

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. ANDREWS C E FIRST SCHOOL

Evesham, Worcestershire

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116811

Headteacher: Mr Alex Wall

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough
8339

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th November 2001

Inspection number: 192808

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 10 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marymans' Road Hampton Evesham
Postcode:	WR11 6NT
Telephone number:	01386 41351
Fax number:	01386 765581
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Icke
Date of previous inspection:	17 th - 20 th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8339	Hugh Protherough	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
	Vivien Davies	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs Mathematics Science Design and technology Geography History	How well does the school care for its pupils?
	Beryl Rimmer	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English Art and design Music Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Hugh Protherough Inspections Ltd.
PO Box 396
Banbury
OX15 5XJ

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

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This first school is of average size and provides education for 182 pupils between the ages of 4 and 10. There are 88 boys and 94 girls. The pupils are of predominantly white ethnic origin, including 14 children from Travelling Families. Only one pupil speaks English as an additional language. The school serves an area that is socially mixed. Although only 5% of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, the absence of a school meals service makes it difficult for the school to gather reliable data. The early assessments of the children show that their attainment on entry is generally below average, especially in their early communication, language and literacy. This is further reflected in the significant proportion of pupils (37%) on the school's register of special educational needs, which is well above the national average and includes one pupil with a statement of special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

As a result of its positive response to the last inspection report, the school has gained in effectiveness and is now doing a good job. In the past four years, the headteacher, with the support of the staff and governors, has tackled the many shortcomings identified in the previous report with perception, determination and considerable success. As a result, there is greater breadth and balance to the curriculum and the teaching throughout the school is of far better quality. Standards are starting to rise and pupils of all abilities are helped to succeed. The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and has built a staff team that is working together with increasing effectiveness.
- Standards are improving, especially in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The teachers know their children very well and use this knowledge effectively to plan lessons that successfully include and motivate pupils of all backgrounds and abilities.
- The curriculum is very broad and well balanced, and includes a rich mixture of additional activities that enhance the provision for the children's personal development.
- The governors have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and provide a successful blend of support and challenge for the staff team.
- The quality of much of the children's work in art and design is exceptional.

What could be improved

- There are no major weaknesses in what the school provides. The inspection team endorses the priorities identified for continuing school improvement that are set out within the school development plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in March 1997, it was judged to have "serious shortcomings in the quality and standards of the education provided." **This is no longer the case.** Standards have improved steadily as a result of the conscientious response of the headteacher, governors and staff in addressing the issues raised. The teachers now make far better use of the information gleaned from the results of the national tests and other assessments to set relevant and challenging targets for individual children. The school now provides a more coherent curriculum that includes the effective

use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and all other statutory requirements. The adoption of common approaches to planning lessons has also contributed to improvements in the quality of the teaching that is now generally good throughout the school. The headteacher, staff and governors have developed extremely effective approaches to planning school improvement so that there is a shared understanding of current targets and priorities within the school development plan and how they are to be achieved. This process includes careful financial planning so that best use is made of the school's budget.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	D	D	C	D
writing	D	D	C	C
Mathematics	B	C	A	A

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

When the pupils enter the reception class, the teachers' early assessments show that their levels of attainment cover the full range, but are generally below average overall. As a result of the good teaching the children soon settle into the routines of school and make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is generally in line with the expected levels in most areas of learning. However, a significant number of children still struggle in the development of their skills of communication, language and literacy.

The school's results in the national tests frequently fluctuate, as a result of annual variations in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Even so, the trend of the past four years shows a generally steady improvement in the standards of reading, writing and mathematics. In the national tests of 2001, the Year 2 pupils achieved results that in comparison with both the national picture and similar schools were broadly average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Standards of reading were in line with the national average, but below average when compared to the results of similar schools. Although the current Year 2 cohort has significant numbers of lower-attaining pupils and standards this year are slightly lower, the inspection findings demonstrate that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are achieving well and making good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. The pupils are on course to meet the challenging and realistic targets set by their teachers. An analysis of the results of the voluntary tests shows that the pupils in Year 5 have made good progress since the end of Year 2. As a result of the teachers' high expectations and some consistently good teaching, standards are now broadly average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science.

