

INSPECTION REPORT

CRADLEY C E VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cradley, Malvern

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116874

Headteacher: Mr D. W. Townsend

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R. Sims
28899

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st June 2001

Inspection number: 192358

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cradley
Malvern
Worcestershire

Postcode: WR13 5LL

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P. Hurle

Date of previous inspection: 24th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
28899	G. R. Sims	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9075	J. M. Baxter	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?
22352	F. B. Gaywood	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Provision for pupils with special educational needs Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Equality of opportunity	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
25560	B. Wigley	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cradley CE Primary School is a voluntary aided Church of England school, situated in the village of Cradley to the west of Malvern. There are 134 boys and girls on roll, between the ages of 4 and 11. It is much smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils come from the village of Cradley and the neighbouring villages. The socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils are generally above average. Most families own their own homes, and unemployment is low. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, and none come from a minority ethnic background or have English as an additional language. These figures are well below the national average. Just over one fifth of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. Most children have attended a privately run playgroup before they join the school. The attainment of most children when they start school is above average. There have been no significant changes in the school's circumstances since the last inspection, although governors are planning to move the school to a new site within the next two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, Cradley CE Primary School is an effective school. The quality of the teaching is good, and pupils achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. The pupils are frequently polite, cooperative and well-behaved. At times, however, their response in lessons and to other people is not as good as it should be. The headteacher manages the school well and, in most respects, provides sound leadership for a hard-working and committed team of staff. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school.
- The overall quality of the teaching is good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and helps them to make good progress.
- The staff know their pupils very well and provide good care and personal support for them.

What could be improved

- The leadership of subject coordinators.
- Standards in, and the use of, information and communication technology (ICT).
- The way the school promotes independent learning skills.
- The pupils' response to their work and other people.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement since the last inspection in February 1997. The school has made improvements in all of the areas identified as key issues in the last inspection, although further progress still needs to be made in some of them. Resources for ICT have improved, and staff are more confident in using computers, but standards are not yet at the expected level and not enough use is made of computers to help pupils in their learning. The overall planning of the curriculum is better than it was, and there is now a scheme of work for each subject. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science have improved and pupils' assessment folders give a clearer picture of the progress pupils make as they move through the school. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects still need to be developed. The process of development planning has improved through the provision of individual subject action plans; these plans now need to focus more clearly on how to raise standards of attainment. Subject coordinators are now given some time to carry out their responsibilities, but are not yet using this time effectively enough to monitor and influence what happens in their subject areas. The school has a set of realistic and challenging aims, although some of these, such as the aim 'to help children to become independent learners, are not yet being fulfilled in practice. In all, the school has maintained standards at a level which is above the national average. The overall quality of the teaching remains good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	B	A	C	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	B	B	C	
science	B	B	C	D	

The National Curriculum assessment test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average and were average when compared to schools whose pupils come from similar backgrounds. Over the last five years, results in reading and writing have risen slightly, but in mathematics the trend is downward, in contrast to the national trend which is one of improvement. The school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 were above the national average in mathematics and average in English and science. When compared to schools in similar contexts, the school's overall results were below average. The trend at Key Stage 2 is one of improvement, but not as much as the national trend. The preliminary results from the National Curriculum assessment tests for 2001 are lower than in 2000 at Key Stage 1, but show a significant improvement in all three subjects at Key Stage 2, with a much greater proportion of

pupils achieving the higher Level 5. The school's targets for last two years were appropriate, and the school was successful in reaching them.

Most children show above average levels of attainment when they enter the Reception and, by the time they start Year 1, they have progressed beyond the Early Learning Goals. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make satisfactory progress through the school, achieving standards which are appropriate for their prior attainment. The pupils currently in Year 2 achieve average standards in English and mathematics. These are somewhat lower than the previous year's test results, but reflect the fact that the current year group contains a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. By the time they leave school, pupils achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science. These standards are better than those achieved by the previous year group, reflecting a higher proportion of more able pupils within the year group. Pupils achieve above average standards in history and music, but standards in ICT and aspects of design and technology are below national expectations throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall, but vary considerably. The pupils are often keen and enthusiastic, respond positively to their work and participate well. At other times, they can be silly, are less than enthusiastic and become very restless.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall, but varies greatly. For much of the time, pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. Individually, pupils have a good awareness of the standards expected of them. At times, however, teachers encounter unsatisfactory behaviour and occasional rudeness from some pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. For much of the time, pupils relate well to their peers and their teachers, and relationships are harmonious. However, pupils sometimes find it difficult to cooperate with each other effectively and indulge in selfish behaviour. When given responsibilities, they undertake them sensibly, but there are not enough opportunities for them to exercise real responsibility or develop independent study skills.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of attendance is slightly above the national average. Most pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching was at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of the 34 lessons observed during the inspection. It was very good or better in 18 per cent of lessons, good in 53 per cent, satisfactory in 26 per cent and unsatisfactory in 3 per cent. The overall quality of the teaching is good; it is strongest for the youngest and oldest pupils. The teaching in the core subjects of English and mathematics is good, enabling pupils to acquire good literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils have sufficient opportunity to broaden their writing skills through written work produced in other subjects, but teachers do not always use these opportunities as effectively as they could to help pupils improve the quality of their writing. Pupils enjoy the stimulus of mental mathematics sessions, which are helping them to become skilful in handling numbers. Although there has been improvement in the school's provision for ICT since the last inspection, not enough time is given to teaching it, and some teachers still need further training in the subject. As a result, pupils do not acquire a wide enough range of skills, nor do they have enough opportunity to use computers to promote their learning in other subjects. There are weaknesses in the teaching of design and technology. In addition to the normal music curriculum, the school

provides good opportunities for pupils to acquire further musical skills, particularly in learning to play instruments. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress because of the attention they receive from the special educational needs coordinator. The teachers prepare all of their lessons very thoroughly and try hard to provide pupils with interesting lessons. At times, however, the response of some pupils is unsatisfactory and, as a result, the pupils do not learn as well as they could. Occasionally, this is because the work is not challenging enough for the more able, but more often because some pupils display little interest in what the teacher is doing. When pupils become fully involved in their lesson, as frequently happens with the oldest pupils, they learn well. The school needs to provide pupils with more opportunities to acquire independent study skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is generally well planned, although there are still gaps in the teaching of ICT. The time allocated to teaching in Key Stage 2 is below the recommended amount, which has the effect of narrowing the range of work covered in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils' learning is enhanced through educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school identifies pupils who have special educational needs at an early stage and provides good assistance for them. Individual education plans provide focused and manageable academic or behavioural targets. Parents are involved in reviewing their children's progress. The decision to appoint a part-time coordinator for special needs has proved very effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The staff provide positive role models for the pupils, but need to think more carefully about how to improve pupils' social development and be more consistent in their approach. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about other cultures and their own, and enjoy a wide range of musical activities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good standards of pastoral care are offered to all pupils. Good attention is given to health, safety and pupils' welfare. Staff know the pupils well and show care and concern for them. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics have improved, but procedures for assessment in other subjects still need to be improved.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory overall. Parents support the school well, although more are now critical of the school than formerly. The school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents, and reports on pupils' progress are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides a good lead to the staff through his own classroom practice, his respectful dealings with pupils and staff, and his overall vision for the school. His heavy teaching commitment prevents him from carrying out other aspects of his leadership role as effectively as possible. Subject coordinators do not fulfil their roles particularly effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are supportive of the school in many ways. They have devised good plans for relocating the school. They need to develop a greater awareness of the school's current strengths and weaknesses and to monitor the effectiveness of the school more closely.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school, and subject coordinators in particular, are not critical enough in evaluating what happens and how things could be improved. Subject development plans do not focus sufficiently on raising attainment. The school does not do enough to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's budget is managed efficiently and effectively. The principles of best value are applied well in awarding contracts and purchasing resources. Apart from the use of computers, effective use is made of most of the school's resources. The school has sufficient staff and adequate resources to meet the needs of the curriculum. The school's accommodation is poor and adversely affects learning opportunities in many areas of the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine out of ten parents express their satisfaction with most aspects of the school, including the standards their children achieve, the quality of the teaching and the attitudes and values which the school promotes. • Nearly all parents would feel comfortable approaching the school if they had a problem. • Teachers are receptive and helpful. • They respect the way the headteacher leads the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost half of the parents are dissatisfied with the school's approach to homework. • Over half of the parents feel they are not well informed about how their children are doing or what is happening in school. • Almost three-quarters of the parents would like to see a wider range of activities after school. • Some parents are concerned about the quality of teaching and the lack of challenge in some work. • Some parents feel behaviour could be better.

The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 13 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 73 parents (58 per cent) who returned the parents' questionnaire. Inspectors feel that parents' somewhat conflicting views give an accurate picture of the school. The school has many good features. There is no doubt that all of the staff are well intentioned and are trying to provide pupils with a good education. All of the staff are approachable, receptive to parents and helpful. The school is aware of the need to formulate a clear policy on homework and has noted parents' desire for more information. The inspection findings support the concerns of a few parents with regard to the lack of challenge in some of the work given to their children and the standards of behaviour, although also point to the fact that most of the teaching is good and much of the time pupils' behaviour is good. The school offers an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 for the year 2000, the school's results were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to the results of schools in similar contexts, they were average. All pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 2 in mathematics, and 85 per cent achieved this level in reading and writing. Almost half of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and a third achieved this level in mathematics. Overall, standards are similar to those pertaining at the time of the last inspection. Over the last five years, results in reading and writing have risen slightly, but in mathematics the trend is downward, in contrast to the national trend which is one of improvement in all three areas. Provisional results from the 2001 National Curriculum tests are not as good as those in 2000, but reflect the fact that the current year group contains a greater percentage of pupils with special educational needs than in previous years. Inspection judgements reflect the most recent National Curriculum results, showing that standards achieved by pupils currently at the end of Year 2 are average in English and mathematics. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1.

2. At Key Stage 2, the National Curriculum test results in the year 2000 were above the national average in mathematics and average in English and science. When compared to schools in similar contexts, the results were average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. When compared to schools whose pupils achieved similar standards in their tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1996, the overall results were average. Almost all pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4 in English and all pupils achieved this level in mathematics and science. However, very few pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics, and one in five achieved this level in science. The results were not as good as in previous years, but this small homogeneous group of 14 pupils contained fewer higher and lower-attaining pupils than in previous years. Although the trend in the school's results is one of gradual improvement, the rate is slower than the national trend. Provisional results from the 2001 National Curriculum tests are very much better than those of the previous year, with a significant percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. The school has set itself appropriate targets for the last two years, and has been successful in achieving them. Inspection judgements reflect the most recent National Curriculum results, showing that the pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 2 are achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

3. Because of the relatively small number of pupils in each year group, the school's results fluctuate more than in a larger school. Despite these fluctuations, comparison of the Key Stage 2 results for the years 2000 and 2001 with the Key Stage 1 results achieved by these pupils four years earlier shows that they have

made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. However, over the last three years, girls have achieved more highly than boys, to a much greater extent than the difference in performance nationally. The difference is particularly marked in English, where girls' attainment is almost a year ahead of boys at the end of both key stages. The school has not analysed the reasons for these differences, and nothing was noted during the inspection to indicate that girls were receiving more favourable treatment than boys. In lessons, however, it was noted that boys' concentration and behaviour was not as good as that of the girls in some classes.

4. Observations made during the inspection and the school's own baseline assessments show that the general level of attainment is above average when children start school in the Reception class. The latest intake of children, however, shows lower levels of attainment than in previous years. Children make sound progress during their time in the Reception, and most of the older children achieve the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning well before they start Year 1. For much of the time, the children show a good level of maturity for their age, especially in the way they relate to adults. They are capable of showing great consideration to others, but some children need prompting more than once to do as they have been asked. They enjoy reading activities, have a good understanding of the purpose of books and many children are starting to read simple texts for themselves. The speaking skills of the older children are particularly good, but some of the younger children still lack maturity in word formation and vocabulary. They listen well during the literacy hour and, through the provision of interesting activities, are starting to develop good writing habits. The children recognise simple shapes well, undertake simple mental calculations and can handle money up to 10 pence with understanding. The children have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world, they know how a baby grows and how they, as children, have changed over time. They enjoy their creative and physical activities and make sound progress in these areas, despite the restrictions imposed by the cramped and inadequate accommodation.

5. Standards in speaking are above average throughout the school. Pupils are confident in speaking in front of others and show maturity in their conversation with adults. In contrast, however, the listening skills of many pupils are poor. They do not always listen well to what others have to say, and some have difficulty in restraining themselves long enough to listen to their teachers before interrupting with their own thoughts. The teachers remind them about taking turns and listening to others, but these reminders often go unheeded. It is only in Year 6 that pupils show a consistent ability to listen well to what others have to say, and the quality of discussions in this year group are of a much higher standard than in other classes.

