

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OULTON CE FIRST SCHOOL**

Oulton, Stone

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124276

Headteacher: Mrs E Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr E Jackson  
3108

Dates of inspection: 2- 4 July 2001

Inspection number: 192253

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rock Crescent Oulton Stone Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST15 8UH
Telephone number:	01785 354100
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Foster
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	Eric Jackson	Registered inspector	English; Science; Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education French English as an additional language Equality of opportunity.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further
19366	Bill Walker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10144	Mary Marriott	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Geography History Music Religious education Special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Oulton Church of England First School caters for pupils from three to nine-years-old. It is a small school, admitting up to 15 pupils into its reception class annually, many of whom have attended its nursery part-time. It draws its pupils from a wide area, although its numbers fluctuate year-on-year. Last year it was oversubscribed. There are 88 full-time equivalent pupils on roll, including 19 part-time in the nursery. There are 53 boys and 44 girls, but in Year 1 there are 10 boys and only two girls. All classes are of mixed age groups, so that the children in nursery and reception form Class 1, Years 1 and 2 form Class 2, and Years 3 and 4 form Class 3, each representing a different key stage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds (Chinese, Icelandic and German) is below average, although the number learning English as an additional language is above average. Sixteen pupils are on the school's register of those with special educational needs, about average nationally, and two have a statement of their needs, which is above average. The pupils' particular needs range from physical disabilities, to moderate and specific learning difficulties. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Attainment on entry to the reception class covers a wide range and varies considerably year-on-year, but entry-level test results have been about average over the last three years. Attainment by the end of the reception year at entry to Key Stage 1 is above average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school, offering its pupils a rich curriculum and high quality teaching that promotes very good learning. This leads to the attainment of above and well above average standards in national tests, and good achievement in many areas of learning, including the pupils' personal development. The headteacher provides very clear and purposeful leadership, supported very strongly by the whole staff team and the governors. The school gives very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards of attainment are well above average at seven and nine years of age in English, mathematics, science and art and design, and above average in most other subjects.
- The quality of teaching and learning are very high, founded in the high quality of curricular opportunities.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The staff care for the pupils very well academically, socially and spiritually.
- The school successfully promotes very good attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and personal development, founded in the high quality of working relationships throughout the school.

#### **What could be improved**

- Pupils' opportunities to use information and communications technology (ICT), and their levels of achievement in the subject.
- How pupils are taught to review their written work in order to improve it.
- The quantity and quality of books and other reading materials, particularly those sent home as part of the reading scheme.

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

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

Good improvements have been made in the areas identified in the previous inspection in 1997, and standards have been maintained or improved. Annual reports to parents on pupils' progress now fulfil statutory requirements. They are detailed and thorough, suggesting targets for improvement in key areas. The use of ICT across the curriculum is better, and there are new computers in all classrooms. However, further improvements are required here. Provision for design and technology at Key Stage 2 is good now, and the pupils follow the design process suggested in recent national guidance. Outdoor play and activities for children in the Foundation Stage have improved because a new area

adjacent to the classroom has been turned into a safe play area with some fixed equipment such as a slide and a climbing frame. Other improvements include teaching and learning through monitoring and performance management. All teaching staff have agreed an improvement target related to the teaching of ICT, for example. The overview of the school's work by the headteacher, senior staff, and the governing body has also developed, so that priorities in the school development plan are based on structured monitoring and evaluation of standards of achievement and the quality of education. A parent who is a modern languages specialist now provides French lessons for every class. Targeted funds have been used effectively to improve the offices and staff facilities, and storage areas to create a library. Parents have generously funded the acquisition of extensive new equipment for educational gymnastics.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	A*	B	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	A*	C	B	C	
Mathematics	B	C	B	C	

The table shows that the school's results in national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were above average nationally, and in line with those in schools in similar circumstances. In 1998, the school's results in reading and writing were in the top five per cent nationally. Comparisons between this school's results and national averages, or with similar schools, should be treated with caution. Because the school has small cohorts of pupils in each year group, results can fluctuate dramatically from year to year. There are only 16 pupils in Year 2 this year, for example, and only 10 in Year 4. The headteacher feels that more accurate assessment since 1999 accounts for the apparent fall in standards between 1998 and 1999. As the 1998 Year 2 cohort has left the school, no inspection judgement can be made about this. This year's seven-year-old cohort achieves well above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The current nine-year-olds also attain well above expected standards for their age in English, mathematics and science. The trend in the school's results at Key Stage 1 is variable, but improving recently against the national average. The school has set realistic targets for the attainment of its seven and nine year old pupils which it has achieved in the last two years, and also agrees individual targets for each pupil with their parents. Pupils' attainment in other subjects is either above or well above those expected for seven and nine year olds, except in ICT and physical education (PE), where they are as expected for their age.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have excellent attitudes to the school and to their work. They show very productive working habits, listening carefully, seeking answers, evaluating their work and trying to improve it.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Their behaviour is very good. They respond superbly to the work set by the teachers, and co-operate in a variety of social groupings very well.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils grow in self-confidence, and learn to work independently of the teacher and support staff. This is because the working relationships fostered by the staff are excellent.



Attendance	Good: above the national average. This contributes well to pupils' attainment and progress.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good.	Excellent.	Excellent.

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

The quality of teaching is excellent overall. It was excellent in 35 per cent of lessons seen, very good in a further 56 per cent, and good in the remaining 8 per cent. The strengths of the teaching lie in the shared understanding between the staff of the areas of learning for children in the reception and nursery groups and the subjects of the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2, and in the high expectations set by the staff for the pupils' learning and attainment. Lesson planning is thorough and detailed, and caters for the wide age and attainment differences in each class very successfully, so that pupils learn at a rapid pace. The skills of numeracy and literacy are taught very well, leading to the pupils achieving high standards in reading, writing and number work by seven and nine. Teachers use their detailed knowledge of what the pupils have achieved to plan new work that stretches them to attain higher levels. The current focus on the improvement of writing has been effective in raising standards across the school, although pupils need further help in revising their written work in order to improve it. Because the relationships between staff and pupils are so good, the pupils apply themselves to their work conscientiously, and work hard to achieve the targets and learning objectives set for them. Better use could be made of the school's new computer resources to increase pupils' ICT skills, however.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for all pupils is rich and varied, fully meeting statutory requirements. New policies and schemes of work for all subjects have improved curricular provision, introduced structured teaching programmes and comprehensive monitoring and assessment opportunities. ICT still needs further development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Assessment procedures have been introduced which assist with the identification of pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers' classroom planning takes into account the requirements of the individual plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are few pupils learning English as an additional language, but they make very good progress in learning English, and in applying their language skills in other subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. Provision for spiritual and moral development is excellent. Provision for social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a strong sense of community, reflecting shared values and commitment to the well being of all members of the school. All staff know the pupils very well and provide a safe and secure environment in which pupils grow in confidence and learn very effectively.

The partnership between school and home is very fruitful and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development. Parents respond very well to being treated as part of the school community and as valued partners in the education of their children.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school very effectively, giving extremely clear direction to its work, agreed by the whole staff and governors in the school development plan.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory duties fully, and oversees the work of the school thoroughly. Many of the governors are active in the school, and know it well from their regular contacts with the staff and pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education and pupils' standards of achievement are key features of the school's performance management, used very well to track and set development targets.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of almost all the school's resources. Better use could be made of the ICT equipment, however.

Staffing, learning resources and accommodation are adequate, although new reading and library books are needed. The governors apply the principles of best value carefully in selecting and evaluating the school's resources.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That their children love coming to school.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard and make progress in their learning.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is very good.</li> <li>• That the school helps their children to become responsible and mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of texts for home reading.</li> <li>• The variety of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Some aspects of the management of the school.</li> </ul>

The inspection supports parents' positive views of the school, and their views about the quality of texts for home reading. However, there is a good range of activities to enrich and broaden the curriculum outside lessons, and the leadership and management provided by the headteacher, staff and governors are very effective.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils' attainment in national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics was above average nationally and similar to that in schools in similar circumstances. The current seven and nine year old pupils attain well above the levels expected for their age in English, mathematics and science, and a high proportion attain at higher than expected levels. This represents good progress in their learning since entry to the school, and very good progress was observed during the inspection in all three classes. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
2. Comparisons between this school's results and national averages, or with similar schools, should be treated with caution. Because the school has small cohorts of pupils in each year group, results can fluctuate dramatically from year to year. There are only eight boys and eight girls in Year 2 this year, for example, and only five boys and five girls in Year 4.
3. Attainment at entry to the reception class varies year-on-year, but has been about average over the last three years using results from a nationally validated entry-level test. Again, caution is required in interpreting these results given the small numbers in each cohort. By the end of reception, the children have made good progress to be above average in most areas of learning, particularly in reading and number work, and in their social development. Their physical development is as expected for their age. Almost all of them achieve the expected levels in the recommended areas of learning, and have begun to work in the early levels of the National Curriculum by the time they begin Year 1.
4. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is lower than that of the majority of their peers, but appropriate when account is taken of their specific learning difficulties. They participate fully in all areas of the curriculum and receive support where necessary, making very good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. There are few pupils learning English as an additional language, but they make very good progress in learning English, and in applying their language skills in other subjects.
5. In English, pupils' attainment in reading and writing in the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average. Almost half the pupils attained the higher than expected Level 3 in reading, which is well above average. However, the number attaining at higher levels in writing was about average. This led immediately to writing becoming a key priority in the school development plan. Standards in speaking and listening were well above average, based on the teacher's assessment. This maintains the levels seen at the last inspection.
6. The attainment of seven and nine year olds currently is well above average in all aspects of the subject, building well on the recent improving trend. The school's current priorities in the subject are to develop speaking and listening further in order to improve the pupils' writing as they gain confidence in using more complex spoken English. This is having a good effect, and standards in writing have improved considerably this year in Year 2 and Year 4. Entry-level tests over the last three years

indicate that pupils' English skills are about average at the beginning of the reception year, although they vary considerably from year to year. Their attainment by nine reflects good progress during their time in the school, and during the inspection progress in learning was very good for almost all pupils.