The school has correctly identified the pupils' relative under-performance in reading and writing as a focus for school improvement. The inspection evidence shows that the teachers are currently making much better use of their informal assessments to ensure that fundamental literacy skills are regularly

revised and reinforced so that the pupils' progress is speeding up. Closer analysis of the school's assessment data suggests that by the end of Year 5, on average, the girls have been performing in advance of the boys. However, the inspection findings indicate that all groups of pupils are achieving well and that there is no evidence of bias within the teaching that might contribute to this variation. Throughout the school, the standard of the pupils' work in music continues to exceed the expected levels and their work in art is of exceptional quality.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The children enjoy school and work hard in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The overwhelming majority of the children are courteous, polite and behave considerately towards each other, staff and visitors to the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are very good. The children are successfully encouraged to accept responsibility from an early age.
Attendance	Above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 5
Quality of teaching	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 has improved considerably since the last inspection when almost one in five lessons were judged unsatisfactory. On this occasion, no unsatisfactory lessons were observed and a high proportion was of either good or very good quality. In a few instances the teaching was excellent.

The teaching in the reception class helps the children get off to a good start. The teacher makes effective use of the Foundation Stage Curriculum in planning a good range of appropriate activities across each of the six areas of learning. A strength of the provision lies in the effective way that the adults have helped the children to settle swiftly into the routines of school so that they now show increasing confidence in their work and play.

In Years 1-5 the teachers have successfully embraced the guidance offered by the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Their subject knowledge is secure and their lesson planning thorough and detailed. A particular strength is the way that the teachers identify precisely what they expect the children to learn. In the most effective lessons, these objectives are made plain to the class at the outset and referred to regularly throughout the period in order to check progress. The teachers know their pupils very well and make good use of their informal assessments when planning the next steps in learning.

Throughout the school a major strength of the provision is the teachers' high expectation of the children regardless of their background or ability. They know the children very well and use this knowledge skilfully in planning lessons that interest and motivate. The very positive relationships within each class engender a climate of hard work and enjoyable learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a much-improved curriculum that has breadth and balance and is enriched by a very good range of extra curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The effective teamwork of the co-ordinator and the teaching assistants helps the teachers to ensure that these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are appropriate arrangements that enable the school to obtain the right sorts of advice and resources in meeting successfully the needs of such pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides a wide range of stimulating activities that cater effectively for the children's all round development. There is particular strength in the frequent opportunities offered for the pupils to reflect on life's deeper questions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has strong and effective systems that ensure the health, safety and welfare of all pupils.

The staff works hard to encourage a true partnership between home and school. The majority of parents welcome this and many read with their children and support school events. However, a significant number find such involvement difficult to sustain.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership has grown in strength because his clear vision includes a commitment to developing the skills and talents of the staff team. As a result, the management of the school is extremely effective because all adults understand their roles and responsibilities and their performance is regularly reviewed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is extremely effective in its support of the school and fulfils all of its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, staff and governors have a keen appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses based on a shrewd analysis of a good range of relevant evidence collected at first hand from around the school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes maximum use of its annual budget and a good start has been made in applying the principles of best value.

The staffing levels are good. The governors have made significant investment in ensuring that each class benefits from the support of a teaching assistant and a school meals supervisor. The school's

accommodation is adequate, but three of the classes are in temporary accommodation and the school's heating system needs upgrading. The levels of educational resources are good and include recent improvement to the school's supply of computers.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • The teachers are good at making learning fun so the children make good progress. • It is easy to approach the school with problems or concerns. • The teachers encourage good behaviour and are helping the children to grow up into mature, responsible people. • There is good support for the children with special educational needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' views on homework are divided: some would like more, others less.