6. Pupils' reading skills are above average throughout the school. In the early stages of their education, good support from home, communicated well through the home-school diary, contributes to the development of the pupils' reading skills. Few pupils experience real difficulties with reading and, by the time they leave the school, most pupils are independent, discerning readers, who enjoy books of all types for pleasure and information. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are average. At times, pupils' writing is well organised and they use interesting vocabulary but, frequently, their handwriting is untidy and their writing is careless. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. Pupils write in a mature style, show the ability to use evocative vocabulary, and demonstrate sensitivity in their writing. Handwriting, spelling and punctuation improve as the pupils move through the school and, by the time pupils reach Year 6, their written work shows a good degree of accuracy. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to produce written work in other subjects, but teachers do not make full use of these occasions to help pupils to develop their writing skills further by correcting the pupils' English and showing them how to improve.

7. Pupils achieve average standards in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. The more able pupils attain good standards in their number work and solve problems in a practical context well. Pupils are developing confidence in handling data. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards that are above the national expectations and, in some aspects of number work and their understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes, they are attaining very good standards. By the time they leave the school, most pupils have

developed good numeracy skills. They calculate accurately, both mentally and with pencil and paper, and can explain their methods and reasoning.

8. Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 are currently similar to those found in most schools. Most pupils have a sound understanding of each area of the science curriculum and achieve the national expectations for seven-year-olds, but few pupils exceed them. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainments are above average, and in some aspects of their factual knowledge and understanding they are well above average. The oldest pupils are very good at assimilating knowledge. The pupils learn a great deal from practical work, although much of this is through demonstration and pupils are rarely given the opportunity to exercise their own independence by devising and carrying out their own investigative work.

9. Standards in art and design are above national expectations by the end of Key

Stage 1. Pupils use their observational skills well and produce drawings of good quality. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly in line with national expectations, but with good features in some of the work. Pupils' skills in drawing and painting are not developed as effectively as they could be, but some of their three-dimensional work contains fine detail and is of a good standard. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design. Standards in design and technology are below the national expectations at the end of both key stages and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory across the school. The main reason for this is because the school does not give the design element sufficient weight and importance.

10. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriate standards in geography. There are good features in the work in both key stages and pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of some of the key geographical concepts. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of places. They are developing a good sense of location and distance. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of human geography and have developed insights into the differences between developed and third-world countries. Standards in history are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above expectations at Key Stage 2. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring key skills in history. By the end of Key Stage 1, they have a satisfactory understanding of the recent and more distant past. By the end of Key Stage 2, they have a good understanding of various historical periods such as the Tudors, the Vikings and the Egyptian civilisation, and a particularly good understanding of human aspects of history.

11. Raising standards in ICT was a key issue from the last inspection. Improvements have been made to the school's provision for this subject, but much still remains to be done. Standards of attainment are below the nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages and pupils are not achieving as highly as they should. The main reasons for this are that some aspects of the curriculum are not being covered as fully as they should, not enough time is given to teaching the subject and not enough use is made of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects. Standards are highest in Years 4 and 5 where pupils benefit from the expertise of

the coordinator and the use of a wider range of computer programs. Overall, however, pupils have a long way to go before using ICT as an everyday tool for finding things out, developing their ideas and exchanging and sharing information.

12. Music continues to play an important part in the life of the school, and standards at the end of both key stages are above those expected nationally. Pupils make good progress, particularly in learning to play instruments. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good performing skills and a good awareness of rhythm. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils achieve standards in performing which are well above those normally found. Many pupils are learning to play musical instruments and the school now has a thriving orchestra and the participants achieve high standards for those who have not yet started their secondary education. The older pupils do not sing as well as they play.

13. As no physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, there is very little evidence on which to base secure judgements about pupils' attainment and progress. The school continues, however, to place a strong emphasis on swimming. As a result, pupils achieve standards that are well above the national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. The school offers a full programme of physical education, covering all aspects of gymnastics, dance and games, and provides a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities.

14. Although the more able pupils are not offered sufficient challenge on occasions, pupils nevertheless achieve above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Given the above average levels of skill shown by most pupils when they enter the school, progress through the school is, overall, satisfactory and pupils are achieving standards which are appropriate for their levels of ability. Insufficient attention, however, is given to ICT and to aspects of design and technology. Support for pupils with special educational needs is generally well targeted and helps these pupils to make good progress. The special educational needs coordinator liaises well with the staff to ensure that the pupils' specialised plans, support and programmes are clearly focused, in order to maintain and improve the standards of the pupils on the special educational needs register.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The visitor to Cradley School is presented with an interesting mixed picture when observing the attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships of its pupils. When talking to pupils around the school and in the playground, they are generally friendly and polite, accepting of outsiders, asking questions and keen to talk about themselves and their interests. They are courteous and helpful, as one inspector found when a pupil willingly took a file back into a classroom at her request. They generally listen well to the theme and stories in assemblies, but they are less enthusiastic when it comes to singing on the occasion of these school community gatherings. During one whole school assembly, it was observed that older pupils at the back of the hall hardly joined in at all, thereby setting a rather negative example to younger children. In lessons, it was also observed that pupils' attitudes were less than enthusiastic on occasions. When there was a good, crisp, introduction by the teacher, pupils settled well. Where the remaining lesson content

was challenging and stimulating, they remained interested throughout. On other occasions, when lesson delivery and allocated tasks did not stretch them sufficiently, they soon became bored, resulting in some silly attitudes on the part of both boys and girls, but boys in particular. It was also observed that pupils were occasionally cheeky and cocky to teachers in response to teachers' endeavours to manage inappropriate behaviour. The previous inspection report considered that pupils' attitudes to work were good and that pupils enjoyed coming to school. That they enjoy coming to school is still true, but the number of incidents where negative attitudes were displayed during this inspection results in attitudes that are only satisfactory overall.

16. The rate of attendance is slightly above the national average for primary schools and as such is satisfactory. It generally reflects pupils' enthusiasm for coming to school each day. The rate would be higher if fewer pupils took holidays during school terms. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average for primary schools. Punctuality is not a problem in the school.

17. Behaviour throughout the school is satisfactory. There have been no exclusions in the last school year or, indeed, in the school's history. Again, the visitor gains a mixed picture. This is a school where the environment and circumstances of pupils would lead outsiders to expect, and find, behaviour to be very good or excellent. Frequently, it is, but staff do not always implement the school's behaviour policy consistently and corporately, and this is one of the reasons for the varying standards of pupils' behaviour. Even when behaviour management is good and the lesson topic interesting and well delivered, some teachers are, at times, faced with ingrained behaviour that is restless and silly, for example with pupils pulling faces at each other. On a few occasions, individual pupils were witnessed to be openly rude to their teachers. Equally, in many lessons, pupils were observed to be very well behaved and self-disciplined as they set about their tasks, and there are many pupils who display considerable self-discipline all of the time, even when others do not. This is a school where there are many able pupils, as illustrated by the good standards consistently achieved. They need to be constantly stretched and challenged in lessons to keep them fully occupied throughout the day so that their behaviour does not have a chance to become inappropriate or lacking in self-control and self-discipline.

18. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, but, in this small, closely-knit school community, it could be better. Pupils are given a number of tasks around the school, for example, preparing the hall for assembly and operating the overhead projector in lessons. They carry out these responsibilities well. However, the pupils are capable of much more. Currently, there is no school council or means of consulting pupils to ascertain their views. There is a tendency on occasions for pupils to be spoon-fed by teachers when in fact pupils in this school are of the calibre where they would relish high levels of responsibility and involvement in the school's affairs. They are not presented with many opportunities to discover the independent study skills of which they are undoubtedly capable. If homework was to be given more consistently throughout the school, pupils would have more opportunity to develop research and investigative skills, particularly the older ones on the threshold of moving to secondary education.

19. Relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils and their peers are satisfactory. Staff clearly care for their pupils, and there is generally a good sense of trust between them. Most pupils relate well to adults and are mature and confident in their conversations with them. However, there are times, as already reported, when a small minority of pupils are rude or cheeky to their teachers. There are many examples of friendship groupings amongst the pupils, most of whom relate well to each other. At times, however, some pupils find it difficult to cooperate effectively when working with each other in groups and indulge in selfish behaviour, for example, by snatching resources off each other or arguing about trivialities. This hinders their work and progress in some lessons.

20. Pupils at Cradley achieve good standards and a good number of them are mature beyond their years. Whilst the pupils were often positive and well behaved during this inspection, there is considerable scope for improvement that would result in even higher standards and a more lively, vibrant, and responsible school community.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The overall quality of the teaching in the school is good. Of the 34 lessons or part-lessons observed during the inspection, 53 per cent were good and 15 per cent were very good. One lesson was excellent and one unsatisfactory, and the remainder were satisfactory. The teaching is strongest for the youngest and the oldest pupils. The quality of the teaching remains very similar to what it was at the time of the last inspection.

22. The quality of learning is not as good as the quality of the teaching. Overall, it is satisfactory, although it is better for children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 6. Whilst teachers plan and prepare their lessons well, offering pupils many interesting and varied lessons, the pupils' response is not always as good as it should be. Although many pupils respond well to their teachers, some pupils have poor listening skills and, at times, show little interest in what they are asked to do. The previous inspection report commented on pupils calling out and not awaiting their turn to speak. This continues to be a problem throughout the school, but particularly in Classes 2, 3 and 4, and it impinges adversely on pupils' learning. In the previous inspection, it was noted that pupils worked collaboratively with other pupils. This was not always the case during this inspection, and minor instances of squabbling or not cooperating with a partner were seen to detract from pupils' learning in a few lessons. In Year 6, pupils respond in a more mature manner and, for most of the time, show a good level of interest, apply themselves well to their tasks, and maintain good levels of concentration.

23. Teachers are aware of the differing needs of pupils within their mixed-age classes and, generally, plan appropriate work for the different age groups. Work is differentiated particularly well in Class 1, where children in the Foundation Stage are often taught separately from the pupils in Year 1 from the same class. Occasionally, tasks for the higher-attaining pupils are not always as challenging as they could be, although the most able pupils achieve high standards by the time they leave the school. Teachers work hard to organise appropriate tasks for pupils with special educational needs and give as much support to individuals as they can. They ask questions well, so that pupils can join in. The system allows for pupils to be withdrawn for teaching sessions with the special needs coordinator one day per week in appropriately small groups. Tasks here are challenging at an appropriate level, there are high expectations for good behaviour as well as work, and so the learning is good. The coordinator offers assessment tasks and rewards with stickers and certificates, which provide the pupils with good incentives to learn.

24. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher and classroom assistant work very closely together to plan worthwhile experiences for the children, and the support provided by the assistant when the Foundation Stage children are taught as a separate group is particularly valuable. The well-planned induction procedures allow children to settle in quickly when they start school. The staff are caring and make successful attempts to provide a pleasant and stimulating learning environment, despite the inadequate size of the classroom which restricts the range of activities which can be offered at any one time.

25. The teaching in the core subjects of English and mathematics is good, enabling pupils to acquire good literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils have sufficient opportunity to broaden their writing skills through written work produced in other subjects, but teachers do not always use these occasions as effectively as they could to help pupils improve the quality of their writing. Not enough attention is given to developing pupils' listening skills. Pupils enjoy the stimulus of mental mathematics sessions, which are helping them to become skilful in handling numbers. The teachers provide appropriate opportunities within others subjects for pupils to develop their numeracy skills. In science, for example, pupils are taught how to collect and display data and to take measurements of length and temperature. Although there has been improvement in the school's provision for ICT since the last inspection, the teaching of this subject is still unsatisfactory. Some teachers are still not sufficiently confident in teaching the subject and not enough time is given to it. As a result, pupils do not acquire a wide enough range of skills, nor do they have enough opportunity to use computers to promote their learning in other subjects. There are also deficiencies in the teaching of design and technology, as teachers do not give enough scope to pupils to involve themselves fully in the design stage of a project. The teaching of art and design is satisfactory, and for all other subjects it is good. In addition to the normal music curriculum, the school provides good opportunities for pupils to acquire further musical skills, particularly in learning to play instruments.

26. Overall, the teachers plan their lessons well. In most lessons, clearly formulated objectives provide an appropriate starting point for the teachers' planning, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons frequently contain a good variety of interesting activities, although, occasionally, some activities are not sufficiently challenging, and this nearly always results in restless behaviour. The planning relates well to what pupils have learnt before. In a good science lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, pupils' prior learning about different types of food was taken into consideration well and then extended as they learnt about the importance of carbohydrates and proteins. Lessons in one subject are frequently linked very effectively with lessons in another. The literacy focus for the week for pupils in the Foundation Stage and Year 1, for example, was a big book called 'Ben's Baby'. During the week, the theme of the book linked very well with work in science as pupils considered how humans grow and develop. Pupils' learning was, therefore, enriched in both subjects. In many lessons, the teachers also make good use of resources, which help to reinforce pupils' learning and sustain their attention. In a good science lesson in Year 6, a three-dimensional model of a heart and a computer CD-ROM were both used effectively to illustrate

the structure of the heart, veins and capillaries. In an interesting history lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, pupils' understanding of the construction of Roman roads was reinforced as they set about making a replica road using beach stones, flat stones, pebbles, substitute cement and plaster.