7. This is because the quality of the teaching is very good. The teachers' high expectations of the pupils' commitment allied to excellent planning of the tasks and preparation of resources keeps the pupils interested and concentrating, so that the pace of their learning is very good. The teachers make good use of the format of the National Literacy Strategy, but have adapted it well to meet their pupils' needs, and often follow the guidance a year in advance in order to challenge the older pupils in their class.
8. In mathematics, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 2000 national tests was above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher than expected Level 3 was well above average. These results were close to the average in comparison with schools in similar circumstances.
9. The attainment of the seven and nine-year-old pupils currently is well above average, showing an improving trend. There was no difference in the performance of boys and girls in the lessons seen. Standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are above those at the time of the previous inspection reflecting improvements in the quality of teaching. At the end of Year 4 standards are well above those expected for nine-year-olds and this is also an improvement on the previous inspection findings. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who are gifted and talented, and pupils for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress.
10. Factors aiding progress include the terrific attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and the high quality of teaching, using the format of the National Numeracy Strategy very well. Pupils in Year 2 confidently count beyond 100, and use mathematical language well. They solve problems with money up to £10 very competently. In Year 3 and 4 pupils consolidate their understanding of probability and in their mental and oral work are confident when they quickly answer questions such as counting backwards in 10's from any given number. They know their multiplication tables and are very confident in their speedy response to teachers' questions.
11. Pupils' standards of attainment in science are well above average at seven and nine years of age. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, building on the above average standards reported then. The improvement is because the quality of teaching is high, leading to very good or outstanding progress in learning for the pupils during lessons observed. The pupils really enjoy their work because it is practically based, very well planned and organised, and stimulates them to think hard to conduct the required tests. Their attitudes to this work are excellent, and they behave in exemplary fashion. All pupils have access to the full range of learning opportunities, and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of facts and processes.
12. The trend in the school's results at Key Stage 1 is variable, but improving recently against the national average. The school has set realistic targets for the attainment of its seven and nine year old pupils which it has achieved in the last two years, and also agrees individual targets for each pupil with their parents.

13. Pupils' attainment in art and design is well above average at seven and nine. The high quality of the pupils' finished work reflects the skill and care of the staff and pupils in developing observation, drawing, and painting techniques. In almost all the other subjects of the curriculum, standards are above average at seven and nine, maintaining the levels seen at the last inspection. However, in ICT and PE standards are as expected for the pupils' ages, although they are above average in swimming.

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

14. The pupils' very positive attitudes and their very good behaviour and personal development continue to be great strengths of the school. From their early years in the nursery and reception class children respond well to the high expectations of their teachers and support staff. The good learning environment that is then established enables them to become increasingly mature and independent in their working habits. Excellent relationships contribute strongly to their enjoyment of school and, coupled with very good personal development, help to ensure that by the time they leave they are well equipped to benefit from the next phase of their education. The great majority of pupils take full advantage of their opportunities at school by attending regularly and on time. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to their work. They are eager to contribute fully to their lessons and show a keen interest in their learning.
15. The staff create a happy environment where pupils arrive in the mornings with a smile on their faces, ready to wrestle with the challenges of the day and enjoy the fun that so frequently punctuates it. In the Key Stage 2 class, for example, pupils started their day grouped around their teacher singing with great gusto a selection of songs familiar to their grandparents. This impromptu rehearsal clearly engendered great pleasure. The pupils are proud of their school and take obvious pleasure in discussing it with visitors and helping them find their way. They also take pride in their work and are keen to show what they have achieved. In lessons at all levels pupils quickly become involved, anxious to answer questions, and enthusiastic to explore any learning opportunities. Their response in lessons observed at Foundation level and in both key stages was never less than good and was often excellent. They show very productive working habits, listening carefully, seeking to find answers, evaluating their work and trying to improve it. This good practice is reflected in the stimulating displays around the school. In the Year 3 and 4 classroom for example, pupils' work illustrates how they use different strategies to solve their own problems. In the nursery and reception class, children are invited to find their name, write down a number, identify a mini bug and tell their friend about it. Pupils have good knowledge of their own learning and are led to accept responsibility for extending it.
16. The very good behaviour that contributes so successfully to the learning in the classroom is mirrored by the courteous and civilised atmosphere that pervades the whole school day. Whether at play, dining or simply moving about the school, pupils are very orderly, polite and friendly. They enjoy each other's company and mix happily, irrespective of age or background. They are always ready to hold doors open, share resources, or take their turn. Relationships at all levels are exemplary. Pupils are anxious to support their teacher and to help each other. In a Key Stage 1 history lesson a Year 1 pupil was unsure how to spell a word; a Year 2 child immediately went to get him a personal dictionary and explained patiently how the use of the "contents" section would help him to locate the appropriate page. When the word could not be found a second Year 2 pupil offered to write in the correct spelling so that he would know it in future. This all took place without any adult help

and illustrates not only the quality of the relationships between the pupils, but also the high level of independence which characterises their personal development. There are also many opportunities for pupils to reflect on and learn to respect the values and beliefs of others.

17. Personal and social education is taught through other subjects, and pupils learn from their early days to accept responsibility for their actions. Throughout the day pupils are led to reflect on their behaviour and the impact it has on others. They take increasing responsibility for school routines, delivering registers, setting up classrooms, and assisting supervisors to clear the hall at lunchtime. Older pupils assist their younger or less capable colleagues, the emphasis being on helping rather than controlling. Pupils show no concerns about bullying but indicate that they know what action to take should they observe any untoward behaviour. There have been no exclusions from the school in recent years.
18. Levels of attendance are consistently good and there is very little unauthorised absence. The headteacher works closely with other schools in the local schools' 'pyramid' to discourage any unnecessary absence, particularly that associated with holidays taken during term time. The great majority of pupils arrive in good time to enable teachers to make a prompt start to the day. This good attendance and punctuality contributes well to pupils' good progress in their learning.

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

19. The quality of teaching is excellent overall. It was excellent in 35 per cent of lessons seen, very good in a further 56 per cent, and good in the remaining 8 per cent. The strengths of the teaching lie in the shared knowledge and understanding between the staff of the areas of learning for children in the reception and nursery groups and the subjects of the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2, and in the high expectations set by the staff for the pupils' learning and attainment. Teachers and support staff co-operate very well, and the pupils benefit from the close adult attention this provides, particularly in Classes 1 and 2.
20. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to use performance management targets effectively to focus on particular aspects of the teaching to develop and improve. They have maintained the high standards recognised in the previous inspection, and through their commitment and dedication have developed new levels of expertise that deliver very good opportunities for the pupils to make significant progress in most subjects of the curriculum. From the rising attainment year-on-year by the end of the reception class, it is clear that changes and improvements in working practices in the Foundation Stage have had good effect. This has included the successful adoption of new national guidance on the targets for learning by the end of reception, and a new Foundation Stage curriculum.
21. Lesson planning is thorough and detailed, and caters for the wide age and attainment differences in each class very successfully, so that pupils learn at a rapid pace. Every class contains two age groups, and covers a key stage so that the spread of attainment is very wide. Because the school has adopted a two-year planning cycle, when the pupils are in the same class the next year they follow different topics to maintain their interest and concentration. This works well, and the staff constantly review what they teach through joint discussions both in school and with other local schools. However, they have not yet adapted their practice sufficiently to allow the

pupils more frequent access to the school's full ICT resources, which slows pupils' progress in this subject.

22. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well, leading to the pupils achieving high standards in reading, writing and number work by seven and nine. For example, during a very good literacy session for Year 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher asked the pupils to discuss in pairs their response to a poem she had read out to them. This they did with animation and sensitivity, and when returning to whole class discussion they were able to express their own feelings well, and listen to and build on other pupils' contributions successfully. The teacher had helped them to work at high levels for their age.
23. Similarly, in an excellent lesson on solving problems using money, Year 2 pupils were prompted by the teacher to change such amounts as 132 and 846 pence to pound notation. Because of the good work habits that have been fostered by the high quality relationships and high expectations of the staff, the pupils were eager to volunteer their answers. They gave accurate answers, and could put the amounts in order successfully because the teacher helped them to become secure in their understanding of number and place value. Again, this is learning at high levels for their age.
24. Because the teacher of Class 2 works part time, arrangements must be made to cover her class for two half days. The school uses this opportunity creatively to tap into the specialist talents of the Class 3 teacher and the headteacher on Wednesday afternoons. Accordingly, the Class 3 teacher leads history, music and drama with Class 2, and the headteacher teaches science with Class 3. This is a very good arrangement, as they both have specialist knowledge in these areas, and the pupils have very good learning opportunities.
25. Teachers use their detailed knowledge of what the pupils have achieved to plan new work that stretches them to attain higher levels. A recently adopted system of precise individual target setting in literacy and numeracy is welcomed by the parents, and has also increased the pupils' knowledge of their own learning. This has helped to drive up standards, as the lesson objectives shared with the pupils in every lesson are matched to their individual goals.
26. The current focus on the improvement of writing has been effective in raising standards across the school, although pupils need further help in revising their written work in order to improve it. There are good examples of teachers giving the pupils the opportunity to do this. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils have written and illustrated stories for younger pupils in the reception class, including preparing the cover sheet using the computer for text and graphics. The presentation involved detailed consideration of how to present the story in a way that could be understood by these younger pupils, and changes to the text to improve it. This was a very successful exercise for the pupils. However, much of the written work from Year 2 on is not revised by the pupils after the teacher has marked it, or after reading it through for themselves. In some work, additional adjectives have been over-written to make the text more interesting, but in general pupils are not expected to revise their work sufficiently to improve it.
27. Because the relationships between staff and pupils are so good, the pupils apply themselves to their work conscientiously, and work hard to achieve the targets and learning objectives set for them. During the whole inspection, the pupils'

concentration and pace of learning was very impressive. They are inspired by the quality of the lessons, and the interesting tasks they are set. For example, children in the nursery and reception groups discussed a visit to the park, concentrating on the playground equipment. They eagerly contributed their ideas about safety during a whole group discussion, then worked in groups successfully using construction toys to make models of safe swings and slides. Having made their first attempts, they responded well to the skilled prompting of the teacher and the nursery nurse to strengthen the models using masking tape and string.

28. A feature of the teaching is in the skill with which the teachers use extra adult support to meet the pupils' learning needs. Support staff are always effectively deployed to work with individuals or groups, and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in Classes 1 and 2. Using the good relationship with parents, teachers encourage them to work in school as often as they can. Whenever parents and other volunteers are in class, they are clear about what they should be doing, and give good support to the pupils. One parent, for instance, has volunteered her language teaching skills to teach each class French for twenty minutes every week. This is a tremendous commitment, and adds significantly to the overall quality of the pupils' learning. Another parent worked with pupils from Year 2 with a floor robot. Her support was of a high order, and the pupils worked at high levels for their age in setting a sequence of instructions for the robot to negotiate a grid pattern.
29. Teachers use assessment information well to set appropriate learning tasks for pupils with special educational needs in their respective classes. Targets are closely focused on what the pupil's need to do to make progress over time. This targeting is done with the use of a record sheet, which shows present achievement and what the pupils' needs to cover in the future. The pupils are aware of their targets, and this helps to understand what they need to do to improve. Work in classrooms for pupils with special educational needs is planned with reference to individual education plans. The special needs co-ordinator holds meetings with staff to monitor pupils' work. Classroom assistants keep good records of what they have covered with pupils and discuss the outcomes with teachers. Staff together with the special educational needs co-ordinator review individual education plans regularly.
30. Homework is given regularly to an agreed schedule, and contributes well to pupils' learning. Parents are very supportive, and rightly complained that the quality of reading texts for home reading is inadequate. However, some of the topic work undertaken at home by pupils in Years 3 and 4 is of a very high standard, and gives those with access to a computer the opportunity to use their skills, with guidance from their parents.

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

31. The school provides a very good curriculum for children in nursery and reception in the Foundation Stage: this is based appropriately on the national Early Learning Goals. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is very good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The production of new policies and schemes of work for all subjects has raised the level of curricular provision, introduced structured teaching programmes and comprehensive monitoring and assessment opportunities. It is quite clear that the school has worked hard to make these improvements. The key issues of the previous report have been achieved. ICT has developed across the curriculum, although still needs further development, and



design and technology is effectively taught and monitored at Key Stage 2. The range of activities for pupils is now appropriate. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. Provision for spiritual and moral development is excellent. Provision for social and cultural development is very good.

32. The school has made considerable progress in its work to incorporate recently published national guidance into each subject scheme of work, and this has included the regular reviewing of the curriculum in the school development plan. This ensures that developments are continuous. Whilst considerable emphasis and time is given to literacy and numeracy, this does not detract from the quality of provision made for most other subjects. However, teachers do not plan for pupils to use the classroom computers enough. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, resulting in the raising of standards in these key areas. The staff use the information gained from an analysis of assessment data constructively to plan future targets for groups and individual pupils.
33. There is a good programme of extra-curricular activities, including inter-sports with local schools, a recorder club, and basketball and football coaching. The school is developing educational links with schools in France and Germany so that pupils can develop an understanding of what it means to be European. This is reinforced by a parent teaching each class French language and culture for 20 minutes every week.
34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Since the previous inspection, further assessment procedures have been introduced which assist staff in the identification of pupils with learning difficulties. Once identified, the co-ordinator works effectively with teachers to provide clear, focused individual education plans for pupils and offers guidance to teachers on the implementation of these plans. Teachers' classroom planning takes into account the requirements of the individual plans.
35. The school has clear and well-established procedures for the identification of pupils with general and specific learning needs. Some parents expressed concern that these processes were slow, but the inspection found no evidence to confirm this. Indeed, children in the nursery are identified as needing extra help. All pupils with special needs have full access to the curriculum and opportunities to join extra-curricular clubs. All the requirements of the national Code of Practice are fully met. The targets set in individual education plans are focused on the needs of the pupil concerned and the strategies to be used are clearly defined and achievable.
36. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The skills and knowledge in this important area of learning have been identified and are presently covered within all subjects together with a dedicated time each week. The present method of teaching through discussion is effective, and pupils are aware of how to look after themselves. The healthy eating programme is well established and pupils understand the need for a healthy diet. Pupils know the importance of cleanliness. They know the importance of medicine and that it must be kept in a safe place. Appropriate attention is given to sex education and drugs misuse.
37. The provision for spiritual and moral development has improved from being very good at the previous inspection to being excellent now. Much thought has been given to ways in which pupils of this age can appreciate the beauty of the world around and

understand the effect their actions may have on it. Collective worship is thoughtful, using themes linked to religious education and to subjects taught within the curriculum, for example journeys in geography. Pupils celebrate major religious festivals, some of which are held in the local church and shared with parents. Local clergy contribute appropriately to school worship and pupils welcome their visits. Pupils participate in assemblies each day where success is celebrated. The school uses prayer and opportunities for discussion and personal reflection at appropriate times throughout the day.

38. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent, and their behaviour in classes is very good. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are excellent. Teachers know their pupils very well, understand and respect their idiosyncrasies and respond in a caring and positive manner to each pupil. Should there be an instance of unacceptable behaviour it is dealt with quickly and successfully. The respect the pupils have for their teachers is evident. They are secure and confident in class and are able to explore their ideas confidently. Pupils respect one another and show in their actions that they think about their likely effect on others. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong, and respect the school's rules. The parental support for the positive behaviour policy contributes to its successful implementation. In all classes pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for routine daily tasks and those who are chosen are very proud of the tasks they undertake.
39. Pupils have opportunities to work individually, in pairs and in groups, and their social development is very good. They are sensitive and supportive to each other and on one occasion, when one pupil was upset because she was missing her friend, the other pupils immediately comforted her and shared the problem with the teacher. Pupils participate in many fund raising activities, some of which are organised by the school and some of which they organise themselves. They have supported charities such as the NSPCC, the homeless and are very proud of the certificates given to them for raising money for the Harvest in Africa.
40. Provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils learn about a variety of faiths and cultural traditions, the traditions of their own area, and the great diversity of music and art. They extend their understanding of the use and impact of art and music on the development of thought and opinion. For example, Grieg's 'Morning' was effectively used in a geography lesson to help concentrate the pupils' minds on journeys, and the pupils' responses were very good. The school takes every opportunity to enhance the curriculum by involvement in activities which extend pupils' cultural understanding. Theatre and musical groups visit the school to offer pupils the experience of live performance and pupils themselves are involved in performing to audiences at special times of the year.
41. The school works very closely with other local schools through the pyramid structure of first, middle and high schools. Many curriculum developments are shared, so that pupils moving on to the same middle schools have had similar experiences to their peers. Close links are also maintained with the parish, and the vicar leads an assembly in the school every fortnight.

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

42. This is a very caring school. There is a strong sense of community, almost of family, reflecting shared values and commitment to the well being of the school. Teachers and other members of staff know their pupils very well and are able to provide the

safe and secure environment in which pupils grow in confidence and learn effectively. The good practice that was the subject of favourable comment in the previous inspection report is still in place. The shortcomings that were then identified in the annual reports on pupils have been resolved. The school complies fully with statutory requirements.