The inspection team agrees with the overwhelmingly positive views of the vast majority of parents. The successful completion of homework by a few pupils is clearly helping them to make good progress in subsequent lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There has been considerable improvement in the quality and standard of the pupils' work since the last inspection when standards in English, mathematics and science were described as low and weaknesses were identified in religious education, information and communication technology, art and design and technology. Even though the school's results in the national tests still fluctuate in line with the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the trend of the past four years shows a generally steady improvement in the standards of reading, writing, mathematics and science. The inspection findings confirm that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make good progress, so that by the end of Year 5 their achievements reflect significant improvement from the time when they first started school.
2. The teachers' early assessments show that when the children enter school in the reception class, their attainment covers the full range, but is generally below average overall. This is particularly the case in their early communication, language and literacy development. As a result of good teaching, the children soon settle into the routine of school and make good progress in all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. By the end of this stage, the majority of children have achieved the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional, mathematical, physical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, a significant number of children still struggle in the development of their skills of communication, language and literacy.
3. In the national tests of 2001, the Year 2 pupils achieved results that in comparison with both the national picture and similar schools were broadly average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Standards of reading were in line with the national average, but below average when compared to the results of similar schools. The current Year 2 cohort contains a substantial proportion of lower-attaining pupils including many with special educational needs. As a result, standards are average in mathematics and science, but slightly below average in reading and writing. Nevertheless, the inspection findings show that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are achieving well and making good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. They are on course to meet the challenging and realistic targets set by their teachers.
4. In Years 3, 4 and 5 the school makes sensible and effective use of the voluntary national tests. An analysis of these results shows that the pupils in the current Year 5 have made good progress since the end of Year 2, especially in improving their performance in reading and writing. For example, their scores show that on average the pupils have made almost seven and a half terms of progress in the course of just six. The inspection findings confirm that as a result of the teachers' high expectations and consistently good teaching, standards are now broadly average in reading and writing and are above average in mathematics and science.
5. The school has correctly identified the pupils' relative under-performance in reading and writing as a focus for school improvement and is working on this to good effect. The inspection evidence shows that the teachers are currently making much better use of their informal assessments to ensure that the fundamental literacy skills are regularly revised and reinforced so that the pupils' progress is speeding up. Closer analysis of the school's assessment data suggests that by the end of Year 5, on average the girls have been performing in advance of the

boys. However, the inspection findings indicate that all groups of pupils are achieving well and that there is no evidence of any bias within the teaching that might contribute to this variation.

6. There are good arrangements for tracking the performance of different groups of pupils to ensure that they are making sufficient progress. For instance, the additional support provided for some of the pupils from Travelling Families is carefully targeted to help their literacy skills. In addition, the special needs co-ordinator successfully supports the teachers and teaching assistants in order that the pupils can make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. Although there is currently only one pupil who speaks English as an additional language, the school has taken care to find out what it needs to do to support such children. As a result, it is working successfully to help this child to integrate successfully within lessons and make progress in his/her work.
7. Throughout the school, the standard of the pupils' work in music continues to exceed the expected levels. The headteacher's own considerable skill with the guitar and the effective support of the school secretary enable the children to reach a good standard in their singing. This makes a strong contribution to the quality of the daily act of worship. Class music in Year 2 has also been enhanced by the use of the specialist music teacher. Following the appointment of a skilled and knowledgeable art co-ordinator the pupils' work in this subject has improved throughout the school and is now frequently of exceptional quality. Several pupils have won local and national competitions and awards. The new co-ordinator for information and communication technology is in his first year. A good start has been made because the necessary equipment is finally in place and the staff is gaining in confidence as a result of his patient training. The standard of the pupils' work has improved and is now in line with the expected levels. Since the last inspection, the status of religious education and design and technology has been assured within the school's curriculum. The pupils work hard and are achieving the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 5 in religious education and exceeding these in design and technology.
8. In physical education, geography and history the standard of the children's work continues to be in line with the expected levels. The very good range of educational visits and adventurous activities provided by the staff clearly enhance the quality of the pupils' learning experiences and the level of their achievements.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The pupils are keen to come to school and their levels of attendance are above those normally found in primary schools nationally. They appreciate the very good range of activities offered, including the extensive programme of visits and extra curricular activities, as well as the good, and sometimes very good, teaching that they receive. Their approach to learning is often enthusiastic, as they listen attentively and work hard. For example, one pupil was heard to remark, on returning to an English lesson after a break, "I can't wait to do my writing!" Some of the younger pupils can be a little restless in class and others find it hard to concentrate. However, by the time they reach the top end of the school their ability to sustain interest and involvement in what they are doing is a credit both to them and to the quality of the teaching they are receiving. The parents agree that their children like school.
10. Throughout the day and in all activities, the children's behaviour is invariably good. They respond well to the consistently high expectations of both the teaching and non-teaching staff and are polite and helpful to visitors. In class, they respond quickly to instructions and take due care of the books and materials they are using.