27. The teachers' expectations are generally appropriate, although there is considerable variation. In Year 6, the teachers expect and receive good standards of behaviour and a positive response from the pupils to their work. As a result, quite a high proportion of pupils is working at levels which are above those expected for eleven-year olds. Whilst teachers in other classes expect high standards of behaviour and response from the pupils, these are not always achieved, and the staff do not have common strategies for managing pupils' behaviour. There is a tendency in all classes for teachers to control learning too strongly by providing pupils with all the information, and not giving them enough opportunity for open-ended learning tasks or to find out things for themselves. The way pupils present their work varies, but occasionally they are given unmerited praise for work which is not well presented.

28. The teachers use a good variety of teaching methods. Methods suggested in the National Numeracy Strategy are having beneficial effects upon pupils' learning in mathematics. The teachers give clear instructions, which enable pupils to have a clear understanding of what they are to do. Resources are used well, and a number of occasions were observed during the inspection when judicious use of resources helped to focus the pupils' attention well and acted as a good stimulus to learning. At times, the teachers spoon-feed the pupils too much, and do not give enough opportunity for them to become truly independent learners. Some teachers have good, open-ended questioning techniques which challenge and promote progress but, in a few classes, questions are rather ponderous and do not stretch the more able pupils. The teachers generally strike an appropriate balance between whole-class teaching, group-work and individual tasks, although the small size of some of the classrooms makes it difficult to group pupils together for whole-class teaching sessions which acts as a further hindrance to pupils' concentration. In a good English lesson for pupils in Year 6, a sense of the dramatic mixed with an element of fun was very effective in maintaining pupils' concentration.

29. The teachers know their pupils very well and treat them respectfully. Some pupils, however, do not always respond with the same level of respect, and some teachers find it hard at times to manage the pupils' restless, and occasionally arrogant, behaviour. However, the staff are not entirely consistent in their approach. In one lesson, the teacher gave pupils frequent reminders about not calling out their answers, but countermanded her own requests by accepting answers from those who persisted in calling out. In another class, the repeated requests to various individual pupils to stop fiddling around and pay attention acted as a constant irritant within the lesson. In contrast, other teachers are more successful in their attempts to manage the class. The youngest children, for example, responded very well to their teacher's request to be considerate towards the baby who was visiting their class with her mother. In another lesson, the teacher made her expectations very clear at the start of the lesson and then maintained good discipline throughout the lesson, helped by the fact that the lesson itself was challenging.

30. The quality of the teachers' day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. Some lessons start with an effective review of previous work to ensure that the pupils understand what has gone before. There is effective discussion and recapitulation at the end of most lessons which reinforces the objectives of the lesson, and teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding before they move on to the next stage of a topic. Pupils' work is marked consistently throughout the school, and in many subjects, such as history, geography and science, the teachers make positive and helpful comments in the pupils' books. Occasionally, these comments are over-generous in their praise of work which is only mediocre in standard. Little attention is given to correcting the pupils' use of English when written work is produced for another subject. In a piece of writing about the Nile, for example, a pupil had incorrectly placed apostrophes in plural words on more than a dozen occasions, but attention was not drawn to the error, which then continued to appear in subsequent pieces of writing. Although sometimes asked to do so, the pupils rarely revisit their work to correct or improve it in order to learn from their mistakes. The school's marking policy has not been reviewed for some time.

31. Parents expressed a considerable amount of concern over the school's stance with regard to homework. Pupils are expected to read regularly at home. However, the school does not have a policy on homework at present, with the result that there is no consistent approach to setting homework and there is no established pattern so that parents and pupils know what to expect. Pupils in Year 6 are set regular homework for science, and this has helped to reinforce pupils' understanding of the science curriculum in preparation for their National Curriculum tests. However, pupils are not prepared for the quantity and regularity of homework they will receive when they move on to the secondary school and they are missing opportunities to become more independent in their learning by consolidating work undertaken in school with research or other tasks undertaken at home.

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

32. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is based on the government's non-statutory guidance, and children work towards the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals. However, the constraints of the accommodation, and the mix of Foundation Stage children with Key Stage 1 pupils due to the size of the school, are barriers which impede the youngest children from initiating learning for themselves. The staff provide a rich, stimulating, but rather controlled environment, which reduces the opportunities for children to explore, experiment and solve problems for themselves. However, the children who have been in school for more than a term, have surpassed the Early Learning Goals in many respects, and a degree of more formal work is sometimes appropriate for them in preparation for work in Key Stage 1.

33. At both key stages, the school provides a broadly balanced curriculum, except in ICT and some aspects of design and technology. In the former, several important strands of the subject are not covered adequately and, in the latter, the design element of the subject is given an insufficiently high profile to make it a complete process for the pupils. The school has given some thought to the linking of subjects, for example, writing historical accounts and letters within literacy lessons, and making three-dimensional items in design and technology, such as Viking longships for history. However, this has not yet been wholly successful because there is insufficient concentration on the skills required in each discrete subject. For example, when writing in history, there is not enough focus on the pupils' literacy skills; when making an item, there is not enough investigation of the ideas by the pupils.

34. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements for all National Curriculum subjects. However, at Key Stage 2, the time allocation is short of the government's recommendation, as it was at the time of the last inspection, and the time allocated to each subject is still not being controlled sufficiently rigorously by the headteacher and staff. As a result, for example, very little time is devoted to ICT in some classes, and an unnecessary amount of additional time is given to English-related activities at Key Stage 1, thereby reducing the amount of time which can be spent teaching foundation subjects. The school changed the timing of the morning break in order to make better use of time, and this has allowed for an additional teaching slot in addition to the literacy hour and numeracy session. The extra half-hour gained, however, is not always used as effectively as it could be and, in some classes, simply provides an extension to the literacy hour. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented satisfactorily. Schemes of work in most other subjects are based mainly on the government's exemplar schemes of work, often with a two-year rolling programme to take account of the mixed-age classes. However, discussions with pupils indicate a degree of overlap and repetition in some of their work.

35. The school caters adequately for pupils' personal, social and health education, covering statutory elements relating to drugs education within the normal curriculum. The governors have elected not to offer sex education within the school. Staff know their pupils very well and deal with personal problems in a caring and sensitive manner. The school does not, however, have a planned programme for other aspect of the pupils' personal and social education, and greater consideration of the wider aspects of personal education could well be beneficial in helping to avoid the negative influences which affect pupils' learning in some lessons.

36. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and has improved since the last inspection. These pupils have full access to the curriculum and other opportunities, and arrangements for them comply with the Code of Practice. Their needs are now recognised early, and their individual education plans are focused, with manageable academic or behavioural targets. These plans are reviewed, up-dated and revised regularly, and agreed with parents.

37. For those pupils who learn easily and who are more able, there is sometimes a lack of challenge. There are, generally, insufficient opportunities for pupils to be independent and to take responsibility for their own learning, within boundaries set by teachers. This is evident in science investigative work, where pupils rarely have the opportunity to devise and carry out their own investigations independently. It is also noticeable in design and technology, for example, where pupils are not given enough opportunity to produce their own designs and consider how they will tackle a particular project.

38. Over the year, the school provides a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities. Apart from the orchestra, they are mainly sporting activities and only for the older pupils. Some taster sessions have been offered in rugby, basketball and hockey, pupils have cycling proficiency sessions at the end of the year, and some participate in 'Crucial Crew', organised by the emergency services. Other pupils have the opportunity to work with local secondary school students in rugby. Swimming and Christian clubs are other options available.

39. Pupils' learning is extended by good links with the local community, which result in, for example, visits from a cricket coach from Worcester County Cricket Club, a mother and baby to discuss child development, and a dietician to talk about healthy eating of fruit and vegetables. The school's relationships with partner institutions are constructive. Very good relationships exist between the local playgroup and the school, enabling a smooth changeover into the Foundation Stage. Good arrangements are made for a similar transition into secondary school, and pupils in Year 5 are taken for a day there. Pupils in Year 6 make the journey there, by themselves, just as they will when they move on. These arrangement helps them to know what it feels like, and the days prepare them well for their new life. The school also benefits from the expertise of teachers from the secondary school, with strong links in drama, dance and music.

40. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is satisfactory, for social development it is unsatisfactory and for cultural development it is good. Opportunities for spiritual development are explored in assemblies and

religious education lessons through its aims as a Church of England school. However, there is insufficient planned provision for pupils' spirituality in lessons or for taking advantage of those unexpected magical occasions when something happens to cause pupils to gasp with excitement, awe and wonder. Moral values are promoted satisfactorily in the school, and teachers provide positive role models to reinforce these values. Pupils understand clearly the difference between right and wrong which is why it is disappointing to see silly and inappropriate behaviour on occasions. Equally, when behaviour is good, the visitor is aware that pupils can be delightful when they so wish.

41. Whilst pupils' social development was considered by the last inspection report to be satisfactory overall, a much higher standard of consistently planned and implemented provision for this aspect of their school life would benefit individual children and the school community as a whole. It is another mixed picture. Many pupils relate well to each other, for example when older pupils take care of younger ones and when, instinctively, pupils are supportive of those with special educational needs. A small minority of pupils, however, occasionally sneer at those making simple mistakes and they are not interested in the contribution their classmates make to discussion. Some pupils call out rudely; they cut across others when they are speaking and do not seem to be aware of the detrimental effect this has on those pupils who are trying hard to behave well and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. A small number of pupils can be dismissive and disdainful of the effort put in by those pupils who are keen to develop socially and personally and to do well. At present, the school does not have effective procedures for helping pupils to develop socially. Staff handle such incidents when they occur in their own manner, without the support of a whole-school policy to ensure consistency of understanding among pupils and staff.

42. The school's provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. The pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures through geography and history lessons where they are able to evaluate how children lived, and still live, in other ages and in other countries. They show a sensitive awareness to the situation of children in third-world countries who are less fortunate than they are. Pupils develop an understanding of their own culture through English, art and design and, in particular, through the music activities that take place in the school. Special events, such as the recently organised poetry week during which pupils responded very positively to a visit from the author Wes Magee, make significant contributions to pupils' cultural development. Educational visits and trips also contribute to their knowledge and understanding of western culture. Religious education lessons and visitors to assemblies ensure that pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. Their study of Sikhism, Hinduism and Judaism prepares them well for adult lives as part of a multi-racial and multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Good standards of pastoral care are offered to all pupils and have been well maintained since the last inspection. One improvement is that the school now has an appropriate policy for child protection. The headteacher is the designated officer

for child protection, and all staff are fully aware of the school's practices and procedures for this important aspect of its work, having received in-house training from the headteacher.

44. Two members of staff have up-to-date training in first aid, and fire drills take place regularly. Governors are vigilant with regard to health and safety and undertake regular risk assessments by touring the school each term. This action is well supported by a regular health and safety audit undertaken by the local authority. These practices are to be especially appropriate in view of the school's building, with all the difficulties that old accommodation brings. It is illustrative of the governors' commitment to making the environment safe and secure for the children in their care.

45. All pupils are well known to staff, and this provides a measure of monitoring their personal development and behaviour. Nevertheless, this monitoring is unsatisfactory in that it is very inconsistent across the school and is only formally recorded when there is cause arising from pupils' poor behaviour. It needs to be much more rigorous to take account of all aspects of the children's personal development, both good and bad. More focussed monitoring of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and achievement is needed to improve all aspects of pupils' personal development and at the same time to empower staff to deal more effectively with negative attitudes and inappropriate behaviour when they occur.

46. The school secretary monitors the attendance registers regularly. Registers are completed correctly by all class teachers and meet statutory requirements. Reasons for absence are the usual childhood illnesses, and a considerable amount of absence is due to holidays taken during school time. Parents are informed that only ten days discretionary holiday leave is allowed each school year and that any other holidays taken will count as unauthorised absence.

47. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the high quality support they receive from the teaching and learning support staff. They are well integrated into the school and are included in all activities. Individual educational plans are used well to target problems. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers keep careful records of pupils' attainment and progress in language and mathematics.