43. The excellent relationship between pupils and staff creates an environment of mutual trust and understanding. Pupils from their varied backgrounds and at all levels of attainment know that they are greatly valued. This enables them to talk about concerns with their teachers, confident that they will listen. Particular sensitivity is shown for the needs of the more vulnerable and the school works closely with parents, carers and other responsible agencies to ensure that individual needs are met. Health and safety procedures are very good. Governors have a responsible attitude, arranging for regular, formal assessment of risk and keeping themselves informed through reports and briefings at their meetings. The school's policies for both health and safety and child protection accord with local authority guidelines. Teachers have recently received training from the local authority to raise their own awareness of child protection issues. They make good use of the curriculum, particularly in science and religious education lessons, to build preventive approaches to child protection. There is a clear focus in lessons on healthy living and the importance of health and safety matters. This contributes positively to the pupils' self-confidence.
44. The school places great emphasis on regular and punctual attendance. Working closely with other schools in the area, the headteacher monitors attendance patterns closely in order to identify any unwarranted absence. In particular, she strongly discourages parents from taking their children for holidays in term time. Any unauthorised absence is fully investigated. The behaviour policy is brief but effective. It is soundly based on positive discipline, the emphasis being on praise and reward for good behaviour. Its strength lies in the consistency of its application. Pupils have a clear idea of the standards expected of them and know that bullying or any form of harassment is not tolerated. Any incidents of misbehaviour that do occur are dealt with promptly and properly.
45. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and assessing their progress and achievement are very good. The school's policy for assessment is brief and precise; its implementation is consistent and very effective. By focusing clearly on the key objective of accurate assessment rather than over extensive recording, the policy gives teachers the freedom to concentrate on their prime professional task of teaching well. In effect they are left with more time to plan tomorrow's lessons on the basis of today's experience. The teachers analyse the results of national and other test data carefully to monitor pupils' achievements, and to develop their curricular and lesson planning. This enables them to set challenging but realistic targets in reading, writing and number, appropriate to each pupil's level of achievement. The continuing review of these targets, which are fruitfully shared with parents each term, provides the means for the headteacher to monitor progress throughout the school.
46. The careful assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance is matched by less formal but equally effective monitoring of their personal development, behaviour and attendance. Particularly with younger pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, teachers and non-teaching members of staff have a routine of sharing information daily on any matter affecting the well being of those in their charge. Promoting the pastoral care of all members of the school community is a

primary aim of the school that it achieves with distinction. All the pupils benefit from the caring and supportive environment provided for them. Together with the very good educational support, this has a positive effect in raising pupils' level of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.

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

47. Parents take great interest in the work of the school and many of them take advantage of the many opportunities offered to involve themselves in the education of their own children and to support the work of the school generally. Most are very happy with what the school provides and achieves, but as at the time of the previous inspection a few have expressed reservations. The school provides very good information to parents to give them a clear idea of their children's progress, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers have built very effective links to enable parents to make a very good contribution to children's learning at school and in the home.
48. Forty-one parents returned the Ofsted questionnaire and twenty attended the meeting with inspectors. Their views and those of the several parents spoken to during the inspection are very supportive of the school. They particularly like the fact that their children are happy, behave well, work hard and make good progress. Overwhelmingly they consider the teaching to be good and the teachers to be approachable. The few concerns from a small minority of parents relate primarily to the limited extra curricular activity, to the poor quality of some resources, particularly reading books, to aspects of the headteacher's management style, and to a perceived slowness in identifying individual needs of pupils. The inspection evidence supports the criticism about the quantity and quality of reading books available for children to take home with them. The school is aware of this shortcoming which is already the subject of an action plan. The inspection did not find evidence to substantiate the other concerns expressed.
49. The school greatly values the support of parents and fully recognises the important contribution which they can make in the educational process. This is made manifest by the detail of the Home/School Partnership Action Plan, now in its second year of development. It provides for a range of strategies to communicate with parents and to assist them to contribute to children's learning at school and in the home. The school's documentation, including the prospectus, the governors' annual report and letters, are well presented, informative and helpful. Annual reports on pupils are comprehensive documents which give parents a clear idea of how well their child is coping with the work and environment of the school. They comply fully with statutory requirements, improved since the last inspection. On a daily basis parents have ready access to teachers before and after school. On a more formal basis there are termly consultation evenings which are very well attended, introductory meetings for parents new to the school and briefings to advise parents about different aspects of the curriculum. The briefings are supplemented by opportunities for parents to develop their skills of sharing books with children and learning how best to support them with their mathematics both in school and at home. More generally the school follows the principles of best value by consulting with parents about school routines, policies and plans.
50. Parents respond very well to being treated as part of the school community and as valued partners in the education of their children. Many come into school to help with readers, general classroom support, or to run extra curricular activities. Many more

co-operate very successfully with the school staff to raise funds to support the school's resources. In the home they support their children with homework which is used effectively to reinforce and extend classroom learning. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the diagnosis of problems and the review of individual educational plans. The partnership between school and home is very fruitful and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development.

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

51. The headteacher leads the school very effectively, giving extremely clear direction to its work, agreed by the whole staff and governors in the school development plan. She has overseen good improvements since she was appointed over three years ago, including all the key issues from the previous inspection. A key feature of her headship has been to help the staff adopt changes to the curriculum and their teaching practice, and to be clearer about the importance of monitoring and evaluating the school's work in order to take it forward. It is to their credit that they have been able to adapt so successfully to the new requirements. She has also skilfully overseen improvements to the premises, using funds allocated nationally for this purpose. The headteacher is moving to another post at the end of the term, and because there is no deputy headteacher, and no-one on the staff is willing to assume temporary responsibility, the governors have wisely sought the local authority's help in finding a temporary headteacher.
52. In such a small school, all staff bear a significant responsibility for its management. For example, the headteacher also oversees science, ICT, geography and PE as subject co-ordinator, and the Class 3 teacher is the special needs co-ordinator, oversees Key Stage 2 developments, and is subject leader for English, music and history. These are significant responsibilities, and they are taken seriously. Between them, the staff keep track of new developments nationally and locally, attend regular meetings of co-ordinators for the local schools, lead staff training, and monitor and evaluate their wide subject portfolios. They also prepare their work as teachers meticulously, and deserve the praise of the parents for their commitment and high quality work.
53. The special needs co-ordinator manages this aspect of the school's work well. She has made very positive links with the local education authority support teams. She works very hard and maintains the system for support in a thorough and organised way.
54. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties fully, and oversees the work of the school thoroughly. Many of the governors are active in the school, and know its strengths and weaknesses well from their regular contacts with the staff and pupils. There is a good system of committees to aid the governing body in its work, and they discuss the detail of new policies to be ratified by the full governing body. The school development plan recognises the important developments and reviews required to maintain and improve the quality of education and pupils' achievements. For example, it rightly focuses on the improvement of pupils' writing skills, the importance of investigation in science, and the constant need to work at the improvement of staff and pupils' skills in ICT. These are all bearing fruit this year.
55. Governors have agreed with the staff a clear and focused set of aims for the school, and it is to the credit of all associated with the school that they are evident in all the

school's work. Its Christian foundation permeates its work, so that the strong spiritual and moral direction given by the staff has a powerful influence on the pupils' development. They have also agreed a very effective performance management strategy, with clear and forward-looking targets for all the teaching staff. This has had a very good impact in honing the teachers' classroom skills, and on their confidence in using the information gained from monitoring and evaluation to set new targets for development.

56. The school's finances are in good order. The school secretary manages them efficiently, and keeps the staff and governors up-to-date with the current position. The governors oversee the budget through the finance committee, and the whole governing body ratifies the annual budget forecast, maintaining a small working surplus. Specific grants for staff training, for improvements to the accommodation, or for special needs are used appropriately. There has been some difficulty in securing effective staff training for ICT, and the headteacher and governors are seeking ways to assure value for money for the grant they have received. In general, the governors seek to apply the principles of best value to their overview of the school's work, and the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work between the staff and governors testifies to their commitment.
57. The school is adequately staffed, and the staff are very well-qualified for the work they undertake. The accommodation is reasonable for the numbers of pupils, and has been improved by the addition of decent offices, staff room, and a medical room. It is kept very clean, and is light and airy. However, during warm weather, the classrooms become unbearably hot, and it is to the staff and pupils' credit that they continue to work hard and concentrate in such conditions. Outdoor play facilities have improved since the last inspection, and are now good. There are plans to upgrade the internal décor in the classrooms, and to create a more spacious car park. As the school is on a sloping site, it is difficult of access. There is currently no ramp from the drive to the front of the school, which is difficult for those with impaired mobility, and for parents with children in pushchairs. The school's learning resources are generally adequate, and used very effectively, and the new PE equipment in the hall is very good. However, the reading books sent home are not of the same high quality as books in the classrooms, and there are insufficient fiction and non-fiction books in the school library.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to further improve the quality of education offered, and raise the pupils' standards of attainment further, the governors and staff should:

1. further develop staff expertise in ICT in order to raise pupils' standards of attainment and increase the time spent by individual pupils in using and developing their skills by:
  - a. providing effective staff training to help to develop staff confidence and competence in using ICT;
  - b. ensuring that there is a suitable range of appropriate programs for pupils' use in all subjects of the curriculum;
  - c. organising a timetable that ensures all pupils have sufficient access to ICT resources to help them develop the range of skills, knowledge and understanding required in the National Curriculum Programme of Study.  
(Paragraphs 21, 31, 32, 56, 109, 111 112, 113)
  
2. further improve pupils' writing skills by:
  - a. providing more opportunities for Year 2 pupils to revise and rewrite their own work to improve it
  - b. building on this work in Years 3 and 4 so that pupils know how to edit and improve their own and other's written work, including by the use of ICT.  
(Paragraph 5, 26, 78)
  
3. As funds allow, provide books for pupils to take home to read with their parents of the same quality and standard as those used in school, and continue to improve the book stock in the library.  
(Paragraph 30, 57, 73)

The first two of these issues are also covered in the current school development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
35	56	9	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)	10	78
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	15

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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



### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	10	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	8	9	8
	Total	18	19	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (85)	90 (92)	86 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	18	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (92)	86 (100)	90 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	90 (87)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8:1
Average class size	29.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	17

