaviour in one year group

The inspection team agrees with all the strengths identified by the parents.

The amount of homework does vary between class and the school is in the process of reviewing provision for homework. The school is fully aware of the concerns about behaviour and has implemented several initiatives to address this issue. During the inspection there were no incidents of poor behaviour in lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In 1999, the pupils' results in national tests for seven-year-olds were well above average in reading and writing when compared to all schools and those of similar background. In mathematics the pupils' results were broadly in line with the national average when compared to all and similar schools. Evidence from the inspection confirms that attainment in reading and writing is well above average. In mathematics all pupils attained the national target level for this age group and the number exceeding this level was close to the national average. The school has adjusted the curriculum to increase the number of pupils attaining the higher level and inspection evidence indicates attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is now above the national average. These results show that pupils are achieving high standards. Although there was a dip in 1998 due to more pupils than usual identified as having special educational needs standards have remained above the national average and are continuing to improve.
2. There are no statutory tests at the end of Year 4 and evidence from the inspection, including scrutiny of work, discussion with pupils and lesson observations, judge standards of work to be above the level expected for pupils of this age in English, mathematics and science.
3. Pupils enter the nursery and reception class with a wide range of skill levels and overall attainment is broadly average and slightly above what is seen in most schools. Teaching is good for the children under five and this ensures the vast majority is progressing well and they exceed the national target in personal and social development, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. By the age of five most have achieved average standards in mathematics and creative development.
4. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers plan carefully to provide tasks to match their attainment and during lessons offer constructive advice to ensure pupils achieve well and make good progress. Similarly higher-attaining pupils are provided with work that appropriately challenges them so that they progress at a good rate in lessons. However, in some subjects these pupils complete work at a level that is too easy for them before they move on the harder work and they could work for longer at work that is more challenging. In both key stages there are occasions in science and mathematics where pupils could attain higher standards. The results of statutory tests indicated in some years girls were not attaining as high as boys. Close observation of the attainment of boys and girls during lessons did not identify any underachievement by girls and there was no evidence of boys receiving more attention than girls. The vast majority of pupils are achieving to the best of their ability and make good progress as they move through the school. In design and technology and information technology when resources and opportunities are not always available the rate of learning is slower than it could be.
5. The Literacy Hour is now fully established in the school and is having a very positive effect on standards in reading. This is a strength throughout the school and at the end of Key Stage 1 standards are higher than average. Most pupils read accurately and have a range of strategies for dealing with unfamiliar words. As pupils leave school at the end of Year 4 standards are above average and pupils read fluently and with expression. Speaking and listening skills are high at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Pupils are articulate and have a wide vocabulary. They listen attentively and explain and discuss their work clearly. Seven-year-olds attain very high standards in writing and pupils write independently and know how to use capital letters and full stops. The higher attaining pupils write short stories

and use speech marks correctly. By the end of Year 4 standards in work seen are above average but not all pupils pay sufficient attention to presentation of their work. Spellings are not always carefully checked and many continue to print although they are taught to join up their handwriting.

6. Overall standards in literacy are good and make a significant impact to standards in other subjects. In science pupils confidently record their investigations and in religious education are able to describe their thoughts about precious gifts. Reading for research is done in many lessons and teachers provide research homework to give pupils more practice in these skills.
7. In mathematics pupils achieve high standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. By the age of seven the vast majority are confident handling data and extract information accurately from grids and graphs. They use their number skills expertly to solve problems and have a range of mathematical terms to explain their calculations. At the end of Year 4 pupils apply mental strategies to estimate and check their work and have a secure knowledge of multiplication and division processes. All pupils are achieving well in relation to previous work and their rate of learning is good. However, on occasions pupils at both key stages, although given suitably challenging work do not have sufficient opportunity to extend their learning by using initiative to tackle open-ended problems.
8. Numeracy skills throughout the school are good and used effectively to support learning in other subjects. For example, in science when measuring pulse rates and in geography when locating places on maps.
9. Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average. Pupils have a very good knowledge of life processes and living things and a detailed knowledge of the human body, in particular. Pupils enquire and predict and observe closely and record what they have seen. At the end of Year 4 pupils' attain high standards and pupils have extended their scientific knowledge and use correct vocabulary to discuss their work. They understand the key elements of enquiry, such as the need for a fair test, although opportunities to generate their own investigations are not always provided.
10. Pupils' skills in information technology are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4 are slightly below average as some elements of the curriculum are still under developed. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use computers to type their work using correct punctuation and with adult support they alter the lay out and save their work. In Key Stage 2 pupils are more skilful at using computers to access information but until recently lack of resources has meant pupils have had insufficient opportunity to become confident using computers for handling data or to control activities or measure events.
11. In religious education pupils attain standards in line with the requirement of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Pupils have a secure knowledge of the Christian faith through studying bible stories and they understand the concept of God as a caring father. In Years 3 and 4 this knowledge is extended to other faiths and religious practices. Pupils are beginning to relate their knowledge of the Christian faith to their own feelings and experiences.
12. In other subjects of history, geography, music, physical education pupils achieve standards that are at least in line with their ages. Standards in art are good and pupils' work is attractively displayed around the school. Only in design and technology do standards fall below those found in similar schools. Currently the subject is taught as part of topic work and has received insufficient attention to ensure pupils acquire relevant skills.
13. Standards have improved since the previous inspection in English and science at the end of Key Stage 1 and in science at the end of Year 4. Standards are similar in other subjects

although the average levels identified in design and technology have not been maintained due to lack of attention given to the subject. Given the generally average to above attainment on entry to the school and the good standard achieved by many pupils as they leave school the majority of pupils are working at a good pace and achieving well for their age and prior level of attainment. The best progress is made in Key Stage 1 when teaching is consistently good and often very good and pupils respond well to the demands of teachers and work at a slightly faster rate than pupils in Years 3 and 4.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. They clearly enjoy coming to school and the vast majority are enthusiastic to join in the full range of activities offered. This has a very beneficial effect on their learning. Almost all parents, who returned the questionnaire, agree that their children like the school and think that behaviour in the school is good. Many of the pupils are particularly keen to contribute to lessons and often bring in artefacts and information from home to support their learning. With the exception of a small group of older pupils, who could work harder, pupils apply themselves well in class, and sustain concentration to complete tasks to the best of their ability.
15. Behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is very good, and contributes greatly to the purposeful working atmosphere. There have been no exclusions in the last year. Pupils co-operate successfully in pairs and small groups to share ideas as when carrying out investigations in science. At lunchtime, pupils respond positively to established procedures, collecting their lunch trays responsibly and chatting quietly and sociably with their peers at the table. In the playground, the vast majority of the pupils play together harmoniously and are quick to help fellow pupils should the need arise. Despite some parents' concern about bullying in Year 4 no instances of oppressive behaviour were observed during the Inspection. Discussions with the pupils reveal that they are confident of their safety in school.
16. Throughout the school relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and adults are very good. This makes a significant contribution to the high standards of personal development achieved by the pupils. The vast majority of the pupils are thoughtful and are able to reflect on the consequences of their own behaviour. They are beginning to realise the impact of their actions on others. In everyday school life, they show respect for the feelings of other people and in lessons they empathise with the plight of fictional characters. When given the chance pupils are keen to take initiative to be responsible members of the school community. They are confident to carry out monitorial tasks in class, or lead a prayer in assembly. The older pupils are enthusiastic to act as library helpers, to ring the bell, and to carry out a few minor administrative tasks around the school. The pupils demonstrate concern for people less fortunate than themselves by contributing generously to fund-raising events for charity.
17. Pupils' positive attitudes to school are reflected in their standard of attendance, which are very good. Attendance rates are significantly above the average for similar schools. Almost all absence is satisfactorily explained and the amount of unauthorised absence is negligible. Pupils arrive punctually at school and this enables lessons to start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Overall teaching is good and has a very positive impact on pupils' high standards. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen and was good or better in 74 per cent of them. Teaching was very good in 15 per cent of lessons seen. Good teaching was seen throughout the school but was best in Key Stage 1 when 94 per cent of teaching seen was good or better and in 29 per cent of lessons seen teaching was very good. This

consistently high quality teaching ensures pupils learn well and although the rate of progress is good throughout the school it is best in Key Stage 1. Teaching for children under five was good or better in three-quarters of lessons seen. In Years 3 and 4 teaching was good or better in 56 per cent of lessons. Examples of good teaching were seen in all subjects except design and technology where insufficient attention is given to developing the required skills.