11. The school has worked hard to establish and support friendly and positive relationships both between pupils themselves and between pupils and staff. Considerable emphasis is placed on due respect being shown to everyone and a proper regard for each other's feelings and needs. The introduction of Circle Time and the provision of activities, such as adventure courses and camps, held away from the school site have helped the pupils to develop good social skills and a sense of mutual appreciation. As a result, relationships across the school are good and the pupils are sensitive to the feelings, values and beliefs of others. No instances of bullying, sexism or racism were seen during the inspection.
12. The pupils are gradually learning to assume responsibilities for different tasks throughout the school day, such as taking registers to the school office and putting out chairs for visitors. They also assume increasing responsibility, as they progress through the school, for their own actions and the well-being of others. Individual pupils have initiated charity fund raising, for example, and become involved in supporting both local and national charities through activities organised during the school day. The confidence shown by the oldest pupils, during a dramatic presentation, as part of their class led assembly, is a measure of the personal development achieved during their time in the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. At the time of the last inspection, almost one in five lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case because the headteacher and staff have worked together effectively to improve the quality of education provided at the school. As a result of monitoring each other's lessons and ensuring that successful practice is shared and understood by all staff, the teaching has improved dramatically and is now of a good quality throughout the school. During the course of the inspection, 52 lessons were observed. Of these, 6% were judged excellent, 21% very good, 48% good and 25% satisfactory. The bulk of the very good teaching is found in those classes with some of the more experienced and senior teachers, that is Years 2, 4 and 5. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.
14. The teaching in the reception class helps the children get off to a good start. The programme of work is planned in line with the national guidance provided for the Foundation Stage Curriculum so that the children receive a good range of appropriate activities across each of the six areas of learning. The strength of the provision lies in the way that the adults have helped the children to settle swiftly into the routines of school. The children appear eager to get to school and are quick to register themselves and start work. They can do this because the teacher and her assistant always make sure that there is a good range of activities from which the children can choose. For instance, some will choose to play in the shop, others listen to story cassettes whilst a few make good use of the musical instruments. This type of organisation is helping the children to make independent choices and grow in confidence as they start to establish personal interests and preferences. The teacher places an appropriate emphasis on developing the children's early skills of literacy and numeracy within a broad variety of contexts. This is important because on entry the children's attainment in these areas is generally below average. Soon after the start of each day, the class comes together to sing a variety of songs and rhymes from a repertoire that now includes "Jack and Jill" and "Baa Baa Black Sheep." This develops the children's love of language and the teacher's lively story telling is similarly encouraging them to want to learn to read. Good attention is paid to teaching the children about the sounds of letters and the related activities, such as collecting objects that begin with "b", clearly motivate them, especially when they have to check whether the headteacher's offerings really do begin with a "b"! The teaching of mathematics is made similarly enjoyable through the effective use

of a broad variety of games, equipment and colourful number lines that are used effectively to help the children to count, sort and order.