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	169,017
Total expenditure	169,980
Expenditure per pupil	1,988
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,560
Balance carried forward to next year	13,598

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	41

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	49	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	44	5	5	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	44	7	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	59	7	0	0
The teaching is good.	63	32	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	49	5	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	24	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	49	7	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	22	66	10	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	41	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	27	22	0	10

## **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**

59. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The nursery and reception class provides a safe and secure environment in which young children learn. Children begin nursery on a part-time basis, morning or afternoon, when they are three years old. They begin full time in the reception class in the autumn term following their fourth birthday. The school invites parents to a meeting, which familiarises them well with the curriculum and routines of school life. The occasion also gives parents a good opportunity to meet each other and to discuss their child with the staff of the school. During the first few weeks in the reception class the teacher assesses the children's learning needs. These assessments confirm inspection findings that the majority of children enter the reception class with skills that are average. By the end of the reception year all children have made good and often very good progress, including those with special educational needs.
60. The nursery and reception class is very well equipped and organised. All areas of learning are covered thoroughly and the curriculum provides experiences that are firmly based in the national Early Learning Goals for which the children aim by the end of reception year. The quality of teaching is very good with examples of excellence. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Children are inspired to learn by the quality of teaching based in excellent relationships, and the high quality learning environment. Activities are carefully planned and build upon the progress made when they were in the nursery group. The nursery and reception class has a full time nursery nurse, who works closely with the class teacher, and takes charge often of the nursery children. The quality of support the two staff give the children is very good. A very good balance is achieved between teacher directed activities and child-initiated activities to include open-ended but focused tasks for the older children. Progress in all areas of learning is carefully monitored and assessed and the ensuing data used to plan future learning. Very good use is made of initial assessments of children's attainment at entry, to identify and provide an appropriate focus for children's learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

61. Children's personal and social development is given appropriate emphasis. The staff work hard to help them make progress, and their teaching is very good. Relationships are excellent, which allows everyone to get on with the job of teaching and learning. Children are encouraged to gain confidence in choosing what they would like to do and to use activities sensibly. They learn to relate to one another and to adults very well. Children learn to take turns with equipment such as the wheeled toys, and to share the roles in the 'Oulton Café' play area. They know right from wrong and become very confident learners. Their behaviour is very good and often excellent. They work well together, for example when constructing playground equipment using a range of construction resources. By the time they leave the reception class almost all children have made very good progress and have achieved the appropriate learning goals, and a significant number have gone beyond them.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

62. Very good progress is made in the area of language and literacy because the teaching is very good. By the time children leave the reception class the majority of them are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are a focus for development in the nursery, with careful teaching, planning and development across all areas of learning. Staff ensure that children listen with enjoyment, for example in the story 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, what do you see?' Very good use of language and expression helps the children to think about the story and re-tell their favourite parts of it. Children in the reception group listened carefully to the teacher as she introduced the Big Book story of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. The expression used and the clarity of diction ensured that all children were able to identify words beginning with the same sound, for example, 'g' as in girl, gold, and good. Higher attaining children understood and pointed out that Granny began with a capital letter. Speaking and listening skills are well developed by the end of the reception year as children learn to communicate very well. During activities using, sand, water, paint and small construction toys, staff take care to encourage talk and discussion. Children have a wide range of books to enjoy to familiarise themselves with print. They are encouraged to take a book home to share with their family. Many children in the nursery group are at the early stages of reading. They learn early mark making skills, and many can write their name. A wide range of opportunities is provided for children to write, for example on a white board, to make lists in the telephone kiosk, and in a writing area which gives them opportunities to choose from a variety of writing tools and paper. Children practise writing their names on all pieces of work that they do. By the time they leave the reception class most children are writing simple sentences and are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum for English.

## **Mathematical development**

63. Children make very good progress in developing mathematical understanding because the teaching is very good. Whilst in the nursery group, children practise counting in many activities. Good teaching helps the children to reinforce their good speaking and listening skills and to use the correct mathematical vocabulary. For example, they choose coins from a 'feely bag', say the number written on the coin and match the coin to others in the appropriate container. In the reception group, children use money to find totals and give change. In their mental and oral development at the beginning of numeracy sessions, children use number fans, number lines and cubes and quickly respond to the teacher's questions, for example accurately working out  $5 - 2$  and  $9 - 4$ . Children are encouraged to experiment with large and small toys, for example building blocks of different shape and size, to explore sand and water and to develop an understanding of capacity. Children learn the difference between big and small, and investigate the properties of shape. They learn about number from a range of practical activities, for example when paying for food from the menu in Oulton Café. By the time they leave the reception class many children are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum for mathematics.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

64. Children enter the nursery with a sound understanding of the wider world. The very good teaching they receive in this area helps them to develop confidence in exploring it further. For example, they learn about the life cycle of the butterfly, look for mini-

beasts when going for a country walk, write simple stories of their findings and plant some seeds. During the inspection, following a visit to a playground, they used construction kits to make playground models. Through listening to stories and poems, and when visiting the Museum of Childhood, for example, they widen their experience of the world very well. They use the computer appropriately to develop their mathematical and reading skills. Most children will be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum in history, geography and science by the time they leave the reception class.

### **Physical development**

65. Teaching is very good here and helps the children develop their physical skills effectively. By the time they leave the reception class almost all of them, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress. The school has a secure playground, improved since the previous inspection. Children play safely, take turns and share the wheeled toys and other small equipment sensibly. Very good quality interaction between staff and pupils helps and encourages imaginative play. Children use space well and become confident in moving round at different speeds and in different directions. In a technology lesson, children used the playground equipment to determine how a range of toys moved. The teachers asked them to think, 'Were they pushed or pulled?' During this investigation children developed their skills in moving with confidence and safety. This lesson also continued the development of listening skills and reinforced the importance of routines as they returned to their classroom. Most children are on track to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time they leave the reception class.

### **Creative development**

66. Teaching is good and often very good so that creative skills develop well and children make good progress. There is a high level of discussion and conversation, which also develops children's speaking, listening and thinking skills. Children gain experience in using a good variety of materials. When making a collage of minibeasts, for example, they use card, paper, pipe cleaners, split pins and tape effectively to secure their model snail shells. They begin to learn how to cut using scissors, for example when making playground toys, and make good progress in this skill under the careful instruction of the teacher and the nursery nurse. The staff encourage the pupils to take part in these activities which stimulate their imaginations and give them real enjoyment. Children take turns when painting and develop their manipulative skills well. Overall, their skills in this area are as expected by the end of reception.

### **ENGLISH**

67. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing in the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average. Almost half the pupils attained the higher than expected Level 3 in reading, which is well above average. However, the number attaining at higher levels in writing was about average. This led immediately to writing becoming a key priority in the school development plan. Standards in speaking and listening were well above average, based on the teacher's assessment. This maintains the levels seen at the last inspection.
68. The attainment of seven and nine year olds currently is well above average in all aspects of the subject, building well on the recent improving trend. The school's current priorities in the subject are to develop speaking and listening further in order

to improve the pupils' writing as they gain confidence in using more complex spoken English. This is having a good effect, and standards in writing have improved considerably this year in Year 2 and Year 4. Entry-level tests over the last three years indicate that pupils' English skills are about average at the beginning of the reception year, although they vary considerably from year to year. Their attainment by nine reflects good progress during their time in the school, and during the inspection progress in learning was very good for almost all pupils.

69. This was because the quality of the teaching was very good in each lesson observed. The teachers' high expectations of the pupils' commitment allied to excellent planning of the tasks and preparation of resources kept the pupils interested and concentrating, so that the pace of their learning was very good. The teachers make good use of the format of the National Literacy Strategy, but have adapted it well to meet their pupils' needs, and often follow the guidance for pupils a year older in order to challenge the pupils in their class.
70. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average when they begin Year 1, and these are built on well by the staff and pupils as they progress through the school. There are many opportunities for them to listen to their teachers and other staff, and make careful and considered responses. For example, during a very good literacy session for Year 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher asked the pupils to discuss in pairs their response to a poem she had read out to them. This they did with animation and sensitivity, and when returning to whole class discussion they were able to express their own feelings well, and listen to and build on other pupils' contributions successfully. This was at high levels for their age, and was reinforced during a very good science lesson led by the headteacher when they used their speaking and listening skills well to talk about the forces acting on a moving ball. The Year 3 and 4 class teacher, who is also the English co-ordinator, leads drama sessions for both classes at Key Stage 1 and 2 to reinforce and develop these skills. Pupils are also helped to develop their listening skills in very good French lessons led by a parent volunteer, and during music lessons and hymn practices. In all these lessons, and in all English sessions seen, the pupils' attitudes to their learning, their behaviour and their personal commitment to learning were outstanding.
71. Pupils' skills in reading also develop from being above average at entry to Year 1 to being well above average by age seven and nine. There are regular opportunities to practise reading, and good texts are available to support group reading sessions. In these sessions, the teacher guides the pupils skilfully to develop their ability to sound words out, to use a variety of clues to establish meaning, and for older pupils to begin to infer what the author intends from the text. By nine, high attaining readers read a range of texts accurately and fluently, and describe their favourite books and authors with confidence and insight. They attain levels expected of pupils two years older. The pupils demonstrate good use of their reading skills in other subjects such as history and geography, and teachers use many opportunities to encourage the pupils to read text in displays, worksheets, reference books, for topics, and for homework. Better use could be made of ICT to extend pupils' skills in all areas of the subject, however.
72. Pupils with special needs are supported well to work towards the detailed targets in their individual learning plans. A support assistant working with the Year 1 and 2 class works well with statemented pupils, and also oversees the work of other pupils skilfully. During a literacy session, she helped Year 2 pupils, including her focus child, in sorting words containing the 'ough' cluster of letters. This was a challenging activity

for them but they persevered well in working out how to say, spell and understand such words as 'ought', 'fought', 'sought' and 'wrought'. Another support worker takes individual pupils for targeted support in learning the sounds of letters and simple spellings. For example, she helped one boy to complete his learning task between changing for PE, and the lesson in the hall actually starting. This made excellent use of time and resources, and helped him make good progress.

73. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts available in classrooms, and a developing school library, although this is short of a full range of reference texts. The school also makes good use of book loans from the local authority topic loan collection, which supplements and extends the books and reading resources available to the pupils. They learn to use the index and contents pages to locate information, and to use dictionaries and a thesaurus to find spellings and meanings. Some parents complained, however, that the quality of books sent home to read with them is not good enough. Inspection findings support this view, as the range of books in the school's supplementary reading scheme is limited, and does not interest the pupils sufficiently to motivate and challenge them. Indeed, in conversation with a number of the pupils it was clear that the school's demands on them through the home reading books is markedly lower than the demands they make on themselves by their own choice of books.
74. Pupils' writing skills are above average when they start Year 1, although the current Year 1 is a lower attaining group overall than is usual in the school. Although the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level was well above average, last year's national test results for seven-year-olds at the higher levels were disappointing for the school. These pupils now in Year 3 are making rapid progress in improving their skills in this area, however. The current focus in the school development plan is to raise the profile of literacy and improve standards in writing, and in particular to help more pupils achieve at higher than expected levels for their age. This has already had a good effect, and the standard of written work in both key stages has improved. For example, the teacher inspired the Year 1 and 2 pupils to develop an imaginary story using the hidden contents of a back-pack. She encouraged them to speculate what the 'magic dust' might be capable of, jotting their ideas down on individual white boards. The support assistant then skilfully worked with the lower attaining pupils to stimulate discussion prior to composing their own story. She challenged the pupils to use and interpret extended language by using a large font story on the computer. The pupils responded very well to questions such as, 'What does bulging mean?' In improving the story, she encouraged the pupils to close their eyes and imagine where the boots sprinkled with the magic dust would take them. This was an excellent technique to stimulate their imagination, and led to these pupils working at a good level in their use of written English.
75. In this same class, the pupils contribute pieces of work to different class collections, which are then neatly bound and added to the class library. For example, pupils write poetry to imitate various styles. In one collection of nonsense poetry one pupil wrote:

'I got out of my toothbrush  
I cleaned my teeth with my bed  
Ate my face  
Washed my breakfast.'

In playing with language in this way, the teachers encourage the pupils to explore what words actually mean, and the limits of their use in accepted speech and writing.



In this library there are also 'books' from the children in the partner school in Germany, which usefully extends the pupils' reading horizons.

76. Similarly, the teacher of the Year 3 and 4 pupils has very high expectations of the pupils' ability to interpret what they read, and to write their own opinions on complex and thought-provoking texts. In considering the poem referred to earlier, the pupils had to reflect on affluence in contrast to poverty, and differentiate between want and need. In their discussions, and in their contributions to a whole class debate, the pupils were questioned by the teacher to justify their comments by reference to the poem, and to issues of justice and fairness. One girl with special needs was inspired to write, 'One boy only wants it, and he's greedy, but the other boy needs it to live.' Higher attaining pupils offered very thoughtful and considered responses, digging behind the surface meaning to deeper issues of morality and personal choice. This intense work stretched the pupils' thinking, helping them to make very good progress in their understanding and control of a specific form of persuasive language. It is at a high level for their age, and reinforces the school's excellent work in developing the pupils' spiritual growth and their moral understanding.
77. However, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use an English exercise book which is both outdated and does not conform to the school's own equal opportunities policy. Given the richness of the general work in the subject, the use of this type of exercise detracts from the generally high quality teaching and learning.
78. From a scrutiny of pupils' written work in all subjects, the teachers provide opportunities for them to write in a wide range of styles, and for a range of purposes. For example, the letters written by Year 2 pupils to their grandparents are of a very high standard for their age. Year 3 and 4 pupils have written and illustrated stories for younger pupils in the reception class, including preparing the cover sheet using the computer for text and graphics. The presentation involved detailed consideration of how to present the story in a way that could be understood by these younger pupils, and changes to the text to improve it after first consideration. This was a very successful exercise for the pupils. However, much of the written work from Year 2 onwards is not revised by the pupils after the teacher has marked it, or after reading it through for themselves. In some work, additional adjectives have been over-written to make the text more interesting, but in general pupils are not expected to revise their work sufficiently to improve it.
79. Pupils' handwriting develops steadily across the school. Pupils present their work neatly, and by Year 4 most of them have a good, fluent style of joined writing. Spelling progresses well, and teachers and support staff constantly reinforce patterns and letter clusters to help the pupils to visualise how a word is written. By seven and nine, most pupils have a better than average grasp of spelling techniques, and their spelling of most words in their general work is accurate. The teachers mark all the pupils' work with an eye to the appropriate use of English, so that spellings are corrected in science, history and geography work, for instance. Indeed, teachers use opportunities in such subjects as geography, history and religious education very well to extend the pupils' all-round language development.
80. The English co-ordinator is also responsible for all Key Stage 2 developments, managing special educational needs, and leading history and music. It is a great credit to her and the rest of the staff that the National Literacy Strategy has been successfully introduced so that it is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and is helping to drive up standards. The staff have agreed to plan their

work to an agreed two-year cycle to ensure full subject coverage for all the pupils, and she has monitored the quality of teaching and learning in the other classes. Her overall management of the subject is very good. She is aware of the need to supplement and extend the range and quality of reading texts, and to purchase more books for the library. However, there have been insufficient funds available recently to achieve this.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 2000 national tests was above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher than expected Level 3 was well above average. These results were close to the average in comparison with schools in similar circumstances.
82. The attainment of the seven and nine-year-old pupils currently is well above average, showing an improving trend. There was no difference in the performance of boys and girls in the lessons seen. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above those at the time of the previous inspection' reflecting improvements in the quality of teaching. At the end of Year 4 standards are well above those expected for nine-year-olds and this is also an improvement on the last inspection findings. All pupils make very good progress, including those with special educational needs, those who are gifted and talented, and pupils for whom English is not their first language.
83. Pupils in Year 2 count accurately beyond 100, use mathematical terms appropriately, and solve problems involving money successfully. In Year 4 pupils consolidate their understanding of probability and in their mental and oral work are confident when they quickly answer questions such as to count backwards in 10's from any given number. They know their multiplication tables and are very confident in their response to teachers' questions. Factors aiding this very good progress include the terrific attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and the high quality of teaching.
84. The teaching observed was excellent in all lessons. Teachers' lesson planning is extremely thorough. It provides challenging work for pupils, founded in the highest possible expectations. In lessons, the learning objectives are clearly explained, and re-visited at the end of the session to see how far they have been achieved. In most numeracy lessons, teachers start off with quick-fire question and answer sessions to get pupils thinking. They ensure that the pupils concentrate and work rapidly by setting them timed targets during independent working sessions.
85. Assessment procedures are very good. The school has developed rigorous systems for assessing pupil performance and setting targets to meet individual needs. The school analyses national test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, and the entry-level assessment scores at the end of the reception year. From analysis of the scores and learning patterns identified, the teachers set targets to improve performance and raise levels of achievement.
86. The curriculum is very good. The attention paid to oral and mental work and its application improves pupils' learning across the curriculum. Good work was seen when pupils handled data. For example, pupils were consolidating the idea of probability by looking at a range of data, then using and applying their knowledge to predict an outcome. The subject offers a very good contribution to literacy development as pupils listen carefully to their teachers and develop their

mathematical vocabulary as they move through the school. The methods teachers use offer many opportunities for social interaction for the pupils.

87. The management and organisation of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has successfully delivered training for all the staff to ensure the effective implementation of the Numeracy Hour. The school has a good policy, and uses the Framework for the Numeracy Strategy effectively as a scheme of work. The well developed assessment procedures keep teachers and the co-ordinator informed about pupils' progress. Teaching and learning are monitored and feedback given to teachers.