19. Teaching for children under five is good overall and all staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children. A wide range of activities are planned and there is a good balance between teacher directed activities and free choice. This is successful in promoting independence in the children and they readily accept this responsibility and organise their own learning very efficiently. Early reading skills are taught well through a range of practical tasks as well as the many opportunities to select books and listen to stories. Consequently, children make good progress in language and literacy and particularly enjoy reading. On occasions when mathematics are being taught staff give insufficient thinking time and this leads to a few children being less secure developing problem solving skills. In the nursery and reception classes lessons are always organised well and management of pupils is good. This ensures that overall the children progress at a good rate in a stimulating and friendly atmosphere. Support staff are used very well and make a positive contribution to the children's learning.
20. In Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. They provide good advice as pupils are working and answer questions accurately. This ensures pupils acquire new skills and are confident in applying them to different situations. Only in design and technology and to a lesser extent information technology are teachers less confident with the requirements of the National Curriculum. In these subjects pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to achieve as well as they are able.
21. Early literacy skills are taught thoroughly using an active approach with games and good books and this ensure pupils receive a firm foundation to literacy. Phonics are taught in an appropriate sequence and pupils retain this information and build on prior knowledge. Pupils confidently use this knowledge to try out unfamiliar words when writing and to recognise sounds and blends when reading new stories. Numeracy skills are taught well and teachers are competent following the structure of the National Numeracy Project. Teachers use a wide variety of methods and stimulating resources and this builds pupils' confidence to apply number skills to solve problems.
22. Teachers' planning is good and follows the school's guidelines to ensure tasks build on prior learning. Tasks are planned carefully to match the variety of abilities in the classes. A strength in the planning is the joint planning between years and this works well in ensuring pupils have equal access to the same curriculum. The planning for mathematics clearly identifies specific learning objectives but this is not always so apparent in other subjects. This leads to teachers not sharing with pupils the outcomes of the lesson and so pupils are not always clear about the overall focus of the lesson and it is then difficult for them to assess their own learning.
23. Teachers' expectations of attainment of pupils' work vary from class to class. They are extremely high in Key Stage 1. For example, pupils are challenged to use their early writing skills to write for a wide range of purposes. Pupils respond very well to this and produce work that is well presented and of high quality. This is not as apparent in all lessons in Key Stage 2 and a few pupils do not produce their best work. When given the opportunity to work independently pupils in Key Stage 2 are eager to research and collect data to share with others. Most lessons include tasks for higher attaining pupils and these are usually at an appropriate level to extend their learning. However, in mathematics and science pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to plan their own investigations or to work at

open-ended tasks and challenge their findings.

24. Teachers use a good range of methods to make lessons exciting for pupils. Practical activities are included in most lessons and this is effective in consolidating learning particularly in science and mathematics. There is a good balance of whole class teaching, small group and individual work. This works well for pupils with special educational needs who receive effective support to ensure they understand what is being taught as well as being clear about the set tasks. Small groups of pupils withdrawn from lessons to attend additional literacy sessions make good progress in response to well structured lessons and effective teaching. These sessions are planned carefully to make sure pupils do not miss other aspects of the curriculum.
25. Teachers generally manage pupils very well and achieve very good standards of behaviour. Discipline is based firmly on the very good relationships that exist in the school and this results in the vast majority of pupils accepting responsibility for their behaviour and understanding how this affects the learning of other pupils. They take considerable pride in their work and are eager to share it with others at the end of lessons. In Year 4 there were isolated occasions during the inspection when pupils did not respond as well. Sufficient adult attention was not always given to a few pupils who put limited effort into their work and left tasks unfinished or produced work that was not reflective of their level of attainment.
26. Teachers usually make good use of time and lessons are carried out at a brisk pace. In the very effective mathematics' lessons teachers set times to complete tasks and pupils enjoy the challenge and put in considerable effort to finish the work. Resources are carefully chosen to match pupils' interest and level of attainment. A positive feature of all Literacy Hours observed was the choice of text, which successfully captured the attention of pupils, and they were eager to be involved in the ensuing discussion. This ensures pupils listen carefully and are highly motivated to learn and this makes a powerful contribution to the good progress pupils make in these lessons. As resources have improved information technology has become a feature of many lessons, although it is still not a regular feature of learning across the curriculum.
27. Teachers use questions effectively to assess pupils learning and during lessons circulate well offering advice to overcome difficulties. Teachers give due attention to the targets set for pupils with special educational needs and support staff maintain informal records of the progress of the pupils they support. Marking of pupils' work is regular and a few teachers suggest useful targets to improve work and resolve any errors. However, this is not a feature of all marking. Most teachers maintain appropriate records to identify any gaps in knowledge. These vary in quality but generally are used well to inform future lessons. The school's assessment systems successfully identify pupils who are particularly gifted in any aspect of development. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of these pupils and support recognises both their academic level and their social needs. This ensures these pupils learn at an appropriate rate linked to their prior attainment but are also happy in school.
28. Parents expressed a concern about the amount of homework set for children and inspection evidence identified inconsistencies in the amount of homework given in different classes. There are some good examples such as, individual target words to learn for reading and writing. This makes a positive impact to standards especially in Key Stage 1 when pupils acquire a wide range of words they are confident reading and spelling. When given independent research tasks pupils respond very well. This was obvious in Year 4 when pupils had made models, written reports as well as found books about volcanoes. The school is in the process of reviewing the amount of homework set to ensure consistency throughout the school.
29. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and no teaching seen

was less than satisfactory. The weaknesses identified have been resolved and the new schemes of work are effective in ensuring plans are more detailed. Sufficient time is now allocated to all subjects except design and technology. The high percentage of extremely effective teaching has a very positive impact on the good rate of learning observed in the vast majority of lessons.

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

30. The school provides a good curriculum, which meets the needs of its pupils. The curriculum is sufficiently broad to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.
31. The curriculum for the under fives is securely based on the six areas of learning with appropriate priority given to the development of skills in personal and social education language and literacy, and numeracy. A good range of exciting first-hand experiences supports learning well. As the pupils achieve the desirable learning outcomes in the reception class, they are introduced gradually to the National Curriculum.
32. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the curriculum through careful review of its topic approach. Schemes of work based on national guidance are being introduced to support the systematic development of skills in all subjects except design and technology. The time allowance to science has been adjusted and all elements of the science curriculum are now fully covered. Insufficient attention, however, is given to the structured teaching of skills in information technology and in design and technology. Opportunities to use information technology to support learning in other subjects are not fully developed.
33. The school is successfully implementing the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. Through the use of an increased range of texts, reading skills are enhanced and the pupils' appreciation and enthusiasm for literature is further encouraged. The lively mental mathematics element of the National Numeracy Strategy is significantly improving pupils' ability to manipulate numbers in their heads.
34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the school has a carefully organised system to ensure the needs of these pupils are fully met. The school is committed to full access to the curriculum for all pupils and has gone to considerable effort to ensure pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in school activities. The school has adopted the National Literacy Strategy guidelines for additional literacy lessons and these are provided for 26 pupils in Years 3 and 4 and are having a beneficial impact on their attainment.
35. There is a good range of extracurricular activities, although the majority of opportunities are offered to the pupils in Year 3 and 4. Around 45 pupils regularly attend the weekly art and dancing clubs and around 22 are involved in chess or music. The chess team has been very successful in winning several local tournaments. The gardening club attracts 25 members who are proud of their efforts around the school. Some 18 pupils are involved in seasonal sports practices and represent the school in football, cricket and athletics tournaments. Almost all of the pupils in Year 4 take part in the annual residential visit.
36. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education. Considerable emphasis is given to the promotion of healthy life styles through diet and exercise and pupils' awareness is appropriately drawn to the use and misuse of drugs. There are opportunities to discuss feelings and relationships in personal and social education lessons and in religious education. Sex education is not formally taught but questions are answered sensitively, bearing in mind the age and maturity of the child.