48. In the previous inspection report, the assessment of pupils' academic attainment and progress was a key issue since the school had no manageable system in place. The school has improved some aspects of its assessment procedures, but there is still room for further improvement. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a whole-school assessment policy, and there has been some progress in the way the school has addressed assessment in the two core subjects of English and mathematics. At the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, pupils take non-statutory tests in English and mathematics, and the scores are standardised and put into the pupils' assessment folders along with science test results. Pupils' individual files, introduced two years ago, hold the results of all standardised tests and half-termly samples of work in English, mathematics and science. Their introduction has been beneficial, as they are a source for judging how well a pupil is doing, but they have yet to be used diagnostically to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Likewise, the school's National Curriculum assessment test results in both key stages are not analysed carefully enough to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, for example, the relative performance of boys and girls. Work kept in files is not annotated carefully enough to indicate what pupils can and cannot do and what needs to be improved. The assessment policy refers to a marking scheme that is no longer valid and the school is reconsidering a new policy to ensure better consistency in the marking of work throughout the school.

49. The headteacher, along with the local education authority advisor, checks pupils' records periodically and refers to the assessment files as he undertakes analyses of the overall results, as a means of setting general rather than specific targets. In the Reception class, the school carries out a baseline assessment three times a year when children enter the school at the beginning of each term, and this is effective in identifying the needs of the individual children. The records kept help the teacher plan individualised programmes of learning that appropriately match the particular needs of the child.

50. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum are unsatisfactory. The method of assessment is mainly informal, based on observation, checking the work produced and discussion with pupils. Whereas in English and mathematics there is a clearly established assessment system, in science assessment is done according to National

Curriculum learning statements. Although this gives a better picture of the levels pupils are working at and also helps the coordinator to plan specific teaching objectives, it is not particularly refined and as informative as it should be. In art and design, pupils have a sketchbook which is used as a focus for assessment, but these do not contain specific comments to inform pupils about their progress. There are no formal assessment policies for other National Curriculum foundation subjects and this is unsatisfactory. Subject schemes of work in most of the foundation subjects lack any specific reference to a coherent and progressive assessment policy that checks on pupils' understanding of the key essential concepts and skills. Procedures for monitoring the standard and progress made by pupils in each year group and between the two key stages are a responsibility of the subject coordinator, but little sampling of pupils' work takes place at present, and coordinators are not as fully informed about pupils' progress as they should be.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Parents' views of the school present an interesting picture and are not all as positive now as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Criticisms centre round lack of extra-curricular activities, little homework and general lack of communication between the school and parents. Nevertheless, from the evidence of the pre-inspection parents' meeting and a good number of questionnaires returned to the inspection team, there is still a lot of very solid support for the school.

52. There is a well-organised and supportive Friends of the School Association that works very hard to organise a large number of social and fund-raising events each school year. This is a very positive feature of the relationship between parents and the school, and the fund-raising activities result in benefits to all pupils.

53. A number of parents come into school every week to help in the classrooms by hearing pupils read and assist with sports and cookery. Parents are always welcome in the school, and its open-door policy ensures that they can raise questions with teachers or the headteacher at convenient moments.

54. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is satisfactory. When necessary, letters are sent home to parents on a variety of specific subjects such as educational visits and other school matters, but there is no regular newsletter to keep parents informed of what is going on in the school. There is a formal consultation evening for parents in the spring term and an open day during the summer term. There is no formal gathering in the autumn term and this is something a number of parents would appreciate so that any problems, which might arise in September or October, can be discussed and dealt with early on at the start of the school year. There is no formal procedure whereby parents are given information on forthcoming curriculum studies, although some teachers do this individually. This is something some parents would appreciate so that they can further support their children's learning at home.

55. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality. They make clear what children know, understand and can do and are clearly personal and individual to each child.

They would be of even higher quality if they contained targets which could enhance the way parents support their children's learning at home.

56. Homework is an issue with a number of parents who feel their children are not given enough, whilst others feel that too much homework is inappropriate for children of this age. Inspectors found that the setting of homework is inconsistent across the school and that there is no school homework policy. This results in the possibility of the older pupils being unprepared for homework when they transfer to secondary school.

57. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed at every stage and are aware of their children's inclusion on the register. Regular meetings are held, which about 80 per cent of the parents attend, to review targets and set new ones where necessary. Parents are very supportive of this area of the school's work.

58. In spite of some negative comments, the links between the school and its parents are positive. Parents are supportive of the plans for the school's new building and move within the next two years and, without doubt, will continue to support the headteacher and staff as they cope with the complexities of this undertaking.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. Overall, the quality of leadership within the school is satisfactory. In the last inspection, it was noted that the headteacher provided the school with conscientious leadership. This continues to be the case. In many respects, his leadership is good. He provides a good lead to the staff through his own classroom practice, his respectful dealings with pupils and staff, and his overall vision for the school and commitment to improvement. He also manages the school well, ensuring that systems run smoothly, that staff are clear as to their responsibilities, and that parental concerns are dealt with. However, as so often happens in a small school, the multiplicity of roles which the headteacher has to undertake prevents him from being as effective as he could be. The headteacher's classroom teaching commitment for half of the week leaves little time for him to exercise his leadership role in other areas, for example, by taking more time to monitor teaching and learning, or ensuring that there are agreed procedures for managing pupils and that staff follow them consistently. Governors need to consider whether it is possible to provide the headteacher with more time to carry out his leadership role. The headteacher receives valuable support from the deputy headteacher, who shows commitment to her tasks and great dedication to the school and the pupils.

60. The headteacher's commitment to the principle of ongoing development is demonstrated through the improvements which have taken place since the last inspection. All of the areas identified as key issues in the last inspection have been tackled, although the fact that further progress still needs to be made in some of them is indicative of the pressures on the headteacher's time. Resources for ICT have improved and staff are more confident using computers, but standards are not yet at the expected level and not enough use is made of computers to help pupils in their learning. The overall planning of the curriculum is better than it was, and there is now a scheme of work for each subject. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science have improved and pupils' assessment folders give a clearer picture of the progress pupils make as they move through the school. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects still need to be developed. The process of development planning has improved through the provision of individual subject action plans; these plans now need to focus more clearly on raising standards of attainment. The school now has a set of realistic and challenging aims, although some of these, such as the aim 'to

help children to become independent learners' and the aim 'to encourage all children to acquire independence in all their activities so that they play an increasing part in self-discipline and self-organisation' are not yet being fulfilled in practice.

61. The headteacher delegates responsibilities effectively, so that all teachers have at least one area of the curriculum to coordinate. They are given clear guidance as to what their responsibilities as coordinators entail. Whilst all of the teachers, including those who are part-time, are willing to take on these responsibilities and are carrying out some aspects of their role more effectively than before, they are not yet proving to be fully effective as leaders of their subjects. Some coordinators do not have an accurate picture of what is being taught within their subject area in other classes. Assessment procedures for most of the foundation subjects are lacking, and very little monitoring of teaching and learning takes place. Since the last inspection, time is set aside each term for coordinators to carry out their responsibilities. However, the time is not being used as profitably as it could be in order to raise standards of attainment, and clearer direction over the use of this time is required. Despite the weaknesses in subject management, the staff are very hard-working and committed to the school. They cooperate well together, are supportive of each other, undertake new initiatives willingly and are keen to bring about improvement. In view of this shared commitment, the school has sufficient capacity for further improvement.

62. The coordinator for special educational needs is an experienced, knowledgeable member of the team who works in the school, to great effect, once a week. Her appointment a year ago has led to improvements in the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are recognised and supported sooner, and in greater numbers, than previously. She offers advice to staff when necessary, coordinates and writes the individual plans and keeps effective, efficient paperwork up to date. She brings a good deal of knowledge of the support services and procedures to the post to ensure the pupils get the support to which they are entitled.

63. The governing body exercises its role effectively and fulfils all of its statutory responsibilities. The governors are very supportive of the school, and the chair works closely with the headteacher. They have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities. The committee structure is well organised, and meetings are appropriately minuted. The governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs make regular visits to the school and discuss issues with staff. They have also observed some lessons. The vice-chair, who is also the parish priest, visits the school once a week to take assembly. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about what is happening. Governors are concerned not to trespass on the professional integrity of the staff or to appear to be too intrusive. However, a regular programme of monitoring more closely what happens in school and within lessons would help governors to obtain a clearer first-hand understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of the problems teachers have to face. Governors are currently heavily involved in planning the move to a new school site, which would provide the school with brand new and much more suitable premises. This new venture should solve one of the school's

most intractable problems, that is the unsuitability of the present accommodation which affects pupils' progress in many subjects and in various ways.

64. Procedures for the monitoring and support of teaching, learning and curriculum development are at present unsatisfactory. The school, and subject coordinators in particular, are not critical enough in evaluating what happens and how things could be improved. The school does not have an effective plan to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff refer to the many informal opportunities they have to talk to each other, as providing a means to monitor what is happening. Although they provide useful occasions to keep in touch with what is happening on a daily basis, in practice, these occasions do not give coordinators a thorough enough insight into the quality of teaching and standards of attainment within their subject areas. Where coordinators have had the opportunity to monitor lessons, such as in mathematics, or staff have been able to observe other practitioners, such as in a visit to observe an advanced skills teacher in a beacon school, teachers have benefited. The school has an appropriate policy for performance management and is up to date in its cycle to review the performance of staff. Governors have made the appropriate arrangements for reviewing the performance of the headteacher, and have set performance targets for the coming year.

65. The quality of the school development plan has improved and is generally satisfactory. All staff are now involved in contributing to the plan. All subjects are part of a three-year rolling plan which involves subject development in year one, consolidation in year two and maintenance in year three. In practice, however, because coordinators are not sufficiently aware of strengths and weaknesses within their subject areas, the subject development plans do not focus enough on raising pupils' attainment. The school's main development target is to organise the move to new premises, and preliminary designs for the construction of the new building have already been considered.

66. School and financial administration is efficient, and the budget is carefully planned and closely monitored. The school secretary plays a key role in the smooth running of the school. Effective use is made of new technology for administrative purposes, but not enough use is made within the curriculum. Although the school's income per pupil is above the national average, the budget is modest for a small school and the school finds it difficult to plan for future demands on finance. The school receives invaluable support from the local authority's finance officer. An external audit took place in December last year and all the recommendations in that report have been addressed. The school applies the principles of best value when purchasing new resources and additional services. It makes good and effective use of specific grants and other funding.

67. The school has an adequate number of experienced teachers who are fully qualified for the age range they teach. All staff have clear job descriptions. Support staff are available for more hours than was the case at the last inspection, and play a valuable role in supporting the teachers and helping pupils to make progress. Support for classes in Key Stage 2 is still limited. Two peripatetic music teachers visit the school every week. The school is heavily dependent on part-time staff who

contribute effectively to the teaching and the learning, and who also become a ready source as supply teachers who know the school well. These teachers also devote more than their fair share of time by taking extra responsibilities as subject coordinators. The job-share arrangements in two classes function effectively. Curricular and other responsibilities are equitably distributed among the staff. Arrangements for attending in-service training and for the personal and professional development of staff to enhance their professional expertise are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection.

68. Despite improvements and a pleasantly refurbished entrance area, the school's accommodation is poor. Three classes are housed in 30-year-old temporary buildings and most of the classrooms are small and very cramped. The school library becomes a corridor when pupils from Key Stage 1 want to use the toilet, and the school hall is far too small for the school's needs. There is no accommodation for the special needs coordinator, and groups of pupils have to be taught in the entrance foyer with the distractions which a busy thoroughfare provides. There is very limited storage space, which leads to further restrictions in the space available within the classroom. The tiny headteacher's office is unsuited for its purpose and offers little privacy for conversations with parents, staff or pupils if they can manage to squeeze their way in. The physical conditions in which staff and pupils have to work impinge on their attitudes and, more generally, the accommodation is having an adverse effect on teaching and learning, particularly in subjects that depend heavily on practical activities. There is insufficient space to provide as wide a range of activities at any one time as is desirable for children in the Foundation Stage who also need space to undertake regular and systematic structured-play activities. There is no space in most classrooms for pupils to gather together for the introductory or closing sessions of a lesson. The cramped confines of the classrooms make it very difficult to teach ICT, and movement to and from the classroom computer disturbs other pupils as they are working. The layout and lack of a suitable area make it almost impossible to move computers together so that more than two pupils can work at the same task and be tutored together. In the cramped hall, pupils find it very difficult to move out to the front when they are needed, and it is impossible for all pupils in a class to take part in physical education at the same time, which significantly reduces opportunities pupils have for gymnastics and dance, and for other aspects of physical education when adverse weather forces lessons to be held indoors. The school has pleasant exterior areas, although the field is waterlogged for much of the year. The school's small pool provides a good facility for young pupils to swim during the summer months, but older pupils have a considerable journey to the nearest swimming pool which accounts for a sizeable amount of time each week which could otherwise be used for teaching. The governors, in consultation with the local education authority and the church diocese, are planning to build a new school on a different site in the village.