## **SCIENCE**

88. Pupils' standards of attainment are well above average at seven and nine years of age. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, building on the above average standards reported then. The improvement is because the quality of teaching is high, leading to very good or outstanding learning during lessons observed. The pupils really enjoy their work because it is practically based, very well planned and organised, and stimulates them to think hard to conduct the required tests. Their attitudes to this work are excellent, and they behave in exemplary fashion. All pupils have access to the full range of learning opportunities, and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of facts and processes.
89. The teachers have adapted the successful format of the National Numeracy Strategy to their teaching of science. Both the lessons observed began with a short and snappy session described as 'Keeping skills sharp' where the pupils revisited ideas they had encountered earlier in the year to revise their knowledge and understanding. This is a very effective teaching technique as it gives the pupils good opportunities to consolidate their learning. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils worked in pairs to decide whether an object held up by the teacher was transparent, translucent or opaque, based on work done before Christmas. They discussed each object excitedly for ten seconds before showing a card with the appropriate word. They remembered well, and demonstrated knowledge at higher levels than expected for their age.
90. A similar exercise began the lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils, where they had to consider in pairs the effect of different materials, surfaces and forces on a moving object. The discussion was rich, and high attaining pupils in the class discussion showed a good level of scientific thinking. The teacher pushed them to explain their responses logically, and they responded very carefully and thoughtfully to her prompting. For example, one boy suggested that temperature might affect a rolling rubber ball, and offered a number of explanations to support his theory. Because the teachers have very good subject knowledge between them, they are confident in asking the pupils probing questions to extend their thinking and to clarify their descriptions and explanations.
91. It has been a school priority to develop pupils' investigative and enquiry skills. Accordingly, all lessons involve practical activities to help the pupils to 'discover' information about living creatures, different materials, and physical processes and phenomena such as light, electricity, forces such as pulling and pushing, and the effects of gravity. From a scrutiny of the pupils' books and work on display it is clear that the teachers cover the subject requirements fully, concentrating on helping the pupils to devise different ways to find out by testing, and to record their findings in a

variety of ways. For example, Year 2 pupils visited the park to test the forces required to use the play equipment. As well as recording this in drawings and words, they developed their thinking in designing an item of equipment for a playground in design and technology. This illustrates the way in which the teachers expand learning opportunities across a number of subject areas, and link pupils' learning effectively to consolidate their knowledge and understanding.

92. The teacher in the Year 1 and 2 class also uses a visit to a local forest to explore the variety of plant and insect life. During a lesson observed, she taught the pupils to classify 'minibeasts' using diagrammatic recording. The younger pupils used a simple chart, but decided for themselves which criteria they would use to classify the creatures. Older pupils developed a branch diagram, following a sequential yes/no path in order to distinguish between four 'minibeasts'. This was challenging work for them at higher than expected levels for their age, in which some of them made errors. However, they plotted the sequence of answers to work out where they had gone wrong and corrected their work for themselves. They worked independently very well, in response to the excellent routines established, the outstanding working relationships fostered, and the teacher's high expectations of their behaviour and concentration. This work also covered essential elements of ICT in developing their skills in presenting information in various forms.
93. In a very good lesson with Year 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher posed an investigation for the pupils to develop their understanding and application of how to prepare and conduct a fair test. They have learned the scientific importance of predicting what they think will be the outcome of their investigations, of recording their results carefully and clearly, and of the importance of controlling the variables in order to compare what happens at different stages of their work. The pupils worked in groups to test different soils for their capacity to retain water to establish the best area to locate bog plants. The teacher reminded them of the scientific process, and handed the task over to them to work out in mixed age and gender groups. The pupils responded superbly to her high expectations. They retrieved their own testing materials, which had been well prepared by the teacher. The level of discussion in the groups was of a high standard as they decided how to set up a fair test. They successfully devised 'experiments' using controlled volumes of soil and water, measuring the amount of water collected after a set time very carefully and accurately. This was work of high standard for their age in response to very good planning and presentation by the teacher.
94. The headteacher leads the subject, and uses her excellent subject knowledge to promote it well in the school. She teaches the Year 3 and 4 class, providing a very good model, and oversees the evaluation and monitoring of standards and progress well. Good assessment procedures inform the teachers' planning well, particularly for investigative work. The subject is well resourced, and is a success story for the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. Only one lesson was observed in art and design, and none in design and technology during the inspection. However, there was ample evidence on display and in pupils' books to make some assessment of standards, and subject coverage. Standards are well above those expected at seven and nine years of age in art and design, and for most pupils in line and for a significant number above those expected in design and technology by seven and nine. All pupils take a full part, and boys and girls attain

similar standards. Pupils with special needs are fully involved in all activities, and make similar progress to their peers. For example, a boy with learning difficulties was successfully supported by a support worker in creating his own flower-head clay tile, which was in line with expectations for his age. He concentrated superbly, and with help manipulated and joined the clay determinedly to complete his work.

96. The school agreed with other schools in its local cluster to adopt recent national guidance for its schemes of work, adapted to its own circumstances. This includes planning work for the pupils on a two-year cycle to ensure full coverage of each key stage requirement in the one class. The quality of work in design and technology at Key Stage 2 was a key issue from the previous inspection. There has been very good improvement since then, and the pupils in Years 3 and 4 complete a good variety of high quality activities linked to their topic work which cover all the required elements and skills.
97. The teacher of the Year 1 and 2 pupils led an outstanding lesson in which some of the pupils developed their life drawings of plants to create large-scale paintings in the style of Georgia O'Keefe, whilst others made clay tiles with relief flower designs. On display are tiles made by some of the pupils in previous lessons, and these have been fired and painted. They are of a very high standard for their age, showing good control of the medium, and good concern for the finish. During the lesson, the support assistant and a parent skilfully guided the pupils to roll out the clay using guide boards, cut the tile shape, and to attach shaped clay pieces to form a flower head. These pupils had the other pupils' efforts as a model, and some of them extended the idea to break the frame of the tile with the flower design, creating new and aesthetically pleasing effects.
98. Meanwhile, those expanding their line drawings from their sketchbooks were aided by the teacher having enlarged their work using the photocopier. She encouraged them to compare the large and small images, and to think of ways to recreate the drawing, including how they would colour it in the bright style of the artist studied. The pupils responded to this stimulus with zest and imagination, creating a dazzling range of fresh images which they proceeded to colour using poster paints brilliantly. They demonstrated high level design and drawing skills for their age, and, in mixing paints to reflect both their own work and that of the artist, they showed sensitivity and flair. Year 4 pupils have created large paintings in the style of Clarice Cliff using a variety of media, and are currently engaged, with a parent's help, in transferring their designs to white ceramic jugs and bowls. This is exciting work.
99. In design and technology, Year 1 and 2 pupils have designed and made a model with moving parts linked to the story of Jonah, and in to their topic on minibeasts have made a spider model with a winding mechanism. These are of good standard. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made effective models of a Greek theatre, and as a further design exercise linked to work in science, they have added a switched lighting circuit. In their design books, they follow the appropriate sequence of developing preliminary sketch ideas into annotated working drawings. After making the model, they evaluate their work against a set of criteria, including how they worked together as a design group. Year 2 pupils made an articulated model of a teddy bear and of playground equipment. One boy wrote in his evaluation that he was not impressed with the upper part of his model, but 'I was very happy with the bottom because it was stable.'
100. The co-ordinator has only led the subjects since September, but has been active in developing the joint planning with other First schools feeding the same Middle

schools. She also assists her colleagues, and plans to develop the use of ICT after the staff have received their next training sessions.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

101. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and are above the national average at the end of Year 2, and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, was very good in the lesson observed, confirmed in a scrutiny of their books and displays of their work.
102. Year 2 pupils take 'Barnaby Bear' to different places such as Buxton, Leamington Spa, Cenarth Falls and Tenby on visits. They have written his passport details very carefully and accurately. With the Year 1 pupils they listened carefully as the teacher unpacked a rucksack with a range of items inside, for example a large, muddy boot, two sparkly wands, and a jar of magic dust. Pupils' thinking, speaking and listening skills were enhanced by the inspirational quality of this teaching, and their imaginations were fired to think of different places. Pupils worked collaboratively to decide where the boot had come from and who it belonged to. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson pupils planned a route to make connections and understand destination. The teaching was exciting and cleverly used resources to inspire pupils' thinking skills. The development of speaking and listening skills was enhanced through the range of information given which needed an explanation. For example, pupils used prepared descriptions of a holiday to reach collaborative decisions about a holiday destination. Very good use of resources including atlases, information books and the Internet for research purposes enhanced the quality of learning.
103. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work. They co-operate successfully in pairs and groups, and are mature and sensible. They enjoy the subject and show an interest in learning about different places and their location. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have very good knowledge of the capital cities of different countries of the world, for example. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn appropriately about different places of the world and use maps to locate places. The subject makes a significant contribution to the cultural, moral and social development of pupils as they learn the customs and culture of peoples in different societies.
104. The subject co-ordinator works very hard to maintain the high standards achieved in the subject. She monitors other teachers' plans for coverage and continuity. Standards attained by pupils are monitored through scrutinising their work in books. The school has adopted recent national guidance as the scheme of work, which represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment of learning takes place regularly within and after each lesson. Relevant notes are kept in the medium term planning by the teacher and used to inform the planning for the next unit of work.

## **HISTORY**

105. At the previous inspection, standards of attainment were judged to be above national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1, these standards have been maintained. No lessons were seen in Year 3 and 4. Through scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them, standards are judged to be above average by the time pupils leave the school. Progress is very good at both key stages.