37. As at the time of the previous inspection the curriculum provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. The provision overall is now very good.
38. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school provides regular opportunities across the curriculum and in assemblies for pupils to reflect upon their experiences and beliefs. Pupils respond to stories, song, music and prayer with sensitivity and respect. Assemblies fulfil statutory requirements and are planned carefully to appropriate themes. Work in religious education lessons enables pupils to gain an understanding of the values and beliefs of others, such as aspects of the Sikh faith in the study of India in Key Stage 2. Pupils are developing a growing awareness of the world around them and appreciate the beauty of nature surrounding the school. Pupils have considered the onset of the Millennium and made a very impressive ceramic wall plaque to commemorate the start of a new century.
39. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development. Staff provide good role models and the school's moral code is promoted successfully by all. Pupils are treated with fairness and respect. Pupils know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and respond positively in most lessons and on the playground. Instances of poor behaviour are dealt with sensitively by staff, who encourage pupils to consider the consequences of their actions upon others. This provision enables the school to function as an orderly and caring community in which the personal rights of each pupil are valued and promoted.
40. Provision for social development is very good. Relationships are very good and there is a strong sense of team spirit in the school. Teachers and support staff work closely together and set a good example for pupils to follow. Through their topic work, pupils are taught to treat their environment well. There is respect for the property of others and the school is free of litter. Pupils show compassion for those less fortunate than themselves by raising considerable and commendable funds for charitable concerns such as Christian Aid and the school's chosen charity for the year, El Shaddai, in Goa.
41. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development. The school successfully provides a variety of planned experiences across the curriculum to broaden pupils' understanding of their own heritage. In music lessons and assemblies pupils sing a range of songs and listen to a wide variety of music. They are given a good understanding of their culture through work in art and history and become familiar with famous painters such as Holbein in their study of the Tudors. Pupils study the beliefs and culture of the Sikh faith as part of their work on India and extend this knowledge through visits to a Gurdwara in the locality. The school's participation in the Comenius project in partnership with schools in other countries enables pupils to develop an understanding of the cultural diversity of the world at large.
42. The curriculum is also enriched by effective links with community and partner institutions and these make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils participate in many community events such as a poster competition, festival celebrations and a Church's Education Sunday. Many visitors such as nurses and a music group share their knowledge, experiences and expertise with the pupils. Pupils join with other schools to take part in a festival of music and the facilities of the locality are used to supplement classroom studies. The school works hard to ensure a smooth introduction to school and links are well established with pre-school groups. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the middle school are organised very well. The continuity of teaching between schools and the exchange of information are all well developed and contribute effectively to the progress which pupils make when they move on to their next school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Overall the quality of care and support and guidance is good and creates an environment for pupils, which is conducive to learning, personal development and a sense of well being. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection and there has been improvement in clarity of the school's policy for sex education and provision for developing pupils' awareness of the misuse of drugs is now in place.
44. The health and safety policy and procedures for safety checks follow the recommended county model. There is good first aid cover. Safe practices are observed both in and out of school. Child protection procedures are understood and complied with and the services of educational and health specialists are used appropriately. Teachers and non-teaching staff have a caring attitude towards pupils and promote a sense of security and trust. Lunchtime supervisors receive training, for example in behaviour management, and they carry out their duties effectively.
45. The school gives due attention to monitoring pupils' academic performance and assessment procedures are satisfactory. Statutory regulations for the assessment of the pupils' attainment on entry to the school and at the end of Key Stage 1 are fully met. Assessment is carried out carefully to identify pupils requiring extra help with literacy and this leads to good well directed provision of additional literacy support. The school does not, however, have a consistent approach to monitoring the academic performance of its pupils throughout the school year and as they move from class to class. This results in variable standards in the amount and relevance of data collected and the clarity of judgements made. Reference to National Curriculum levels is sometimes perfunctory and comments insufficiently focused to directly support planning which clearly meets the pupils' needs. There is, at present, no co-ordinator with responsibility for assessment, and opportunities to share the very good practice in some classes with the rest of the school, are missed.
46. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Teachers know their pupils well, and promote respect and self-esteem in their teaching, and provide encouragement through praise and judicious use of the school's reward system. Records of individual achievement are started in the reception class and gradually built up as pupils move through the school. They include the pupils' own reflections on the progress they are making and targets to be met and are a useful record of personal achievements.
47. The school monitors attendance and punctuality very carefully and successfully engages parents' co-operation in providing reasons for absence. Certificates for attendance effectively promote positive efforts.
48. The consistent application of discipline effectively promotes good behaviour. Good behaviour is recognised, rewarded and celebrated and in almost all instances to very good effect. Sanctions, which are appropriate to the circumstances, are applied with reference to parents when applicable. The school minimises bullying by dealing with it effectively when it occurs. Teachers help pupils to understand the impact of their inappropriate behaviour on others and what are acceptable attitudes and conduct. Sometimes this is done through individual counselling.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school works very well in partnership with its parents and the positive relationships, which were reported by the previous inspection, have been maintained.

50. Parents hold positive views about almost all aspects of the school and are pleased with the progress their children make. Inspectors agree with parents' concerns about the unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of pupils and that homework is not consistently set to provide appropriate challenge. The school has taken action to resolve the behaviour of some pupils and this situation is under constant review. Homework is set in most years and the school is in the process of reviewing the homework policy. There is a good range of extra curricular activities but some parents are disappointed that there are not more choices for younger pupils. The school is concerned about the welfare of younger pupils leaving school at a later time and inspectors support this view.
51. Parents are well informed about the life and work of the school via a range of reports, newsletters and published notices. Parents were consulted about the home/school agreement and it enables parents to be aware of the expectations of all parties. There are three open evenings annually when parents can consult teachers formally about pupils' progress and the school is accessible daily for immediate concerns. Annual school reports identify what pupils can do and some suggest useful targets for improvement but they do not always include clear statements about pupils' progress or information that identifies whether a pupil is achieving at an appropriate level. The school invites parents to induction meetings and curricular information meetings, for example about literacy and numeracy. These are very well attended. A termly magazine outlines what is to be taught in each year group. Parents are aware of improvement targets in spelling and reading because the reading records pupils take home include their current improvement targets, which are marked when the target has been achieved.
52. Parents' involvement in the school and with pupils' work is very good. Many parents help in school and their contributions are well directed and of good quality. Parents run a children's school bank savings scheme. They support their children well with their work at home. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs take part in review meetings. They are kept well informed about the provision for their children and the progress that they are making. Parents effectively support the school to achieve very good levels of attendance. Through the school association parents raise substantial funds to assist with the provision of resources. In conjunction with further education colleges the school arranges community courses. Currently a computer course is enabling those who attend to develop their computer skills so that they are more able to support their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The quality of leadership is good and has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher sets a very clear educational direction for the school. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team. The school has clear aims to provide a high standard of education for all pupils and these aims are implemented effectively throughout the school.
54. The role of subject coordinator has been developed since the previous inspection and coordinators now play a valued role throughout the school. They monitor provision carefully and provide action plans that identify appropriate developments for their areas. Coordinators and the headteacher successfully monitor teaching and offer advice to remedy any identified weakness. Currently there are no coordinators with responsibility for assessment or design and technology and these areas have not made as much progress since the previous inspection. The coordinator for special educational needs is very effective in organising support for these pupils and ensuring all statutory requirements are fully met.
55. As identified in the last report the governing body is very supportive of the school and fulfils all its statutory duties. The new strategic planning committee has been very effective in extending the governors' part in future planning and ensuring they have a clear picture

of current developments. This committee is made up of teachers and governors and has sharpened the focus of the school development plan. There are now clear priorities linked to appropriate aspects of the school and each development is linked to resources, tasks, cost, personnel and a date for evaluation is included. Current priorities are matched to the needs of the school and are linked to implementing national initiatives and also include developing information technology, as new resources become available.