69. The school is currently adequately resourced in most areas of the curriculum, but still has an insufficient number of computers to allow pupils frequent access. The school has purchased new resources to take account of the literacy and numeracy initiatives and has good video resources. The level of resources is good in English and music, and there are some shortages in history.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- (1) Ensure better subject management and more effective self-evaluation of performance by:
 - ensuring that the headteacher has sufficient time to help subject coordinators provide more decisive leadership and to ensure that all aspects of the coordinator's role are carried out effectively;
 - monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' learning regularly and rigorously;
 - ensuring that there are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment within each subject area and that these assessments are used to identify weaknesses in pupils' performance;
 - ensuring that each subject's action plan focuses on raising standards of attainment and deals effectively with the strengths and weaknesses identified through the processes of assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

(Paragraphs: 48, 50, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 86, 91, 92, 111, 116, 121, 126, 130, 139)

- (2) Raise standards of attainment in ICT by:
- providing training for all staff to improve their confidence and competence in teaching the subject;
 - ensuring that all pupils have sufficient opportunities to acquire new information technology skills through direct teaching and that they are given sufficient time and appropriate contexts within which to practise their skills;
 - ensuring that ICT is used more frequently as a tool to help pupils' learning in all subjects.
- (Paragraphs: 11, 14, 25, 33, 60, 66, 78, 106, 127-131)
- (3) Help pupils develop independent learning habits. In particular, consideration should be given to:
- ensuring that learning tasks always provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to devise and conduct their own investigations in science;
 - ensuring that pupils have greater participation in designing and evaluating projects in design and technology;
 - providing pupils with more open-ended learning tasks which help them to develop their ability to work on their own, develop research skills and give them opportunity to devise their own ways of recording their findings;
 - ensuring that pupils always respond to teachers' marking and correction of their work and that they learn from the mistakes they have made;
 - providing a more consistent approach to homework, giving pupils the opportunity to develop independent learning habits at home.
- (Paragraphs: 6, 8, 14, 17, 18, 25-28, 30-33, 37, 56, 60, 73, 79, 86, 91, 94, 98, 102, 103, 112-116, 130)
- (4) Make better provision for pupils' social development by:
- agreeing on procedures which will encourage a more positive response from pupils and result in better attitudes to work and improved standards of behaviour. Particular attention should be given to developing:
 - the way pupils cooperate with each other and with their teachers;
 - their ability to listen to what their teachers and peers are saying;
 - the way they participate in lessons and apply themselves to their work;
 - their behaviour towards and consideration for others;
 - ensuring that all staff are consistent in their approach to managing pupils' behaviour and the standards which they demand.
- (Paragraphs: 15, 17, 19, 22, 27, 29, 35, 41, 45, 59, 72, 87, 90, 105)

In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:

- Increasing the amount of time for teaching at Key Stage 2; (Paragraph: 34)
- Correction of pupils' written English; (Paragraphs: 6, 91, 92, 106)
- The standard of pupils' presentation; (Paragraphs 27, 91, 92, 94)
- The inadequacy of the school's accommodation adversely affects pupils' progress in a number of areas. However, the school is making progress with its plans to rectify this situation by transferring the school to a new site within the next two years.

(Paragraphs 4, 24 28, 32, 63, 68, 73, 75, 79, 81, 83, 100, 107, 115, 135, 140)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	15	53	26	3	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	134
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	28

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
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	12	8	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	17	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (90)	85 (90)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	18	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	95 (100)	95 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Where the number of boys or girls is fewer than ten the individual results are not reported.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	3	11	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (89)	100 (79)	100 (95)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (95)	100 (84)	100 (95)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Where the number of boys or girls is fewer than ten the individual results are not reported.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	122
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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	232 376
Total expenditure	252 180
Expenditure per pupil	1 855
Balance brought forward from previous year	31 343
Balance carried forward to next year	11 539

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	126
Number of questionnaires returned	73

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	49	10	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	33	57	4	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	45	3	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	33	24	17	1
The teaching is good.	41	46	8	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	22	37	10	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	32	3	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	47	5	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	22	41	23	8	5
The school is well led and managed.	55	34	4	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	54	7	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	14	27	42	4

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents are concerned about the quality of teaching their children receive and the lack of challenge in some of the work. Some parents feel that pupils' behaviour could be better.

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

71. Children enter the school at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday, most of them having previously attended a privately run playgroup or nursery. Although it varies, the level of skill which most pupils have when they start school is above average. The overall quality of the teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and children are well prepared to start their formal education by the end of their time in the Reception.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Most children enter the school with a greater degree of confidence and self-assurance than many children of their age. They make satisfactory progress in their personal, social and emotional development and achieve most of the Early Learning Goals for this aspect of their development before they progress into Year 1. The children show a good degree of interest in their learning, particularly when they are involved in practical activities. Most pupils have the confidence to speak in front of others in the class and show a good degree of maturity for their age. At times, they show very good awareness of others and the ability to sit quietly and maintain concentration. In one session, for example, the children welcomed a mother with her young baby. The children responded very well to the teacher's requests to be considerate, to talk quietly and not make any sudden noises or movements. A delightful session ensued, in which the children showed great consideration, great interest and great human warmth. At other times, however, they are slower to respond and need more than one reminder to do as they have been asked. They do, however, have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. Most children dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene well.

73. The teaching in this area of learning is good, although staff are considerably hampered by the restricted confines of a room which is far too small for the number of pupils and does not allow for the freedom of movement and the setting up of as wide a range of activities as is desirable at any one time. This limits the opportunities for children to select and use activities and resources independently, although the staff do their best to make such choices available whenever possible. In many sessions, children in the Reception year are taught as a separate group by the assistant or the class teacher, whilst the other adult teaches the remaining pupils from Year 1. These more intimate sessions are valuable for building up the children's confidence within their own peer group, and the children benefit socially from the closer attention they receive. The staff are good at reinforcing important rules about behaviour and social conventions, such as putting up a hand to speak rather than calling out. In their eagerness to give an answer and, at times, their selfishness to be heard before others, some children are slow to learn. At an early

age, they exhibit the traits which some older pupils in the school display too frequently and which, for many, act as a hindrance to their learning. However, the caring approach of the teacher and assistant and the respect they show for each child helps the children to form positive relationships, and to feel secure and happy within the environment which they share with older pupils from Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

74. Most children make good progress in acquiring skills in communication, language and literacy and reach the Early Learning Goals for this aspect well before they start Year 1. They listen well at literacy time, are keen to answer questions and make relevant comments about what they have heard. In one session, for example, they were eager to answer questions about the book 'Ben's Baby' which was the focus of discussion for them and for the older pupils in Year 1, and they became quite excited when explaining about the baby in 'Mum's tum'. They use appropriate technical vocabulary, such as 'vowels' and 'consonants', when they speak. Their level of speech is generally very good, but some of the children who have joined the class since Easter still lack maturity in word formation and vocabulary. Their teacher uses questioning very effectively to draw out different children to extend what they know and how they communicate it. The children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with each other and adults. Many children are beginning to read and the rest 'talk like a book', knowing the correct alignment of the text, that the pictures can give them clues and that we read from the front to the back. Most children hold a pencil correctly and write quite legibly. They know the rudiments of punctuation and when to use capital letters.

75. The teaching in this area of learning is very good, and the teacher is ably supported by the classroom assistant. Together, they provide children with good opportunities to talk and listen. They provide interesting texts which stimulate the children to try out new ideas and communicate their own meaning. The children successfully transferred what they had learnt through reading the story of 'Ben's Baby' to their encounter with a mother and baby later in the week, asking sensible questions and showing interest in the comparisons. Because they are in a mixed-age class, their literacy time is more formal than is usually seen. The lesson is pitched about right for most of the children but, for the youngest, the time is too long and they are not able to sustain their concentration. The poor, inadequate accommodation makes it difficult to arrange things much differently. The staff provide good opportunities to develop the children's early writing skills. For example, the children enjoyed making a book about themselves and about when they were a baby. In writing facts about themselves and captions to their photographs, the children were motivated to develop their writing skills. Such opportunities also help parents to become involved in their children's learning and to demonstrate the importance of writing, as mums and dads contributed to the project by writing little anecdotes and funny stories about their baby habits.

Mathematical development

76. The children make good progress in their mathematical development and achieve the Early Learning Goals before they start Year 1. They recognise simple shapes well and can identify which shapes should be placed to continue a sequence and maintain the pattern. Children undertake simple mental calculations using number and number patterns. They enjoy relevant practical tasks in class and work both individually and in groups effectively. They can handle money up to 10 pence with understanding.

77. The teaching in this area of learning is good. Activities are purposeful and enjoyable, and engage the children's attention. In one lesson, for example, the children formed a human chain in the classroom, making different patterns by sitting down, standing up and kneeling; this was an effective way of securing their understanding of pattern and sequence. Practical activities consolidate their number work. For example, the use of multi-coloured blocks and plastic links to form a chain of differing patterns gave further reinforcement to the children's understanding of shape and pattern. In another activity, the children's understanding of money was reinforced as they engaged in structured play activities in the beach shop, based on their actual visit to the seaside. Good use of well-focused questions by the teacher helps to develop children's mathematical understanding and enables them to make good gains in their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. The children achieve many of the Early Learning Goals for knowledge and understanding of the world before they start Year 1. They know the days of the week and identify a particular day, such as Tuesday. They know that plants grow and that we can eat some of them. As they look at events in their own lives and see how their bodies have changed as they grow up, they develop an understanding of time and how human beings grow and change. They know how a baby grows and develops and how a doctor can see it, inside the mummy, with the aid of a scan. Although they have opportunities to use some programs on the computer, this aspect of their learning is not as well developed as others.

79. The teaching in this area of learning is good, overall. Adults make good use of questions to extend the knowledge and understanding of the youngest children as well as the older ones. The classroom assistant works well with the teacher and both are good at initiating discussions with the children. They use good, technical vocabulary to help the children develop their use of language, and they link learning experiences well to language, literacy, numeracy and historical ideas of time. Through reading a big book about a new baby in the literacy hour, for example, the children were given opportunities to think about events in their own lives and to compare their development to that of others. Meeting a mother and baby enabled them to understand how much they had grown. Good practical activities, and the involvement of visitors, help the children to develop a good understanding of the importance of different types of food. With a visiting dietician, for example, they planned, made and tasted fruit kebabs, exploring similarities and differences of texture and taste. In another session, they designed an attractive salad, first on paper, then using the real ingredients. Who ate the salads after they had been taken home was not revealed, but the experience provided good reinforcement for the children of the importance of eating fruit and vegetables. The physical constraints of an inadequately sized classroom and the difficulties of teaching a mixed-age class sometimes lead to activities which are directed too closely by the teacher and do not allow the children enough opportunity to explore their own ideas fully.

Creative development

80. The children achieve the Early Learning Goals for creative development and make sound progress in this area of their learning. They handle a range of materials competently. In art and design, for example, they cut out their own designs of fish caught in a net as part of their class frieze. In creating the fish, the children they showed skill in cutting out coloured paper to represent fish scales and pasted them to their own designs.

81. The teaching in this area of learning is good. The children have a secure play area and enjoy using the large toys in imaginative play. However, the cramped confines of the classroom and poor quality of the accommodation limit the opportunities for children to undertake structured play activities on a regular basis. The teacher links creative work naturally and well with work in mathematics and science.

Physical development

82. When they enter the school, many children are already reasonably confident in their larger physical movements, and some already have skill in the finer movements of manipulating objects or using pencils. The children make sound progress in all aspects of their physical development, and almost all children achieve the Early Learning Goals for physical development well before they start Key Stage 1. Within their physical education lessons and when playing with equipment out of doors, the children move with confidence and in safety, showing good control and coordination. In a dance lesson, the youngest children concentrated hard to perform the same movements as the older pupils in the class and took part successfully. The children show an awareness of space, although have to be reminded from time to time to be more aware of others. They are starting to appreciate the changes which happen to their body when they engage in physical activity. Within the classroom, most children show good control when handling paintbrushes, scissors and pencils. In one activity, the children skilfully cut out pieces of paper, arranged them with cotton wool and added different coloured paints; they had successfully and proudly created ice cream cones, although some were unable to explain what taste the lurid colours represented! All children are improving their ability to form letters and numerals accurately.

83. The quality of the teaching in this area of learning is good, and the children are provided with a range of opportunities to make progress in all aspects of their physical development. The teacher and assistant are aware of the need to cater for all types of physical activity and, during the summer, access to the outdoor playground makes this possible. The cramped conditions of the classroom and the inadequately sized school hall restrict what can be offered at other times of the year, although the staff work as well as they can, and often very creatively, within these limitations. The dance lesson observed during the inspection was well organised, although the children needed reminding more frequently than in the classroom about how to participate sensibly.