106. By the age of seven, pupils' work demonstrates that they are developing an understanding and knowledge of the lives of people in the past. When talking about the past, they are very animated, using appropriate language, developing their sense of time well and talking knowledgeably about events and people. They make comparisons between life then and now, being particularly interested in people and why they behaved in the way that they did. Pupils use information books well to research different topics, for example in a very good homework exercise for Year 3 and 4 pupils on a country of their choice.. The inspirational teaching encourages pupils to listen to, look at and think about times past. For example, an old sepia photograph of 'Trevor' as a young boy was used to demonstrate how he lived and what his job was. This evoked empathy from pupils who were able to discuss their feelings about how he lived and his job when he was a little boy helping the milkman to deliver the milk with a horse and cart. During discussion pupils were able to contrast milk delivery in the past with the present day. Teachers' lesson planning is detailed, including activities across the curriculum, for example drama and music, which are challenging and interesting for all pupils. Pupils' written work is neat and well presented.
107. The subject is taught in blocks at different times on a two-year cycle. The planned programmed of work involves one or two main units of work each year, and covers national requirements appropriately. The subject impacts well on the cultural, moral and social development of pupils. They learn about a wide variety of cultures through work related to ancient civilisation, for example the Greeks, and to more modern historical periods. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She monitors teachers' planning for coverage and consistency, and standards attained by pupils are monitored effectively through work scrutiny.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

108. The pupils attain as expected for their age at seven and nine years of age in those aspects of the subject covered in the school. These include word-processing, presenting and interpreting information in a variety of forms, limited paint and drawing skills, and some control and modelling. There are also some opportunities to use equipment such as tape recorders and a floor robot, and to consider the uses of ICT and control mechanisms in daily life. Many of the pupils have access to ICT resources at home, and some have developed good skills as seen in the topic folders produced at home by pupils in Years 3 and 4.
109. There have been difficulties for the school in developing the subject as the staff would have wished. Most of the staff have received little training to equip them to teach it, but have all bravely adopted an ICT target as part of their performance management programme. Unfortunately, the school did not receive its new computer stock until this year, a year later than planned, and the training received by the staff as part of the national improvement drive has left them feeling deskilled. Despite this, progress has been made since the last inspection, and opportunities to make better use of ICT across the curriculum figure in all subject development plans.
110. A very good session for two pupils in Year 2 taken by a parent under the teacher's guidance led to them making very good progress in controlling a floor robot. The task was to program the floor robot 'bee' to locate different flowers on a square grid. The pupils had previously plotted a sequence of moves on a paper grid, and used this to instruct the robot. They were confident in using the button controls, including to cancel previous instructions, and understood that 90 meant a right angle turn left or

right. They excitedly helped one another, and began to predict the accuracy of their plans as the robot followed the sequence. The parent helper had laid out the grid precisely, and skilfully prompted the pupils to think for themselves what to do next, rather than telling them. This was important in allowing the pupils to solve problems for themselves, and to anchor the learning of new understanding for them. This work was at a high level for their age.

111. However, whilst all the pupils had drawn a plotted grid, which is good, only two of them applied it to the robot during a full lesson. This illustrates a current difficulty for the school. Teachers' plans often show that pupils will have access to ICT resources, but this is often after the main part of the lesson has taken place, and in some cases not at all. For example, in a terrific art and design lesson, the teachers' plan indicated use of a computer drawing and colouring program, but only after the other activities had taken place. This places ICT as subordinate to the main learning, rather than as another tool to support learning, equivalent to a pencil or a paintbrush, but with a different range of possibilities.
112. In work saved, and in displays, there are examples of pupils' use of programs to word-process their writing such as the front pages of books written by Year 3 and 4 pupils for younger pupils, and to organise a poem, using different fonts and page layouts. Year 1 and 2 pupils have also used art programs to create images such as 'minibeasts' in their science topic, and a few pupils have sent and received e-mails to and from their grandparents. There are also research opportunities planned into science, geography and history lessons, but not seen in operation. However, during the bulk of the pupils' time in lessons, literacy and numeracy sessions, ICT resources were seldom used during the inspection. If this is the usual pattern, the teachers have not yet come to terms with ICT as a medium for learning, as well as a set of discrete skills to be learned.
113. The headteacher as co-ordinator recognises the work still to be done in the subject, as expressed in the school development plan. The staff are making strides in developing their own confidence and competence, but as they are all very experienced, they have not had the opportunities enjoyed by more recently qualified teachers to learn the required skills. A local headteacher has led training sessions for the staff to help them improve, but it is also important to focus directly on the pupils' access to the school's resources and to prepare a timetable which runs throughout the day to ensure that the classroom computers and other ICT resources are in much more frequent use.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

114. A parent volunteer teaches each class French conversation and culture for twenty minutes every week. She is a secondary trained modern languages teacher, and presents an excellent model of the spoken language for the pupils. Her work complements very effectively the school's European links with a school in Limousin in France, and another in Germany. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed developing a sequence of sentences in French to enable them to act out ordering and serving in a Parisian café. This they did confidently, and they clearly achieve the early stages of modern foreign language acquisition set out in National Curriculum guidance.

## **MUSIC**



115. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been maintained since the previous inspection and are above average. Standards by the end of Year 4 are well above average, and this is an improvement on the last inspection. All pupils make very good progress, including those with special educational needs, and in Key Stage 2 they make excellent progress, gaining in key knowledge and skills. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate very good vocal skills and their singing is very good.
116. Pupils' control sounds well through singing and playing. Pupils generally pitch notes accurately, and sing with a developing clear tone. Year 1 and 2 pupils developed their listening skills well. They use mime effectively to represent the music when listening to a recording of 'Morning' by Grieg, as they decide what type of morning it is going to be. When choosing and playing musical instruments, pupils develop the story from their history lesson. They choose an appropriate instrument for a variety of movements, whose sound they imagine. For example, the swish of the horse's tail, the 'clip, clop' of the horse's hooves and the turning of the wheels of the milk cart. This was an example of very good curriculum linkage. Literacy skills are developed through listening carefully to music by different composers, and developing an awareness of mood, the understanding of musical vocabulary and performing skills.
117. In the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils continue to build on their knowledge and skills, for example, when clapping a range of rhythmic patterns. For the leavers' concert at the end of term, pupils polish their performance of singing with mime. They practise a variety of songs, such as 'If you know Susie' and 'Dinah'. Pupils sharpen movement, improve expression and enunciation. When listening to 'Fingal's Cave', the teacher encourages pupils to appreciate the feeling in the music and to decide what sort of journey was taking place. Pupils were enthusiastic, used expressive language well and made different suggestions, for example, a forest fire, 'like Titanic moves and then hits an iceberg'. Pupils listen and appreciate that instruments are used to layer sound and can identify these layers, when listening to this music. The quality of the teaching enhanced the learning through excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject and the teaching of skills. Pupils learn standard notation and demonstrate a very good knowledge of musical vocabulary.
118. Professional musicians are invited into school to perform with and for the pupils. For example, during a local cluster schools' Arts Week, Caribbean performers came into school and worked with the pupils. The school performs a Christmas concert for parents in which a variety of music is played, including some for the recorder groups. Pupils in the recorder groups read standard notation well, and handle the instrument very competently, playing tunefully in two part harmony.
119. The co-ordinator works very hard to maintain the high standards. She inspires pupils to learn and to become confident musicians through her own expertise and love of music. Resources are good, well managed and organised.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. Standards are as expected at age seven in dance, and are exceeded at age nine in swimming. Beyond this, no judgement is possible from the inspection, as there was only one lesson observed. This, however, was a very good lesson, and led to very good progress in dance skills for the pupils. They responded to the teacher's presentation exceedingly well, applied themselves with great concentration, and behaved with great assurance and control for their age. Many of the pupils learn to

swim with their parents or through attending swimming lessons outside school, although Year 3 and 4 pupils attend the swimming baths for lessons.

121. From teachers' planning it is clear that the subject meets statutory requirements, and all the required elements of gymnastics, dance, games, swimming and athletics activities are provided at different times in the year.
122. In the lesson seen, Year 2 boys and girls equally performed as expected, whilst many Year 1 pupils worked at higher than expected levels, possibly due to the example given by the older pupils. The teacher handled the lesson very well, and her superb relationship with the pupils enabled all of them, including those with special needs, to make very good progress in their interpretation of the themed story, and in control of their movements.
123. The headteacher as co-ordinator says that the subject has not been a priority for development in the recent past, although it is scheduled as a focus in the next school development plan. There are after-school coaching sessions for older pupils in football and netball skills, and inter-school team games.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124. The previous inspection found standards by age seven and by the time pupils leave the school at nine to be good. Pupils now attain above the expectations in the locally Agreed Syllabus at seven, and well above them at nine.
125. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, by widening their appreciation of different beliefs and in their understanding of the life style of believers in a sensitive and reflective manner.
126. Pupils have opportunities to learn about major stories, celebrations and events in Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They know that Christians have a special book called the Bible that contains stories which are valued. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study 'Gods' Wonderful World' and celebrate the festivals of the Christian Church. In Years 3 and 4 pupils build on their knowledge and understanding and research both the Old and New Testaments. They understand that people who follow the Jewish religion study the Old Testament and recall stories of journeys they had read about in the Bible. For example, they learn about the journey by Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, the journey of the three Kings, and lepers journeying from place to place. The teacher re-capped prior learning and caught the pupils' interest in learning through very good use of open-ended questions. She stretched pupils' thinking skills and developed their vocabulary.
127. The subject develops spiritual learning well. For example, pupils gave serious thought to how they could be a 'better' person. They thought about ways in which they could develop their lives as a pilgrim, and through collaborative learning wrote how they would become, for example, a peacemaker. The excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject by the teacher enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs to make excellent progress.
128. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent. They respond well to the teacher's high expectations to think for themselves and to make connections between stories they listen to and every day life. Pupils are keen to answer questions and do so enthusiastically and accurately. They also enjoy listening to each other and respect

each other's opinions. The varied range of written work in books and the high quality of the displays show how much the school values the contribution of the subject to meeting its aims.