56. The school analyses performance using results from statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and took prompt action to improve standards in mathematics based on these results. The school has trialled a system to set targets for attainment and is in the process of simplifying this system. Currently Year 2 teachers have a good records and predictions for their pupils but this is not as apparent in other classes. This is a priority for attention included in the school development plan.
57. Effective management has ensured staffing of the school is adequate and the gap in mathematical expertise was resolved with a recent appointment. Support staff are experienced and particularly effective support is available for pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation remains cramped and two classes are taught in mobile accommodation. However, the staff effectively overcome these difficulties and ensure they have no adverse effect on pupils' learning. The school has sufficient resources to teach all subjects and has a good collection of books to implement the Literacy Hour. Resources for information technology are not always used effectively to support learning in other subjects. Resources in the nursery and for music are particularly good and these significantly enhance the quality of pupils' experiences in these areas.
58. The school makes optimum use of funding from every source, including donations from the Parents' Association. All monies are spent prudently with a view to priorities in the school development plan and contingency for future changes. Good use is made of money allocated for training and staff development is closely linked to school priorities. The governors and school attempt to ensure that the best value is obtained from spending and investment. Results are analysed and compared with other schools. The governing body seeks competitive quotations for resources and building maintenance. Savings have been made by sharing the costs of training courses with similar schools in the locality, so enabling access to a wider range of training experiences for staff and governors.
59. There has been good improvement in the management of the school since the previous inspection and this ensures the school is in a good position to improve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. To improve further the already good standard of attainment the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) Further raise attainment in information technology by:
 - providing more training to improve teachers' expertise
 - fully implement the scheme of work to ensure all pupils receive sufficient tuition in the basic information technology skills
 - using information technology as an aid to learning across the curriculum.(See paragraphs 4, 10, 20, 26, 32, 57, 76, 82, 102, 103, 104, 105)
- (2) Implement a whole school consistent approach to assessment to ensure teachers have a clearer picture of the progress pupils are making as they move through school.
(See paragraphs 45, 56, 76, 83, 87, 105, 117)

- (3) Provide more opportunities in lessons for pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. Informing pupils of the lesson objectives so they have a clearer understanding of their own learning.
(See paragraphs 7, 9, 22, 23, 76, 79, 80, 85, 86)
- (4) Include more opportunities for pupils to take part in design and technology so that pupils can acquire the basic skills of this subject.
(See paragraphs 13, 20, 32, 92, 93, 94, 95)

Other minor issues that are identified in the report:

- to include more specific information in written reports about the progress pupils are making, together with clear suggestions about what they need to do to improve (See paragraph 51)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0.0	15	59	26	0.0	0.0	0.0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	241
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	21

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	25	23	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	25
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	47	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (100)	100 (98)	100 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	25
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	47	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (93)	100 (95)	100 (98)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	79.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
--------------------------------	----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
----------------	------

	£
Total income	379,100
Total expenditure	395,087
Expenditure per pupil	1593
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,000
Balance carried forward to next year	6,903

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	280
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69.1	25.5	3.6	0	1.8
My child is making good progress in school.	63.6	30.9	1.8	0	3.6
Behaviour in the school is good.	34.5	58.2	7.3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32.7	45.5	14.5	0	7.3
The teaching is good.	56.4	41.8	0	0	1.8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38.2	54.5	7.3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61.8	38.2	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67.3	30.9	0	0	1.8
The school works closely with parents.	49.1	43.6	3.6	0	3.6
The school is well led and managed.	40	47.3	5.5	0	7.3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49.1	47.3	1.8	0	1.8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43.6	34.5	9.1	3.6	9.1

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

61. Children under five are taught part time in the nursery or full-time in two reception classes. There are two admissions per year to the reception classes, in September and January. At the time of inspection there were 80 children on roll in the nursery and 36 in the two reception classes. Three quarters of the reception pupils were under five and only 9 pupils had reached their fifth birthday. The majority of pupils have had some pre-school experience.

62. Standards of work in language and literacy, knowledge and understanding, physical and personal and social development attainment exceed the national expected level by the age of five. In mathematics and creative development children meet this level by the age of five. Pupils are well prepared to start work on the National Curriculum when they reach the age of five. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally in line or slightly above that expected for this age group. The vast majority of children, including those with special needs, respond very well to the good quality of provision and this enables them to learn at a good rate during their time in the nursery and the reception classes.

63. The curriculum is planned conscientiously to cover the six recommended areas of learning of language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development and pupils' personal and social development. All pupils are establishing a firm foundation for learning in a happy and stimulating environment. Overall the quality of teaching for all children under 5 is good. Teachers have good management skills and use the good resources well. Support staff are qualified, involved in planning and deployed effectively. They make a considerable contribution to the children's good progress. An assessment is carried out as children start school and the information gained is used effectively to plan tasks that match children's needs.

Personal and social development

64. Pupils' personal and social development is given appropriate priority and attainment in this area of learning is good. This is due to good teaching and the sensitive, caring way in which all staff treat the children. Pupils, from the nursery upwards, behave very well and respond positively to adults and peers. Relationships are very good and there is mutual respect. Children play together well and co-operate successfully when directed to their tasks. They take turns and share and show an increasing independence in looking after themselves. Children demonstrate their growing social skills, for example, when sharing a snack in the nursery or in tidy up time.

Language and literacy

65. Teachers give priority to language development and effective teaching ensures learning takes place and children make good progress. Daily routines and planned experiences, such as in meet and greet time in the nursery, encourage children to talk and share their experiences with others. By the time children are five they are ready to ask and answer questions and confidently join in discussion to satisfy their curiosity. Many children are unsure of letters or their sounds when they start school. Teaching of letter recognition is good. Appropriate and stimulating experiences enable children to make good progress in early book skills. All pupils in the nursery share and choose their own books and they know that print carries meaning. They concentrate well and follow stories read to them with much interest. They are making good progress in preparation for early writing skills. Children under five in the reception classes are developing their early reading skills well. A substantial number

recognise simple words and discuss the characters and content of their reading books with confidence. The reading ability of many children working in the reception classes exceeds what is expected for their age. They have a good understanding of letter sounds in the nursery and standards in writing are good in the reception class. Most children write their names and copy their teacher's writing with well-formed letters. They work with considerable neatness and demonstrate pride in their achievements. Older pupils are independent writers and use word lists or wordbooks to support their spelling. Good progress in literacy for all children under five is largely due to good teaching and effective parental support.

Mathematics

66. In the nursery, children use a variety of equipment to follow patterns and sequence colours and shapes. Children are familiar with number rhymes, songs, stories, counting games and activities. They sort and match objects and colours. Children under five in the reception classes recognise and count numerals to 10 and sometimes beyond. They successfully sequence and hang numbers up to 5 on the class washing line. Similarly, a few can manipulate numerals to 10. Children are less competent when using number in simple calculations or when applying their mathematical understanding to solve practical problems. Older children sort objects by length and use appropriate language but attainment is affected by the lack of resources for comparison. The majority of pupils are making sound progress in building upon skills developed in the nursery. Evidence from the inspection indicates that children are meeting the nationally expected level by the time they are five. Teaching is satisfactory. It is good when teachers and support staff give children sufficient time to think about their tasks before demonstrating the right answer.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. The rate of learning in this area of the curriculum is good as the children have curious minds and a desire to learn. They explore and recognise features of living things, objects and events in the world. They know the names of some of the birds that visit their birdtable and know the type of food they like. They record their findings using pictures. Walks around the locality extend pupils appreciation of the environment. Old and new toys are examined and children recognise these items and people change with time. When baking cherry scones in the nursery they discuss different textures and how heat changes the scone mixture. They discover the process of a visit to the doctor's surgery and make sensible observations as they dramatise events. Technology is used effectively to help children to make sense of the world. Children are becoming competent in using information technology to support their learning in several areas of the foundation curriculum. The good quality teaching and enthusiasm by adults does much to support and extend learning in this area of development.

Physical development

68. The good range of resources has a positive impact on children's learning and they exceed the identified attainment level in this area of learning. There are many opportunities for children to develop coordination as they ride a variety of wheeled toys outdoors with increasing control. They take turns fairly and steer their tricycles safely round the playground showing an awareness of space. In indoor lessons, children use their imagination well in a variety of movements as they pretend to tread in heavy snow. They follow instructions carefully as they move around the hall, stopping and starting on command or to a tambourine. They use a large space sensibly and make allowances for others. Fine motor skills are developed appropriately as children cut, draw and paint with growing skill. They are making good progress. Teaching is good and staff use every opportunity to let children make decisions and develop independence.