ENGLISH

84. In the 2000 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1, results were above the national average in reading and writing, and average when compared to schools in similar contexts. Almost half of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading, but the picture in writing was closer to the national performance. Since 1996, results have fluctuated, as is frequently the case with small schools, but the overall trend indicates only a slight improvement, which is less than the improvement nationally over the same period. Results of the most recent National Curriculum tests, for which national comparisons are not yet available, were lower than in 2000 in both reading and writing. The inspection findings reflect these results, and show that, overall, the pupils in the current Year 2 are working at a level which is close to the national average. The difference between the standards achieved last year and this is accounted for by a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current cohort.

85. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, results were close to the national average, but well below the average for schools in similar contexts. A comparison of these results to those achieved by these pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1996, however, shows that this group of pupils made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. The National Curriculum test results for the current year show a marked improvement, with over half of the pupils achieving above the national expectation at Level 5. These pupils have made somewhat better progress through Key Stage 2 than the previous year group, but the difference between the standards achieved is largely a reflection of the higher prior attainment of these pupils. The inspection findings reflect the latest results, and show that the pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 2 achieve above average standards in English. Although the school's results have fluctuated over the last five years, the trend is one of gradual improvement, but at a much slower rate than the national trend.

86. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school, because the work set for them is appropriate. They also receive good assistance from the special needs coordinator, who ensures that the targets set for them are clearly focused and manageable. However, in some classes, the more able pupils only make satisfactory progress because the work set for them is not always challenging enough. Over the last three years, girls have performed significantly better than boys, to a much greater extent than the difference nationally. In some years, the girls have been more than a year ahead of the boys at the end of both key stages. The school has not yet analysed reasons for these differences or come to any conclusions as to why the boys may be less well motivated in English than the girls.

87. Pupils' confidence in speaking and expressing their ideas develops well as they move through the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are good and pupils speak confidently in front of their class and to adults. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking are above average. Pupils are articulate and express themselves clearly, and in a mature way for their age, in a wide range of circumstances, for example, during group and class discussions in English, history and science. Generally, teachers use appropriate technical language when teaching reading and writing, as a result of which pupils increase their spoken vocabulary well. However, throughout the school, pupils' inability to listen constructively, then make sensible contributions, hampers the development of their oral skills. Not only do they have problems listening to each other, some have difficulty in restraining themselves long enough to listen to their teachers before interrupting with what they want to say. The teachers remind them about taking turns and listening to others in order to build up ideas and formulate appropriate responses, but these reminders often go unheeded. This inability to listen and follow a discussion or conversation has a negative effect on some lessons and hinders pupils' progress in learning. It is only at the end of Key Stage 2 that pupils start to show better listening skills and to adapt their listening to the situation. In a successful lesson in Year 6, for example, the pupils listened to each other well as they discussed the witches' spell from *Macbeth* and compared and contrasted it to a poem by Wes Magee.

88. Pupils' attainment in reading is consistently above average. The school places strong emphasis on this skill, which develops well from a secure home base. Younger pupils read frequently from texts they have chosen themselves, and there is good communication between home and school through the home-school reading diary so that parents can support the development of their children's reading skills at home. By the age of seven, pupils read a good range of narrative and informative texts with confidence. They use appropriate strategies to make sense of words they do not know and most pupils read with reasonable fluency. They are able to discuss the characters well and have a good understanding of the settings in their text. A good example was seen as pupils wrote about one of four places in their book about monsters. From a picture and a few words of vocabulary, pupils were able to extend ideas and vocabulary well, in readiness for their writing. However, their knowledge of how a library is organised is not well developed, and many do not know, accurately, what an index or glossary really is, even though they have made them in science work for their books on plants. Pupils' reading skills continue to develop well through Key Stage 2. By the end of the key stage, they are independent, discerning readers, who enjoy books of all types for pleasure and information. Most pupils read aloud with a good sense of audience. This was particularly evident in one lesson as pupils acted out the parts from a Shakespearean play. Because they have a good command of vocabulary and fertile imaginations, they were able to develop good ideas in preparation for writing their own spells and incantations. The pupils use reading texts well to illustrate their ideas and show a good ability to compare two contrasting pieces of text.

89. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve average standards in writing. Their writing is often well organised and they use interesting vocabulary, chosen for effect. Punctuation and spelling are generally correct, but some pupils are careless with words they already know. This, combined with often untidy, slipshod handwriting, indicates that they do not always take their tasks seriously. The teacher frequently remarks on this, but little improvement can be discerned through the year. However, some of their content, for example when writing about monsters, is well written. They use interesting connectives, and more able pupils write well, using subordinate clauses. Some groups use tenses accurately, but about half are muddled and change from present to past, without realising. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average. Pupils write in a mature style, for an increasingly wide range of purposes. Written work in science and history also helps them to develop different written styles well. They show the ability to use evocative vocabulary. For example, when writing their incantations and spells, they used alliteration as well as phrases that rhyme, as in the couplets of Shakespeare, such as 'fang of spider, drowned in cider', or 'teeth of shark, mixed in bark'. Some of the finished pieces were of a high standard, sensitively written and with strong ideas. Handwriting, spelling and punctuation improve as the pupils move through the school and, by the time pupils reach Year 6, their written work shows a good degree of accuracy.

90. The teaching of English is good overall and never less than satisfactory. Of the eleven lessons seen, one was excellent, two were very good and three were good. Lessons are generally well planned, and teachers have good methods for teaching basic skills. Most lessons are carried out at an appropriate pace, allowing

time to think and time for quick-fire ideas. However, in less successful lessons, pupils call out too much and do not listen attentively, teachers spend too long sorting out the problems and so the pace drops. In a few lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough, either for the outcome of the lesson or the behaviour of the pupils. In other lessons, particularly in Year 6, the teachers have high expectations with regard to pupils' participation, their behaviour and the quality of their work. In the excellent lesson in the lower junior school, the teacher used a variety of very good strategies to overcome pupils' tendencies to call out, including sharing the purpose of the lesson with the pupils so they knew from the first minute what would be expected of them. They rose to this and worked hard all the time. The learning was very good for all groups; some less able pupils, for example, decided to make their joint poem alliterative and worked extremely well together to juxtapose the phrases they had been given. Other groups chose really imaginative pairs of words such as 'knight-fights' and 'beast-feast' to convey meaning. The teacher had chosen a text which the pupils enjoyed and given them good opportunities for choice within the given task. Similar features were observed during the inspection in the other good and very good lessons.

91. Assessment systems for English have improved since the previous inspection, but teachers make insufficient use of analyses of their various test results or their on-going assessments to alter their planning. A better use of assessment would help the teachers to avoid the inconsistencies in the level of challenge offered in some lessons. The marking of pupils' work is frequently evaluative and reminds pupils of what they need to do to improve. However, the pupils often ignore the teachers' comments, such as those about presentation, spelling or punctuation, and do not grasp hold of these opportunities to improve their learning. The teachers set targets for the pupils, but do not remind the pupils of them consistently enough, and do not monitor the books regularly to see if the targets have been achieved. Throughout the school, the teachers provide pupils with an appropriate range of tasks to develop their writing skills and to learn how to write in different styles, such as factual accounts, letters, persuasive and narrative writing. Opportunities are provided in many subjects, such as history and science, for pupils to enhance their writing skills. However, the teachers often only look at the subject content of the pupils' writing and do not use these opportunities to comment on and develop their writing skills further.

92. Although there is good teaching within the school, the subject is not managed effectively enough at present, and this is one of the reasons for inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching. The coordinator is interested and very knowledgeable, but lacks a vision for leading and developing the subject throughout the school. There are no folders of annotated work, moderated by the staff in order to ensure consistency when assessing pupils' work. Pupils' work is not monitored to check whether individual targets have been met or to ascertain standards of pupils' work throughout the school. There is no common marking policy. Modifications are being made to the curriculum. In some classes, guided reading sessions take place outside the literacy hour, but the extra time allowed for guided writing is not always being utilised to the full. Generally, pupils are not challenged sufficiently about their presentation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation errors, and the coordinator, who is concerned about the standard of pupils' writing, has no immediate plans to

improve these aspects. Since the last inspection, the standards have improved slightly, and much emphasis is given to the teaching of English. The staff are committed to improving the subject, but lack coherent and consistent strategies to help them do so. The undoubted ability of many pupils and the capabilities of the strongest teachers provide a good starting point on which to build improvement in the future.

MATHEMATICS

93. In the National Curriculum assessment tests for 2000 at Key Stages 1 and 2, the school's results were above the national average, but were average when compared to schools in similar contexts. At Key Stage 1, all pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 2, and over a third achieved the higher Level 3. At Key Stage 2, all pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4, but few pupils achieved the higher Level 5. Girls achieved significantly better results than boys at Key Stage 1 but, for the first time, boys outperformed girls at Key Stage 2. The current National Curriculum assessment test results, for which national comparisons are not yet available, are not as good those in 2000 at Key Stage 1, but are better than the previous year's results at Key Stage 2. Although results have fluctuated significantly over the last five years, particularly at Key Stage 1, overall, the school has maintained similar standards to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

94. The inspection findings show that pupils achieve average standards of attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. These findings are in line with the latest test results, but lower than the previous year's results. The present dip is accounted for by the larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the wide range of ability within the current Year 2. The more able pupils attain good standards in their number work and solve problems in a practical context well. The present emphasis on mental mathematics and the use of problem-solving activities has a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially for the older and abler pupils. However, there is still a significant number of younger and less able pupils who are having difficulty with their number work. Frequently, this is because they are given worksheets to complete, rather than the opportunity for practical investigation and problem solving. Older pupils use various strategies to add numbers accurately, create symmetrical patterns and use the five-times table competently. Pupils are developing confidence in handling data and this aspect of mathematics is a distinctive feature of the work in both key stages. The presentation of work is only average and pupils do not always set out their solutions in an easily identifiable way. The standard of presentation of the more able pupils is of a better quality.

95. The more able pupils in Year 1 count accurately, use subtraction patterns to 50 and identify two- and three-dimensional shapes effectively. They understand mathematical language such as 'less than' and 'more than', can tell the time to the hour and half-hour and handle quarter to and quarter past the hour competently. Other pupils find it difficult to calculate numbers beyond ten, but understand the difference between odd and even numbers.

96. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards that are above the national expectations and, in some aspects of number work and their understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes, they are attaining very good standards. Pupils are familiar with the characteristics of shape and can explain them in terms of 'faces', 'vertices' and 'edges'. They handle large numbers confidently and use the decimal point up to five places, mentally converting fractions to decimals quickly. As part of the closing session in one lesson, the teacher questioned pupils well, maintaining a good pace, and the pupils displayed a high level of competence when multiplying using the decimal point. The work set on money and capacity is related to real-life situations.

97. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 complete a range of activities involving the use of hundreds, tens, units and number lines and blocks effectively and confidently. In one of the lessons observed, the range of group activities aimed at teaching pupils how to organise, collect and interpret data was very well organised and imaginatively designed, and the pupils demonstrated good understanding of the properties of data and the basis for classification. In another lesson, effective teaching methods helped pupils to acquire a good understanding of equivalent fractions. Most grasped the concept quickly and were competent in working out problems. Pupils' understanding of place value is very good. The teacher encourages pupils to write full explanations of how they have done their calculations.

98. The teaching is generally of good quality in both key stages. Lesson objectives are clear, and teachers take pupils' differing abilities into consideration when planning their work. Generally, the teachers' questioning techniques focus on getting the pupils themselves to solve problems. In one lesson, the teacher grouped pupils by ability, giving them appropriately differentiated tasks which helped to consolidate their understanding of the operation of multiplication in real-life situations. All pupils made good progress in the lesson and they realised that multiplication can be carried out in any order. Very occasionally, however, the teaching is over-prescriptive, which does not help pupils to think for themselves. In both key stages, pupils display positive attitudes to mathematics and enjoy calculating quickly mentally. They are encouraged to read the numbers and to speak them out aloud, and pupils are developing an appropriate and extensive mathematical vocabulary. They settle quickly at the start of the numeracy session, listen attentively and reply to questions eagerly and enthusiastically. When the work set is challenging, imaginative, relevant and based on their own first-hand experiences, the pupils behave well and they clearly enjoy mental activities and games. The positive approach in these lessons helps them to learn well. In one class, however, where the teacher's delivery was ponderous, the pupils lacked enthusiasm, showed negative attitudes and made slow progress in their learning. In both key stages, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and are sensitive to their difficulties. When particular pupils experience difficulty with some aspect of their work in mathematics they are given additional support in small groups by the support teacher for special educational needs.

99. The coordinator for mathematics provides good guidance and support to staff. The policy for mathematics and the scheme of work are reviewed and modified regularly. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive impact on improving pupils' ability to calculate mentally. The support provided by the coordinator is effective, as are the weekly plans for numeracy lessons and the evaluations made by class teachers, although the latter are not always completed consistently. At the end of each half term, every area of mathematics is looked at and, once every term, teachers are monitored by the coordinator. The outcomes of lesson observations are then discussed informally with teachers.