Creative development

69. Children enjoy a variety of experiences in painting, collage and music and they make good progress. By the age of five they attain the expected level for this area of their development. There are opportunities to investigate different, interesting media such as 'gunk' in the nursery and develop skills of printing, such as with sponges, to explore pattern. Children investigate a range of textures, for example, rough and smooth, hard and soft in a variety of ways, such as the effects of crunch paintings. All children enjoy singing, making music and exploring sound with percussive instruments and in this aspect of their creative development they exceed the desirable learning outcome. The quality of teaching, overall, is good. However, many tasks are over directed by adults and involve children following instructions rather than enabling them to be creative. There are some lost opportunities for children to experiment for themselves in imaginative play and interact freely with each other.

ENGLISH

70. The pupils' results in national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, at both the expected and the higher level, were well above the national average in both reading and writing. Standards in reading were particularly high with 50 per cent of pupils exceeded the national target level. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment was also very high. Evidence gathered from the inspection confirms that pupils achieve high standards at the end of Key Stage 1. As pupils leave school at the end of Year 4 standards of work are above average. Although previous results have indicated boys are attaining higher than girls there is no consistent evidence to support this. During the inspection observations indicated girls received equal access to the curriculum.

71. The previous inspection found that standards were above average in all aspects of English. It is clear that the school has built upon its strengths to raise standards higher.

72. Standards in speaking and listening are high at the end of Key Stage 1 and also at the end of Year 4. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively to teachers to gain information and follow instructions accurately. They ask questions to clarify their understanding and are confident when speaking in front of the class. In a Year 1 lesson pupils showed an extensive vocabulary when making lists to describe the characters in the book they were reading. These skills are further developed in Years 3 and 4 and by the time pupils leave school they use well expressed English to discuss controversial issues. Good spoken English was particularly evident in a Year 4 lesson and the teacher used questions expertly to get the pupils to look for deeper meanings in the text they were studying. Pupils responded by entering into a lively debate about the advantages and disadvantages of life in the future. Their language is enlivened by technical terms associated with other subjects.

73. Standards in reading are a strength in the school and pupils are enthusiastic readers. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils attain very high standards. In Year 1 pupils re-tell what they have read in their own words and express opinions about characters and major events in stories and poems. By the end of the key stage pupils use different strategies for reading unfamiliar words. They have a secure knowledge of letter sounds and the alphabet. All pupils who read to the inspectors were confident using non-fiction books to locate information. Higher attaining pupils were able to read a piece of information silently and then discuss the main points in their own words. By the end of Year 4 standards are above average and pupils' research skills are well developed and used effectively in other subjects. They are beginning to recognise how authors create suspense in stories and use language in different ways. They are becoming discerning readers and read a variety of texts fluently and accurately. The more able pupils who read to the inspectors were able to discuss critically the texts they were reading. Teachers have introduced pupils to more sophisticated texts as part of the Literacy

Hour.

74. The previous inspection judged writing to be above average and this has been maintained at the end of Year 4 and improved in Year 2 with an increasing number of pupils exceeding the national target level. In a Year 1 lesson pupils were eager to try out their independent writing skills to plan a story of the three little pigs and they made good use of their knowledge of sounds to spell new words. By the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils are confident writing unaided and most pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately. A few higher attaining pupils are beginning to use speech marks correctly in their stories. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and recognise many different styles of writing. For example, friendly, informal language is used to write postcards. Poetry is good, many pupils excel with their use of descriptive language. By the end of Year 4 most pupils have consolidated their writing skills although there are examples of less care being given to handwriting and spelling. These skills are taught regularly and pupils are encouraged to plan their work. However, in Year 4 not all pupils give sufficient attention to checking their work and spelling errors remain in completed examples of work. Similarly, with handwriting pupils are taught to join their letters but this skill is not used consistently. This means that by the end of Year 4, although handwriting is legible, not all pupils have developed well-formed joined up handwriting. Imaginative writing is of good quality for the vast majority of pupils and stories are more extended and the more able are successfully using paragraphs. Pupils have extended their understanding of writing for different purposes such as, in Year 4 a class has a 'News Board' and pupils use headlines effectively to draw attention to their messages.

75. The good skills in literacy have a significant impact on attainment in other subjects. For example, pupils write lists of materials required to make a puppet and record the results of scientific investigations. In Year 4 pupils write a description of life in India and in religious education write sensitive language about precious gifts. Teachers provide research tasks for homework to ensure pupils practise their skills. Response to this is very good, as in Year 4 when pupils made models as well as writing facts and collecting books about volcanoes.

76. The overall quality of teaching seen was good. In Key Stage 1, 50 per cent of teaching seen was very good and the rest was good. In Years 3 and 4, 25 per cent of teaching seen was very good, 25 percent was good and the rest was satisfactory. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection, as no teaching seen was less than satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge of the requirements of the Literacy Hour and adapt lessons to match the needs of the pupils. Phonics are taught successfully both in the early years and then later to blend sounds in reading and writing. Teachers ensure these skills are taught thoroughly through rhymes and games activities. This makes lessons interesting and also helps pupils to retain these skills. This has a significant impact on the very good progress pupils make in reading. Skills are taught in an appropriate sequence and pupils concentrate in lessons and retain knowledge and apply this to new learning. Teachers do not always inform pupils of the learning objectives at the beginning of the lessons and pupils are then unclear of what is expected of them or how well they have achieved in lessons. The strength of the teaching in Key Stage 1 is the very high expectations teachers have of pupils' learning. They encourage pupils to try out their new skills when writing unfamiliar words. This leads to pupils achieving well in writing as they develop independent skills to check their work and start to find pleasure in writing stories and poems. In Years 3 and 4 teachers' expectations are not always as high and some pupils could produce more work of a higher quality. Teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods to make lessons interesting. For example, in Year 1 pupils were very excited about the teacher's methods to find words in the shared text. This led to a very good learning atmosphere with pupils eager to learn more and they made very good progress. All lessons are carried out in an orderly way as teachers have very good relationships and manage pupils effectively. Only occasionally, in Year 4 does pupils' misbehaviour lead to interruptions to learning. Time is used well in lessons and teachers make good use of the conclusion to consolidate learning as well as to celebrate achievement. Pupils are keen to share their work with others and this leads to a sense of determination in many lessons as

pupils work at a good rate to complete the task. Information technology is often used to copy final work but some tasks do not fully extend pupils' learning of information technology skills. Support staff are used very well to ensure pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support. The school has adopted the National Literacy's Strategy guidelines for additional support for a few pupils needing a boost to their learning. This is organised and taught well to ensure these pupils make good progress relative to their prior attainment. Teachers give good advice and keep records that identify the progress pupils are making. The quality of these records varies from class to class. In Year 2 they are very rigorous and identify clearly how pupils are expected to achieve compared with national levels. Other examples are less detailed and as they are transferred between classes do not always provide a clear picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Pupils receive regular homework. They are set spelling and writing targets and this has a significant impact on pupils' knowledge of many of the more frequently used words. The strength in the teaching is the staff's genuine concern for the needs of their pupils and commitment to provide the best and to enable pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

77. The coordinator provides very effective leadership and has monitored lessons and offered good advice when required. This has had a positive impact on teachers' confidence when teaching the National Literacy Strategy.

MATHEMATICS

78. Pupils' results in national tests for seven year olds in 1999 were average when compared to all and similar schools. These results were similar to those in the previous year. Attainment in mathematics declined from above average to average during the period 1996 to 1999 and was not as good as that in reading and writing. The school identified a weakness in mental mathematics and insecurity in basic understanding of number concepts. As a consequence some pupils found difficulty in recalling previous work for use at a later date. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and more structured lesson planning have focused attention on consolidation of the fundamental principles of mathematics. This new approach is already having a significant impact. Scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of lessons, and discussion with pupils indicate that overall standards of work are currently above average, both at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school. Boys and girls are working equally well and there is no significant difference in the standards achieved by each. This indicates similar standards as the previous inspection.

79. On entry to Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in mathematics is average. Many count and recognise numbers to ten, and sometimes beyond, but their recall of concepts such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'next', 'count on' is less secure. The teaching in the early part of the key stage builds up pupils' confidence in the application of number skills through the use of a wide variety of stimulating material and techniques. Teachers are quick to recognise where individual pupils do not fully understand and they then use alternative strategies to assist learning. For example, when some pupils in Year 1 found it difficult to associate two one pence coins with a two pence coin the teacher reverted to simple addition of single digit numbers. This led to the addition of numbers making 10. By the end of the lesson a significant majority of the class was choosing items they could buy from the toyshop with 10 pence. Some pupils extended this to shopping with 20 pence. By the end of Year 1 most pupils have a sound understanding of number bonds to 20, and many work beyond this. By the end of the key stage, pupils are applying their basic knowledge of number work to shape, space and measure. They are successfully beginning to handle data and make reasoned judgements from its display on bar charts. Teachers encourage pupils to look for alternative ways of solving problems and checking the correctness of the result. This tactic is used well to assess pupils' understanding. For example, in the Year 2 lesson in which three pupils' strategies for

mentally working out an addition sum involving three numbers were written on the board. The reasons for the incorrect answers were discussed by the class and pupils identified for themselves where, and why, the reasoning was faulty. Throughout the key stage pupils are encouraged to use mathematical terminology appropriately. They are introduced to the more technical terms at the earliest opportunity, which enhances their ability to understand the language of problem questions. For instance, pupils in Year 1 used the word 'equivalent' as oppose to 'the same' when working with money problems. Pupils progressively build up skills in Key Stage 1 as a direct result of well-structured and shared lesson planning across year groups and within the key stage. This generates cross-fertilisation of ideas and provides good opportunities for teachers to identify what does and does not work. Appropriate work is set for pupils of different ability levels and teachers adjust this daily to reflect progress made in the previous lesson. Pupils respond well to challenge and are keen to move on to what they perceive as 'harder work'. Teachers do not always capitalise on this by providing enough opportunities for independent investigative studies. At present, although all pupils are given suitably challenging work, there is insufficient scope for them to demonstrate use of their own initiative. Overall, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well in Key Stage 1. They make good progress from their starting point at the beginning of the key stage.

80. Pupils in Key Stage 2 did not have the benefit of the National Numeracy Strategy in their earlier years. The textbooks these pupils used were less exciting and the course was not so well structured. As a consequence, although pupils could often obtain the correct answers, their understanding and ability to use information at a later date was only average. This is apparent in the work of pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 classes. Current programmes of study in these year groups are focusing well on consolidation and reinforcement of work that is now an integral part of the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Pupils are being taught well and by the end of Year 4 apply mental strategies to their work and are starting to estimate likely answers, to use reverse operations to check their work, and, importantly, to view the language of number as a tool for life. Pupils say they are enjoying mathematics more this year and that it is fun. They particularly like being able to target and record their own improvement, for instance through the 'Race against the Clock' sessions. Pride is also shown when they achieve certificates awarded for knowledge and thorough understanding of multiplication tables. To obtain these, pupils are required to demonstrate their ability to handle the associated multiplication and division processes for numbers selected at random. The current strategy of adding depth and breadth to previous work is working well. It is a contributory factor to the overall improvement in standards of the Year 3 and 4 cohorts from their national test results in 1998/99. All pupils are achieving well in relation to previous work and their learning is progressing at a good pace. However, as in Key Stage 1, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to determine how to tackle an open-ended piece of work.

81. Numeracy skills are good and are incorporated into work in other areas of the curriculum such as science and geography. Greater awareness of the pupils' growing confidence and mental agility in applying these skills is usefully filtering into all aspects of the school's work.

82. Teaching in mathematics is good throughout the school and has improved since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching was good in 88 per cent of lessons seen and satisfactory in the rest. It contributes significantly to pupils' learning and the amount of work completed in lessons. Teachers have effectively embraced the new techniques for teaching numeracy skills. The well balanced, three-part lessons are providing good opportunities for pupils to gain and extend knowledge, practise new skills, reason, and share ideas. The short concluding element to each lesson succeeds in summarising what has been learned and setting parameters for subsequent work. The use of information technology to support learning is beneficial in that individual pupils can set challenges for themselves on programs graded in difficulty. There is scope for wider use of new technology, for instance in handling and analysis of data now that upgraded computers have been installed in all classrooms. It is interesting to note that pupils in Year 3 said they liked mathematics better this year because

‘we learn more when the questions are not too easy’.

83. The coordinator provides good management. Since the previous inspection considerable progress has been made in implementing the new scheme of work and finely structuring planning. Attention now needs to be given to assessment and the monitoring of individual pupils’ progress. Only in Year 2 are there formalised assessments so, in general, the school has no means of checking whether individual pupils are achieving appropriately. There is capacity for further improvement in standards to match those in English and science.

SCIENCE

84. The 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that all of the pupils reached the expected target level. This is very high when compared with most schools nationally and with schools of similar background. The percentage that exceeded this level was broadly in line with that found nationally and with that found in similar schools. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that these standards are being maintained, and that at the end of Key Stage 1, standard in work is well above average. Progress is less marked in Key Stage 2 where assessment, as at the time of the last inspection, is not always used rigorously to plan suitable work. Nevertheless, at the end of Year 4, when the pupils leave the school, standards are above those found nationally. There has been a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection when performance at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average and at the end of Year 4 was average. This is due in part to the re-organisation of the curriculum; the clearer time-allocation now made to science and to the influence of national guidance. This provides a clearer focus on the systematic development of specific scientific skills and knowledge over time.

85. The pupils’ knowledge of life processes and living things is very good throughout the school. At the end of Key Stage 1, they talk knowledgeably about healthy eating, and are able to give clear descriptions of the effect of exercise on the body, in general terms of getting hotter and redder, and feeling faster heart beats. The pupils’ enthusiasm and interest in their investigations makes a significant contribution to their good progress. By the end of Year 4, pupils have extended their knowledge of the body and are able to explain the purpose of the skeleton and the main organs, including the heart. They measure pulse rate to gauge the effects of exercise. Appropriate attention is given to all attainment targets and investigational skills are gradually built up over time. In Year 2, for instance, the pupils carry out tests to see how materials such as plasticene or foam rubber can be changed by processes like bending and stretching. They observe closely and record what they have seen. They are able to make comparisons and generalisations about the properties of the materials. In Year 4, the pupils investigate how the processes of heating and cooling may change materials. They are beginning to recognise how the tests might be fair ones, and can classify the changes as reversible or not. Whilst the Year 2 pupils are encouraged to devise their own method of recording their work, opportunities particularly in Key Stage 2, for the pupils to become independent learners are few. The emphasis in lessons is often on following instructions rather than generating the pupils’ own investigations and identifying and solving problems for themselves.

86. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching was at least good in over half of the lessons observed and the rest was satisfactory. The variability in teachers’ knowledge identified in the previous inspection has been resolved. Teachers now have secure knowledge of the National Curriculum and are aware of the importance of the development of skills as well as knowledge. This enables them to plan purposeful first-hand experiences, which support learning well, and lead to good progress in all attainment targets. Joint planning in year groups provides consistency and assists the efficient use of resources. However, planning does not always indicate how the pupils of differing attainment levels are to be challenged and this sometimes limits the progress of the potential higher attainers. Teachers

do not always share the objectives of lessons with pupils and this clouds pupils' understanding of what they are expected to learn in the lesson. Very good provision is made for the pupils with special educational needs. Well-briefed support workers and volunteer helpers provide good quality individual and small group assistance. This enables the pupils with special educational needs to make good progress when compared with their previous attainment. Most of the teachers employ good questioning skills, including frequent use of the word, 'why', to extend the pupils' thinking. There are occasions particularly in Key Stage 2, when pace of lessons is slow and the rate of learning drops. Plenary sessions are used successfully to consolidate and extend learning and in some lessons to assess the pupils' attainment. In all lessons seen, the pupils were very well managed. The teachers use praise effectively to encourage the pupils to greater effort.

87. Assessment procedures are in place to evaluate attainment at the end of each topic and at the end of the year. These are used inconsistently by staff and do not always influence planning. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor teaching and learning and has identified the area of assessment as a priority for development. An effective start has been made with new assessment procedures being used in Year 4 to track individual progress and set targets for improvement.

ART

88. Standards of attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are good. By the end of Year 4 standards continue to be good and are similar to those identified in the previous report.

89. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities and pupils have many opportunities to paint and experiment with colour. Pupils respond well to this variety of experience and the rate of learning is good throughout the school. Standards of behaviour and attitudes to work are very good. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and enjoy learning new skills. In Key Stage 1 pupils print with a variety of materials such as sponges. By the end of the key stage pupils are skilful joining a variety of materials together to make effective group sculptures. Teachers have high expectations of work and pupils work hard to complete tasks and achieve good standards of work. Many teachers have a wide range of artistic skills, which they teach very well. Pupils have produced good effects using a range of techniques such as tie and dye, batik and flour and water designs. They use sketchbooks to illustrate and write about their observations. Pupils in Year 3 extend their understanding of artistic tradition as they explore the art of knitting, crochet and lace, observing and comparing different effects of stitching and pattern. In Year 4 pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the processes involved in overprinting and overweaving materials and the complexities of Indian fabric patterns. Skills in pottery have been taught carefully and pupils are quick to learn new technique. They have been particularly successful in making good quality thumb pots and coiled clay pots. Workshops and links with a local potter to fire their work has enabled pupils to extend their experiences into the wider community. During the time of inspection, pupils in Key Stage 2, with the help of an Artist in Residence, had designed and made attractive ceramic tiles for a Millennium wall mural for the school.

90. Overall the quality of teaching is good and on occasions very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and this enables pupils, including those with special educational needs, to learn at a good rate as they move through the school. Careful planning maps out an appropriate progression of skills and the areas of experience to be covered. Pupils retain what they have learned and build on these gradually increasing their skills in handling various tools and materials. Teachers plan effective links with other subjects, as for example, the focus on clothes styles and dress of the Tudor period.

91. The school has a popular art club that extends pupils' artistic skills.

Design and technology

92. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection as this aspect of the curriculum tends to be absorbed into topic work. The minimal amount of work seen indicates that the overall standard is below that found in similar schools. The subject has not received the attention of other subjects and currently there is no scheme of work or a subject co-ordinator to oversee the progressive acquisition of relevant skills. These factors have led to the average standards identified in the previous inspection not being maintained.

93. There is some evidence in Key Stage 1 of individual teachers working towards a structured approach to a design brief. For instance, in a Year 1 class, pupils had thought through the design of a musical instrument. They had chosen suitable materials for construction, made and tested the instruments, and listened to the sounds produced. Pupils talked excitedly about this project and had obviously enjoyed the work. In other year groups pupils can recall making robots and towers but their responses lack evidence of evaluation of the finished articles. For instance, in one case, improvement of the finished article rested on its decoration rather than its effectiveness for the purpose intended. Discussion with pupils in Year 3 provided better evidence of the pupils' understanding of the meaning of working to specifications. In this case pupils had been asked to build a bridge from given materials to support a 100g weight. Some thought had obviously been given to the strength of the bridge and the relative importance of the spacing between the supports.

94. The fragmented evidence from the inspection indicates that teachers are aware of the need to develop practical and design skills but that limited time and attention is given to ensuring a coherent approach. Overall, indirect evidence suggests that teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for design and technology and consequently pupils are not progressively developing skills to produce and evaluate the quality of design products of increasing complexity. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 is therefore not as high as it could be.

95. The policy and scheme of work for design and technology needed updating at the time of the previous inspection and the school has not resolved this aspect of the subject. The school should consider how the profile of the subject within the curriculum could be raised to provide a structured range of better quality experiences through which pupils can develop and improve their design and practical skills.

GEOGRAPHY

96. Due to the constraints of the curriculum, no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 and only two were observed in Key Stage 2. Evidence from these lessons, from scrutiny of the pupils' work and the teachers' plans and discussions with the pupils, indicates that standards of work are appropriate for this age range. The last inspection identified standards to be good at the end of Key Stage 1, the apparent fall in standards is due to the geography curriculum being reduced to allow for the school to focus on recent national initiatives in numeracy and literacy.

97. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils understand how the environment affects the lives of people. They talk knowledgeably about their studies of the Isle of Struay. They describe physical features of the village and compare buildings with those found in Penkridge. They describe advantages and disadvantages of living on the Isle in simple terms of their likes and dislikes. The pupils in Year 4 compare village life in Penkridge with life in rural India. They look closely at photographs of Chembakoli and compare human and physical features. They

locate India on a world map and trace the journey there by sea from England. Pupils learn well in this aspect of the subject as a direct response to teachers' good use of the locality, for instance, when considering land use and environmental issues, and of the school building and grounds to increase the pupils' geographical awareness. Resources such as aerial photographs and a range of maps are well prepared. They stimulate the pupils' interest and illustrate teaching points well. The pupils throughout the school are successfully developing their knowledge of the world through on-going geographical studies. Teachers are successful in relating places to pupils' own experiences. For example, in Key Stage 1 the pupils are becoming familiar with a wide range of locations by monitoring the travels of a toy bear. In Key Stage 2, the pupils regularly follow up items in the news by identifying their locations on a world map. These activities are heightening the pupils' interest and support their wider knowledge very well. Scrutiny of the pupils' work in books indicates that insufficient attention is given to the systematic development of mapping skills over time. The coordinator is reviewing the curriculum to resolve this aspect of provision.

98. On the limited evidence of lesson observations and scrutiny of teachers' plans, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. Teachers use questions effectively to extend pupils' thinking. The pupils' positive attitudes and enthusiasm usually contribute significantly to the standards achieved and the satisfactory progress the pupils make. There are, however, a small group of pupils in Year 4 who could work harder in lessons. Homework is used to further learning. The pupils often carry out their own research at home to contribute to topic work.

HISTORY

99. The school has maintained the standards noted at the time of the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1, the school's performance exceeds that of most schools. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 4 the majority of the pupils are in line to meet the level expected for this age group. Progress, including that of the pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory overall and is good in Key Stage 1. The pupils have appropriate knowledge of the programmes of study encountered. Whilst they are learning sound skills of enquiry through examining set texts, photographs and artefacts, progress slows in Years 3 and 4 as opportunities to develop independent research skills further through use of the library or CD-ROM are not fully developed.

100. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a good sense of the past and show a genuine interest in the subject. Their enthusiasm to bring artefacts and information from home is often instrumental in extending their learning. They ask and answer questions about famous people and events, such as Samuel Pepys and The Great Fire of London and are beginning to appreciate the difference between a fact and a point of view. When studying the life of Florence Nightingale, they make deductions about aspects of Victorian society from closely observing pictures. They make comparisons with modern life. They are beginning to appreciate the effect of her work on her contemporaries as well as the influence of her example today. Good use of the locality is made to teach the Year 4 pupils about the Tudors. They gather information from a walk in the village, pictures, artefacts and stories to build up their sense of chronology and factual knowledge of the past. They have a good idea of social conditions for rich and poor in Tudor times and show empathy with a story character who has fallen on hard times. Older pupils suggest consequences of his behaviour and compare his situation to the present day, explaining the help available for the unemployed now. In all but one lesson observed, where pupils could have worked harder, the very positive attitudes of the pupils, and their ability to persevere with tasks, supports their learning effectively.