100. Resources are of good quality, but the use of a recently revised commercial scheme of work is not always compatible with the numeracy strategy. Practical apparatus is not used as consistently as it could be throughout the school and the restraints imposed by the small size of most classrooms is a factor in this context. Some pupils who are experiencing difficulty would benefit by using practical apparatus on a more regular basis.

SCIENCE

101. The school has maintained good standards in science since the last inspection. In the 2000 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the school's results were similar to the national average. The results for the year 2001 were significantly better, with a much higher proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 than in the previous year. The trend in the school's results since the last inspection is one of improvement at a similar rate to the national trend. The inspection findings confirm that standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils achieve the expected level for 11-year-olds, and a significant proportion exceed these expectations.

102. Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 are currently similar to those found in most schools. Most pupils achieve the national expectations for seven-year-olds, but few pupils exceed them. By the end of the key stage, the pupils have a sound understanding of each area of the science curriculum. They understand what conditions plants need in order to grow, and have recently logged the growth of some very healthy marigolds in the classroom. They correctly identify different forces as 'pushes' and 'pulls'. They can construct a simple electric circuit and identify things which use electricity or are sources of light or sound. They classify materials, such as wood, metal, plastic, clay and rubber, and sort animals and plants according to their similarities and differences. Apart from the quality of pupils' writing, there is very little difference between the work of higher and lower-attaining pupils, as all pupils carry out the same work for most of the time. Some of the tasks provided do little to extend the more able pupils, and this limits opportunities for them to make better progress in their learning. Although pupils undertake a variety of practical work, their books indicate that they are not being given a systematic introduction into the concepts of scientific investigation and fair testing and of how to record their hypotheses, methods, results and evaluation of their practical work. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1, although some of the work provided could be more challenging.

103. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainments are above average, and in some aspects of their factual knowledge and understanding they are well above average. The oldest pupils are very good at assimilating knowledge and, from their discussions in class, produce clear notes which indicate good understanding. In their written work, for example, they give good explanations as to why day and night occur, and for the occurrence of longer and shorter days and nights. They display a thorough understanding of forces, sources of light, solids, liquids and gases. They explain the differences between reversible and irreversible changes. In their work on life processes, they give clear explanations as to how plants reproduce and seeds are distributed, and have a sound understanding of the human life cycle and food chains. The pupils learn a great deal from practical work, although much of this is through demonstration and pupils are rarely given the opportunity to exercise their own independence by devising and carrying out their own investigative work. In some of their practical work, pupils do not focus clearly enough on the purpose of the investigation or draw appropriate scientific conclusions. In one investigation, for example, pupils were simulating the effect which the sun has on heating sand in the desert, but the conclusion drawn was that 'you can use thermometers to measure temperature.' Pupils are eager to taste the ginger beer that they are brewing in the classroom, but some are unable to explain the processes which are taking place. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 also carry out some quite complex experiments, for example, 'to design and make a quiz board using a series circuit joined to a parallel circuit', but their written accounts indicate that some pupils do not always understand what they are supposed to learn from their experiments.

104. The overall quality of teaching in science is good although, based on judgements of the work in pupils' books and the tasks they have been given to do, it is stronger in Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. The teachers enable the pupils to acquire a good breadth of scientific knowledge and understanding. In all classes, the teaching is rooted in the teachers' own secure knowledge and understanding of the material to be covered. In some cases, this knowledge is extensive. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, were treated to some quite advanced explanations of volcanoes and rock formation. Resources are used effectively. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, each group of pupils was given a whole range of food products and labels to investigate which foods contained the highest proportions of carbohydrates and proteins. The fact that the teacher had gone to such lengths to prepare an interesting lesson made it all the more disappointing that the responses of a few pupils left much to be desired. Staff are aware of health and safety considerations in the teaching of science.

105. Whilst much of the teaching is good, the attitudes of some pupils hinder their learning. In a lesson full of variety in Year 2, the teacher had planned for pupils to learn about the importance of different foods. The pupils had had a visit from the school nurse to discuss healthy diets, they had produced charts of their favourite fruit and vegetables, and undertaken a survey of what fruit was in their lunch boxes. As one of the tasks, pupils had to plan a meal for a special occasion, but when it came to discussing the components pupils had chosen, there was little interest or concern to produce a balanced diet, but a selfish desire to include only those items which were immediately appealing to the palate. The tendency of a small number of pupils to call out their answers and their inability to listen was noted during the

previous inspection, and this continuing tendency, which is apparent in most classes, is the main reason why pupils do not learn as much as they could from the careful preparation and good input provided by the teachers. In contrast, some pupils show a much more mature attitude. A small group of pupils in Year 6 was observed during their breaktime looking at the progress of mould growth on bread through a microscope. Another pupil had brought in his own science book which was clearly providing him with further

interesting information on the heart and circulation to complement what was being studied in class.

106. In most classes, pupils are expected to record work in their own way, although occasionally they are given worksheets to complete which act as an unnecessary constraint to what pupils are able to write, particularly for the more able pupils. Some of the pupils' written accounts of practical work are not as thorough as they could be, as they miss out important elements of the investigative process, for example, an initial hypothesis or an overall conclusion about what has been discovered. Some of the science work provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills. As part of their work for this term, pupils in Year 2 have produced books on plants in the school grounds. Specially covered and illustrated, the books contain eight pages with brief descriptions of plants or flowers, some with illustrations and pressed flowers. The project has developed the pupils' understanding of conservation and plant characteristics, but the practical involvement of making a book also reinforced in a very appealing way the purpose of a table of contents, an index and glossary. The teachers do not generally exploit these opportunities to help pupils to improve the quality of their writing, as little attention is given to correcting spellings or improving sentence structure or range of expression. Numeracy skills are promoted through the collection and handling of data and activities which involve measurement. Apart from a small amount of incidental use, such as the production of bar and pie charts in Year 2, and the introduction of control technology to pupils in Years 4 and 5, the pupils do not make enough use of computers to present the results of their investigative work. Pupils in Year 6 are given regular science homework, which has helped to reinforce their understanding of various aspects of the science curriculum in preparation for their National Curriculum tests. The format of the homework tasks, however, is somewhat repetitive and not as stimulating as it could be.

107. The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum in science. Curricular planning has been revised and improved since the last inspection. Occasional visitors, such as the school nurse, make important contributions to the teaching of science. The coordination of science is generally satisfactory, although some of the weaknesses noted at the time of the last inspection still remain. Some progress has been made in implementing new procedures for assessment, which enable the coordinator to have a better picture than before to show what level pupils are working at, but the procedures are still not fully embedded. The portfolio of assessed work, mentioned in the last inspection, is no longer operative. Although the coordinator is given some time for coordination duties each half term, there is still little monitoring of teaching or pupils' work, and therefore no clear analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching throughout the school. The subject is adequately resourced, but the cramped accommodation makes it difficult to organise whole-class practical activities and there is very little space to display ongoing projects.

ART AND DESIGN

108. Standards in art and design are above national expectations by the end of Key

Stage 1. The school has maintained these good standards since the last inspection. Pupils use their observational skills well and produce drawings of good quality. In some good still-life pictures of fruit, the more able pupils tried to produce elements of shadow and blur in an effort to avoid producing photographic type copies. Pupils have a good understanding of colour and use paint imaginatively to depict landscape and background and, in some cases, mix paints to produce unusual shades. Pupils also work well with other materials, for example, producing weaving patterns on twigs. They successfully use a range of different materials, including paper, paints, textiles, felt pens, crayons and pipe cleaners. For example, the pupils created good three-dimensional models inside cardboard boxes to depict a seaside scene. Pupils study the styles of famous painters and model their own painting on these styles studied. Pupils in Year 2, for example, produced effective, good quality seaside pictures after studying the pointillist style of the French painter Georges Seurat.

109. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly in line with national expectations, but with good features in some of the work and some aspects which could be further developed. Standards are not quite as high as they were at the time of the last inspection, which reflects the fact that less time is now given to the teaching of art and design. Pupils' skills in drawing and painting are not developed as effectively as they could be, and pupils do not show mastery of a range of techniques. The study of famous artists is not developed in depth and pupils' artistic understanding is fairly superficial. However, some of the pupils' three-dimensional work, such as their sculptures of figures made of clay, contains fine detail and is of a good standard. Most of the pupils' portraits are of average quality, but those produced by the more able pupils use shade and shadow to give the portraits better perspective.

110. The teaching of art and design is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teachers encourage pupils to express their opinions about the paintings they study and to evaluate their own and others' drawings. In a Key Stage 2 class, for example, pupils were asked to draw faces showing different expressions and had to evaluate each other's efforts. The teachers link art-work with topics being studied in other subjects, such as history and design and technology, for example, when studying the history and construction of an old cottage. Every effort is made to allow pupils with special educational needs access to the same experiences as other pupils and they make good progress in developing their skills. Occasionally, good opportunities are provided to widen the scope of pupils' experiences in art and design. For example, a parent has contributed her expertise in silk printing and a local artist has assisted in drawing up a possible new scheme of work.

111. The subject coordinator for art and design has had this responsibility for five years, but has not had any opportunity to attend in-service training courses to enhance her expertise since none have been available locally. Aspects of the coordination role could be improved. There is no formal assessment scheme to determine the level of pupils' progress in the development of key skills and

concepts. The coordinator has not been involved in monitoring teaching and learning within the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Only one lesson in design and technology was seen during the inspection. Judgements are, therefore, based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, evidence of teachers' planning and records, and interviews with pupils and the subject coordinator. From this evidence, standards are judged to be below the national expectations at the end of both key stages and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory across the school. Standards have not improved since the last inspection. The main reason for this is because the school does not give the design element sufficient weight and importance.

113. At Key Stage 1, pupils acquire a satisfactory range of skills which they utilise to make various artefacts. They use joining and folding techniques to make books in zigzag form or with a pop-up element. They produce models using balsa wood and flat buildings made in clay. They learn how to incorporate wheels into the machines they have made. For much of the time, pupils follow instructions as to how to make their artefacts, and they have very little opportunity, therefore, to learn how to design them or do not understand the importance and difficulties of the design process. They are not given sufficient opportunity to think about the materials and tools they will require or how an object could be improved at the design stage or made from other materials. Although they occasionally evaluate their finished product, not enough emphasis is given to looking critically at what they have made.

114. The picture at Key Stage 2 is similar. In their project to make a model Ferris Wheel, pupils in Years 4 and 5 learnt how to cut, join lengths of balsa wood, and use a simple mechanism to make the wheel move using a rotary motor. The finished products are of varying quality, but all pupils succeeded in making a wheel which closely resembles the initial design. Little attention is given, however, to the initial design process and the subsequent evaluation. Their plan for this project comprised a rudimentary sketch with some measurements, but the end products all looked the same because they were following the teacher's instructions to make a model. The pupils have not been taught how to bring their previous knowledge and skills to bear by designing their own model. The pupils have enjoyed making other models, such as Viking longboats and model cars, but have had little input into their design. Pupils in Year 6 have been engaged in a project to make slippers. Although they produce a rough preliminary drawing, give a cursory consideration to the materials they need, and make a template for the sole themselves, the project is not thorough enough or conducted in sufficient detail to provide pupils with good insights into designing and making products.

115. Overall, the quality of teaching for design and technology is unsatisfactory. The teachers' plans and the work undertaken by pupils show that the teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of the processes involved in design and technology. Pupils are not given the opportunity to produce an increasingly complex range of design briefs. To a certain extent, this results from a philosophy of not

allowing or wanting pupils to make mistakes. Instead of finding out for themselves, pupils are spoon-fed with most of the answers to any problem, and an over-reliance on a pre-determined set of materials to make a certain item means that creativity and design flair are little in evidence. The teachers do not offer or encourage pupils to develop a good range of ways to record the progress of their projects, for example, by writing, drawing, using ICT, and drawing on their experiences from other areas of the curriculum. Due care is taken over the careful use of tools and glue. The poor accommodation is cramped and lack of space imposes restrictions on undertaking practical activities.

116. The coordinator is willing and interested in the subject and offers what support he can to colleagues, but clearer guidance needs to be given which would help staff to focus on key aspects of the curriculum for design and technology. Throughout the school, there are pupils who have good ideas, and most are very articulate. When given opportunities to investigate and solve problems, they demonstrate that they are creative, interested and can be independent. Their creativity and enjoyment provide a good starting point for developing the subject further.

GEOGRAPHY

117. In geography, the level of pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. There are good features in the work in both key stages and pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of some of the key geographical concepts. This indicates some improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

118. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of places. In one lesson, a well-designed worksheet challenged pupils to consider places that were near, quite near, further away, a long way and very far away. The abler pupils generally gave accurate responses, but the average and less able found the task difficult and would have attained better standards and made better progress with a more limited range of 'distances'. Good use of a range of visual illustrative material associated with the locality and simple maps of Britain, Europe and the world help pupils to develop their knowledge of places. They can identify the North and South Poles on a world map and are developing a good sense of location and distance beginning with the village and local area, and widening to recognise major cities in Britain and Europe. Pupils are aware of differences and make comparisons with themselves and children from other countries. The pupils understand aspects of human geography well.

119. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of human geography. In one lesson, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were discussing the nature of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Pupils had to consider why Japan could cope more successfully than Mexico City when both cities were the past victims of major earth tremors. As a consequence, pupils developed insights into the differences between developed and third-world countries, based on the way they could respond and cope with such tragedies. They understand that volcanoes can cause huge environmental changes, but also, having learnt about the tremor that affected Hereford Cathedral, that earthquakes can happen in varying degrees in any part of the world. They can locate the sites of plate rifts in different parts of the world correctly and know about plate tectonics. In Years 3 and 4, pupils show an understanding of the major characteristics of other countries. In an interesting lesson on Brazil, pupils investigated and tasted some of the foods grown in the country and learnt about its physical and human features. The brevity of this particular lesson disappointed the pupils, who clearly enjoyed tasting and discussing the fruits of Brazil.

120. The quality of the teaching in geography is good. Teachers in both key stages provide imaginative materials for the pupils and use a range of stories to consolidate pupils' understanding of geography. Through well-directed questions they require the pupils to think for themselves. They make good use of a geographical vocabulary. Teachers are sensitive to aspects of geography that affect people in their daily lives and the environment.

121. The geography coordinator has only recently taken on responsibility for the subject. She has attended an in-service training course on the role of the coordinator and displays enthusiasm for the role. There is an appropriate scheme of work and the subject policy is about to be reviewed. There has been no formal monitoring of teaching and learning in geography by the new or the previous coordinator.

HISTORY

122. The level of pupils' attainment in history at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations, and at the end of Key Stage 2 it is above expectations. This represents an improvement on the standards reported in the last inspection.

123. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the recent and more distant past. In a very good lesson at the beginning of Key Stage 1, pupils looked with a sense of wonder at photographs, videos and a model produced by the teacher of a Victorian bathing machine. The lesson was effective in developing pupils' understanding of the recent and more distant past. When asked by the teacher 'What is history?' one pupil responded by saying 'Back in time' and another pupil said 'A long time ago.' Pupils are encouraged to think about how to solve historical problems. From the other evidence available, pupils are not as secure with the concept of chronology and are not given sufficient opportunities to consider time lines to consolidate their understanding using a variety of different objects or materials.

124. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of various historical periods such as the Tudors, the Vikings and the Egyptian civilisation. The pupils can recall some of the main characteristics about the Viking settlement in Britain and about King Cnut and Alfred the Great. Pupils' written work is variable in quality, but the ablest pupils produce accounts of historical events that are of good quality, neatly presented and in an individualised style. Pupils write for different purposes. A distinctive feature of the work is the emphasis on the human aspects of history. When studying the Tudors, pupils looked at a Holbein portrait of Henry VIII and were asked to consider what they could deduce from it about what he actually looked like. One of the problems set was, 'how do we know how big he was?' and pupils discovered, by using historical references, that it could be done by measuring his personal armour. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the importance of roads for travel and communication. In one lesson, pupils undertook a practical activity to construct a mini model Roman road using pebbles, flat stones and plaster. The lesson was thoroughly prepared and kept the pupils, whose attention had been far from good in other lessons, totally absorbed. Pupils had a clear understanding of how Roman roads differed from Celtic roads.

125. The quality of teaching in history is good. Teachers are sensitive to the human aspects of history and try to involve pupils in appreciating the impact of historical events on people and to develop a sense of empathy. The work is well planned and the scheme of work is helpful to staff. Teachers make good use of the material available, and visits to places of interest help to enrich pupils' learning experiences.

126. The coordinator for history has good knowledge and understanding of the subject, but aspects of her role need to be developed, such as the way the subject is monitored throughout the school to assess the quality of the teaching and the learning. Similarly, the assessment policy for history is too vague and procedures are unsatisfactory. Further improvements could be made to the resources in Key Stage 1, especially visual material and authentic resources and artefacts, to help pupils attain higher standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

127. Raising standards in ICT was a key issue from the last inspection. Improvements have been made to the school's provision for this subject, but much still remains to be done and standards of attainment are below the nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages.

128. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils recognise that everyday devices, such as a television and video recorder, respond to remote control signals. They know that they can enter and print out text using a computer, but some do not know that they use a word processing program to do this, nor do they understand the benefits of retrieving information which they have previously stored in order to amend it or add new information. Pupils have entered data to produce bar charts, but do not know how to set up the data-handling program to do this. When given the chance to use the classroom computer, they are keen to have a go but are dependent on adult help to do anything more complicated than entering text or data. They have used the word processor to alter the size and colour of the text, but they are unable to recall how they did so. It also takes them a long time to locate letters on the keyboard. They are aware that they can select different menus to carry out functions, such as printing, but they do not yet know how to save their work without assistance from an adult. At the present time, pupils are given far too little opportunity to use computers, either to learn new skills or to support their learning in other subjects. Although the subjects features on the timetable for half an hour each day, this time is frequently not used and many of the pupils do not have the chance to use the computer during the course of the week.

129. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are better now than they were at the time of the last inspection, although they are still below the nationally expected level. The main reason for this is that some aspects of the curriculum are not being covered as fully as they should and computers are not being used enough to help pupils with their learning in other subjects. Pupils who are taught by the subject coordinator in Years 4 and 5 are making better progress than pupils in other classes, as they benefit from his expertise and the use of a wider range of programs. These pupils know, for example, how to load a program, retrieve files, save and print their work and are competent in using the basic features of a range of programs. They use a word processor to enter and enhance texts and a graphics program to produce symmetrical patterns. They manipulate data to produce graphs and have a basic understanding of how a spreadsheet works. They have also gained initial insights into the area of control technology. Pupils know how to use the Internet and send emails, but get very little opportunity to do so as there is only one connection in school. Pupils do not acquire significantly more skills in Year 6, and some pupils still only have very basic computing skills. These pupils have a long way to go before using ICT as an everyday tool for finding things out, developing their ideas and exchanging and sharing information. Their experience of using computers over the last few years has been very patchy and, at times, extremely limited, so when they are introduced to a new program they do not always appreciate how it can be used, for example, to simplify a task or to carry out complex calculations.

130. Despite the improvements made since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning in ICT is unsatisfactory, because the teachers have planned far too few opportunities for the pupils to develop information technology skills. There are no class lessons for teaching the subject, and there is very little direct teaching of skills. Although pupils who have learnt and practised a skill pass this on to the next pupils in the class, this method of disseminating information cannot cater for the more complex skills which pupils need. Teachers' competence has improved as a result of some in-service training sessions and all staff are currently undergoing further training, funded by the New Opportunities Fund. However, many of the staff are still uncertain how to teach the subject effectively, particularly when only one computer is available within the cramped confines of the classroom. They do not have suitable strategies to incorporate the use of computers into their teaching or as an additional aid to learning on a regular basis, although appropriate use of computers was planned for some history lessons during the inspection. Although the school has adopted the government's exemplar scheme of work, not all staff are following this as systematically as they should. The overall result is that, in most classes, pupils are not acquiring new skills and the school is not helping pupils enough to become independent users of new technology.

131. Following the last inspection, the school appointed a new coordinator for ICT with particular previous expertise in the field of computing. Whilst this expertise has been used to good effect in his own class, it has not been disseminated as effectively as it could have been to other staff, although support for them is available whenever requested. The school has yet to devise procedures for assessing pupils' information technology skills, and so teachers have no way of knowing how to plan for pupils who bring other skills with them from their use of computers at home. The quality of teaching and learning is not monitored, thus allowing the deficiencies in the school's provision to continue. Resources have improved as a result of funding received from the National Grid for Learning, but the ratio of computers to pupils is still far too low to allow all pupils sufficient time to acquire new skills and have regular access to computers. At present, however, the few machines which the school does have are under-utilised.

MUSIC

132. Music plays an important part in the life of the school. The school has maintained good standards and the high profile of music since the last inspection. Standards at the end of both key stages are above those expected nationally and pupils make good progress. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection, but discussions with pupils and teachers' planning indicate growing musical skill and knowledge throughout the school, particularly in the playing of instruments. The use of the voice is not as well developed, and standards in singing are not as good as those in instrumental performance.

133. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good performing skills. They have a good awareness of rhythm and beat a pulse accurately. Younger pupils develop musical skills well. For example, when playing the accompaniment, which they had

composed, to a story about the seaside, they concentrated well, playing with good self-control and listening carefully to the rest of the group. They followed the conductor well. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn to play musical instruments, as a result on which standards in performance are above average. Older pupils all play the descant recorder and some learn treble. Their technique and intonation are generally good and pupils rarely over-blow. They all learn to read music. Pupils' confidence increases as they have opportunities in class to perform in large and small groups, and many ask to play solo.

134. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils achieve standards in performing which are well above those normally found. There is a high expectation for success throughout Key Stage 2. Many pupils are taught to play other woodwind instruments by the visiting peripatetic teacher and a few learn to play the cello. The school now has a thriving orchestra, run, at present, by the specialist teacher from the local arts college. The project is doing so well that the school intends to keep this going when the funding for the advanced skills teacher runs out. Pupils who have private violin lessons also join the orchestra, and this is proving a very good way to provide challenge for able musicians. Throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to consider feeling evoked by music and to appreciate its qualities. The older pupils do not sing as well as they play. Indeed, in one assembly, many of the oldest pupils did not sing at all, and the response of those who did sing was less than enthusiastic.

135. The quality of the teaching by specialist teachers is good; no teaching of non-specialist teachers was observed during the inspection. However, teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to improve their musical skills. Pupils reported that they play and sing in all classes. Sometimes this takes the form of listening and singing along to pre-recorded television and radio broadcasts. The high standards and the central role of the subject in the life of the school, make it a very good contributor to the pupils' personal development, spiritually as well as socially and culturally. The subject is led and managed well, and, because of her involvement in teaching in classes other than her own, the coordinator has a satisfactory knowledge of how the subject is progressing, overall. The

accommodation is poor and is unsuited to performing music well, but good resources are used well, despite the problems.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Apart from a swimming lesson, which was not observed, there were no physical education lessons for pupils in Classes 2 to 5 during the three days of the inspection. There is, therefore, very little evidence on which to base secure judgements about pupils' attainment and progress in physical education or to make comparisons with the previous inspection's findings.

137. The school continues to place a strong emphasis on swimming. All pupils from

Class 3 upwards have swimming lessons for 20 weeks during the school year. The school's records show that pupils achieve standards in swimming which are well above the national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Before they leave school, many pupils gain certificates for swimming long distances and for water survival. In addition to the school's own staff, pupils are taught by qualified instructors which helps the more able pupils to acquire good technique in different strokes and to become thoroughly conversant in aspects of water safety. During the summer term, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a half-hour swimming lesson in the school's starter pool whenever the weather is fine. The pupils greatly enjoy this opportunity, which helps them to gain confidence in water and prepares them well for their lessons in the larger pool. A significant number of pupils also take the opportunity to use the school's pool after school during the summer term. Given the length of time it takes pupils to travel to the swimming pool in Ledbury, governors may wish to consider whether this is the most efficient and effective use of the time available for teaching, especially as all pupils from Year 3 upwards spend such a large proportion of each year swimming.

138. In addition to their swimming lessons, pupils have two physical education lessons per week. The school offers a full programme of physical education which covers all aspects of gymnastics, dance and games. The long-term curricular plan is clear and appropriate. In addition to these activities, the school has supported a national sports initiative, and pupils have been able to experience taster sessions in a variety of different sports. A cricket professional visits the school during the summer term to provide cricket coaching. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities and, despite its small size, enjoys success as pupils compete in netball and football tournaments and leagues, athletics competitions and kwik cricket matches against local schools.

139. The coordinator has been responsible for developing aspects of the subject and disseminating information to staff. However, apart from the records kept for swimming, there are no assessment procedures to help staff ascertain what progress pupils are making in basic skills. The coordinator has not used the available time for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and is not fully conversant with what is happening in classes other than her own.

140. The school has its own playing field which offers good facilities for games under favourable weather conditions. Adequately sized playgrounds are available at other times. The indoor accommodation for gymnastics and dance is poor and impinges significantly on what pupils are able to achieve in their indoor lessons. The small size of the hall means that, at most, only half of the class can participate at any one time, which leads to inefficient use of both pupils' and teachers' time. A few parents expressed concern that their children frequently miss many physical education lessons because of inclement weather. Although the coordinator acknowledges that some lessons are missed for this reason, it was not possible to gain a clear picture of how adversely pupils are affected. The indoor alternative to lessons outside is not conducive to good performance.