101. The quality of teaching is good overall. In two of the four lessons observed, teaching was good, in one, it was very good and in one, it was satisfactory. All of the teachers have secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. They use a range of visits, visitors,

artefacts and pictures to bring the past to life. This stimulates the pupils' interest. Lessons are well planned to build on what the pupils already know and enable them to make good progress. Support workers and volunteers are well informed and deployed efficiently to provide valuable help to pupils with special educational needs so enabling them to respond to the challenge of the curriculum and make good progress. The pupils are well managed, and praise is used effectively to raise self-esteem and confidence. This encourages greater effort. In most lessons, the teachers establish a purposeful atmosphere and there is a good balance between teacher input, whole class discussion and group or individual work. Together with careful questioning techniques and clearly focused plenary sessions, the well organised structure of lessons has a beneficial effect on consolidating and extending learning. In the very good lesson, a range of activities was provided for all levels of attainment and provided a good challenge for the potential higher attainers.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Information technology is taught as an integral part of the curriculum but whole-class sessions are often used to focus on a particular skill. Subsequently all pupils have an opportunity to practise the skill during the week. This system works well. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is similar to that expected of seven-year-olds. This is similar to the standard identified in the previous inspection. However, pupils in Years 3 and 4 did not benefit from such a good introduction to the subject in their earlier years because the equipment was not available and they have not quite maintained the average standard reported at the time of the last inspection. They are rapidly catching up on lost time and their attainment, although still below average is now approaching that expected of pupils of their age. A significant number of pupils have access to computers at home and their work is of a higher standard

103. The provision for information technology has improved significantly during the past year. New computers have been installed and there is a structured scheme of work, which fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Good organisation of whole-class sessions provides pupils with clear explanations of the skills needed to complete the individual tasks that follow. Some teachers have received training but more is required to raise expertise to an appropriate level. Pupils make a good start in Key Stage 1. Teachers encourage them to become familiar with computers by incorporating literacy and numeracy programs in their lesson planning. Drawing packages are used well to assist pupils to visualise and create designs. Parents complement the teaching by working with individual pupils in class. This enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to gain confidence through 'hands on' experience. By the end of the key stage pupils use computers to type their work using capitals and full stops. With adult help they can plan the layout of a poem and save their work. In Key Stage 2 teaching focuses more acutely on the use of information technology for research and the interrogation of information. For instance, in a good lesson in Year 3, the teacher used data collected in geography to demonstrate how its analysis could be represented in a variety of forms. The pupils' learning progressed at a good pace because the teacher involved individual pupils in selecting operations and inputting data. In another equally good lesson the teacher's clear exposition led pupils to work out for themselves how to give a series of instructions similar to those used when working through files on computer programs. Pupils' learning here was through 'trial and error' and this technique tested their initiative. At present insufficient attention has been given to some aspects of the curriculum particularly aspects of control and measurement. Many pupils already know how to research information from the Internet and they bring this into school in preparation for work on topics. They talk with understanding about the material they have selected, for instance about Florence Nightingale in Year 2 and volcanoes in Year 4. At present the computers in school are not linked to a network but the local education authority has this in hand. The school's involvement in the Socrates project will then enable pupils to make contact with schools in other parts of the world via e-mail.

104. Although only a few whole lessons were observed evidence from the inspection of pupils' work, and discussion with them, indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good.

105. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken up appointment and there is still much work to be done, especially in evaluation of pupils' progress and acquisition of skills. This is particularly important bearing in mind that some pupils have more experience than others through access to computers at home. The subject has made several improvements since the previous inspection but more resources are still needed to raise standards in all the required aspects of the subject. Currently, computers are underused to support learning across the curriculum. There is good capacity for further development in this subject.

MUSIC

106. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, continue to make satisfactory progress and achieve standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave school that are in line with what is typical for them. This reflects the judgement reported in the previous inspection.

107. Pupils throughout the school are gaining confidence in performing with a range of percussion instruments to accompany their singing. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the names of many instruments and the sounds they make. They use this knowledge well, for example, in Year 1, when matching noise words in the story of Bear Hunt with their chosen instrument. All pupils treat instruments with respect and respond appropriately when asked not to play them and keep silence. Teachers are imaginative with activities to promote listening skills. Pupils play instruments behind a screen for other pupils to identify. They thoroughly enjoy this activity and accurately name the hidden instruments. Pupils are learning how to compose and perform music to an audience. They are beginning to incorporate musical elements such as pulse and dynamics in their performance. By the end of Year 4, in their recorder lessons, are acquiring a sound understanding of note value, changing symbols on the stave to create different rhythm patterns to play. Pupils enjoy singing and are building a repertoire of songs, mostly from memory. All pupils have opportunity to listen to music in a wide range of styles. During the inspection jazz was the focus for a musical assembly and pupils are developing preferences for different types of music.

108. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and good where there is specialist teaching. Lessons are managed well and pupils behave well and have good attitudes to music. The content of most lessons includes a satisfactory balance of singing, listening and playing instruments. Resources are good and teachers use them well. The curriculum is largely delivered through a programme of topics, in hymn practice and assemblies, and with the additional support of a specialist musician. This often leads to insufficient progression of skills across year groups as reported in the previous inspection. Skills already mastered and repetition of some activities restricts the progress of some pupils who could achieve more.

109. Many pupils take up the additional opportunities to play the recorder, violin and sing in various group activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. During the inspection it was only possible to see gymnastics and evidence is supported by review of planning, school videos and discussions with staff and pupils. The school offers a range of activities including the opportunity to go swimming and to take part in a range of

outdoor activities during a residential visit to Coven.

111. In the gymnastics' lessons seen pupils made good progress in Key Stage 1 and attained standards above what is normally expected for their age. Pupils make good use of space when travelling and are aware of others and the limited space available in the hall. They show good control as they make a variety of shapes and are inventive finding different balances. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 progress was satisfactory although opportunities to practise and refine skills were not as well developed. The system of classes taking it in turns to get out the large apparatus allows lessons to be longer but restricts the amount of floor space available to practise skills. Pupils are beginning to combine simple movements into a short sequence but insufficient thought is given to linking movements smoothly. Standards in dance are good and similar to the judgement in the previous report. Pupils move in time to music and show a good understanding of the different qualities of movement. The evidence shows pupils take part in traditional dances and this enriches their cultural experiences. Pupils go swimming in Years 3 and 4 and by the time they leave school all pupils can swim and this is a high standard for pupils of this age.

112. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching but no teaching seen was less than satisfactory. Teachers give close attention to pupils' safety and lessons are managed well and pupils respond with good behaviour. Teachers check that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and they make good progress relative to their prior attainment. A strength in the lesson in Key Stage 1 was the opportunities given to pupils to explore and find different ways to move. This led to more imaginative work and pupils made good progress in planning and evaluating their work. All lessons included good use of pupils' demonstrations to clarify as well as to celebrate good performances. Teachers did not always provide pupils with opportunities to improve their own work following a demonstration and this restricted pupils' skills of evaluation.

113. Teachers give generously of their time to provide an interesting range of sporting extra-curricular activities. These include a dance club, football, athletics, skittle ball and cycling. These activities enhance the physical education curriculum for the many pupils who choose to take part.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

114. At the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 standards in work in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has maintained standards since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their understanding of religious belief and practices. They are achieving well in the study of human relationships and personal lifestyles.

115. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reflect upon the world around them and are developing a growing curiosity about their place in it. They are acquiring a sound knowledge of the main beliefs of the Christian faith through bible stories and the school's links with the local church. They appreciate the importance of prayer and praise in acts of collective worship and sensitively share their own prayers at appropriate times of day. Teachers provide opportunities to reflect upon religious issues such as the concept of God as a caring Father. Pupils respect these moments and they make significant comparisons with their own personal experiences and relationships in the community of family and school. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to care for and respect the natural world and each other.

116. The value of caring and belonging to a group or community is further developed in Key Stage 2. For example, pupils in Year 3 are encouraged to explain to others the groups to which they belong and to share their feelings about their role in them. They extend this understanding to the value of belonging to a religious society such as Christianity and Islam.

Pupils talk with a growing confidence about religious practices in some homes and know, for example, that Muslims wash their hands before touching the Qu'ran and keep it in a high place as a measure of respect. By the end of Year 4 pupils use their knowledge of bible stories, such as the flight to Egypt and Moses, to consider why God speaks to chosen people. They make sensible comparisons with their own life experiences when chosen to do a special task and the feelings they have when challenged.

117. The quality of teaching in religious education is satisfactory across all year groups. Teachers make good use of questioning and discussion, which impacts positively upon the quality of learning. Pupils appreciate these discussions and listen closely to teachers and are keen to share their viewpoints with others. They recall previous issues and use this information in discussions and learning takes place at a good rate in these lessons. Teachers endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem and sense of belonging at every opportunity and pupils are interested in the topics covered. Clear planning ensures progression through certain themes although the small amount of recorded evidence of their work in lessons hinders effective monitoring of the curriculum. The school needs to consider the amount of time allocated to the subject on the timetable to ensure that there is sufficient time to cover all the required topics. There are a few gaps in the provision of resources for the study of world faiths but staff are mindful of this and bring in their own to support pupils' learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through the aspects taught in religious education.