15. One of the reasons why standards are improving is that the school has successfully embraced the guidance offered by the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy in Years 1 to 5. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure because a high proportion of them attended additional training events as part of their professional development. Throughout the school, the teachers make effective use of the suggested planning frameworks in both subjects. This helps them to be clear about what it is that they expect the children to learn, and in the most effective lessons these objectives are made clear to the class at the outset and referred to regularly throughout the lesson.
16. A further improvement in the teaching of literacy and numeracy lies in the thoughtful way that the teachers plan work that is matched accurately to the wide range of abilities within each class. One of the reasons that they can do this is that there are useful systems for tracking the progress of each pupil that include detailed records of their performance in tests and assessments, as well as samples of their previous work. However, the major key to their success lies in the thoughtful self-evaluations made by the teachers and in the way that they annotate their lesson plans with what the pupils find hard or easy. As a result of these systems and the brisk rate of learning observed in many lessons, it is evident that the teachers' day-to-day assessments are highly effective in supporting the planning process.
17. The teachers' skilful use of language is a further factor that contributes strongly to the pupils' successful learning throughout the school. They continually attempt to broaden their pupils' knowledge of language through sharply focussed questioning and the correct use of technical language. For instance, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson the teacher successfully improved the children's understanding of the order of numbers by emphasising phrases like "more than," "less than" and asking questions such as "Can you think of a number that goes between 13 and 19?" In subjects such as science, the teachers are careful to encourage the pupils to observe closely and explain what they see. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson, the pupils were measuring the amount of force required to drag a tray over a variety of surfaces. The teacher used this work to introduce the idea of friction and his careful questioning of the children revealed that most could explain that the smooth surface of a desk offered less resistance than damp grass or the carpet.
18. A further strength is the way that the teachers successfully include pupils of all abilities and backgrounds in class discussion and debate. The inspectors looked closely at this aspect of the teachers' work in order to see if this might be contributing to the higher scores achieved by girls in the recent national tests. However, the inspection evidence shows that the staff takes great care to involve both boys and girls fully in the lessons. Similarly, there is no evidence of gender stereotyping within the curriculum, so that boys are as likely to be observed reading, singing and dancing well as the girls are to be found using a computer or leading a science experiment. Similarly, it is evident that those pupils from Travelling families are successfully included in every aspect of the school's life. Appropriate and effective additional support is provided for the few who need help with reading and writing, but the majority require minimal additional assistance.
19. The school makes good provision in meeting the needs of the large number of pupils with special educational needs. The special needs co-ordinator is particularly knowledgeable about dyslexia and her expertise helps many of these children to make good improvements in reading and writing. The teachers also make appropriate use of short, linked tasks that help to motivate these

pupils and lead to good gains in their learning. The consistent application of the school's behaviour policy contributes strongly to the way that those children with emotional and behavioural difficulties are included within the school.

20. Relationships within every class are very positive because the teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and present strong and appropriate role models in their interested and considerate interactions with the children. Throughout the inspection, the teachers were regularly observed providing encouragement and positive feedback in ways that were significant for the individual pupils concerned. This was evident, for instance, in Years 1 and 4 when the teachers praised the concentration and application of pupils who find it difficult to listen for long periods.
21. The teachers are effectively supported by the teaching assistants that are attached to every class. This has a beneficial impact on the quality of the teaching and learning because the additional adult presence means that the teacher can target additional support where it is most needed. For instance, this was frequently successful when the teachers deployed their assistants in the support of the pupils with special educational needs. A further reason why this system works so well lies in the investment made in training the teaching assistants and in the conscientious planning, preparation and subsequent evaluation carried out by the teacher and the assistant after lessons.
22. Although parental opinion is divided about homework, the teachers set this on a regular basis. A few pupils complete these tasks diligently. For instance, some of the Year 4 class had gathered useful information about the life of Isaac Newton as part of their studies in science. On such occasions, it is evident that the teachers check the pupils' work and provide encouraging, helpful feedback that effectively supports this extension of their learning.

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

23. The school's curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection because there is now a coherent framework and consistency of approach to planning that ensures a good breadth and balance across all the subjects of the National Curriculum. In particular, there has been a very positive response to the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy, which has contributed strongly to the recent good improvements in standards. The teachers have made effective use of the national guidance provided for teaching the other subjects of the National Curriculum and have successfully adopted this within their agreed framework for planning. The teaching of religious education is now firmly established within the school's curriculum.
24. The school continues to provide very well for the all round development of the pupils. For instance, every class is expected to make at least one major educational visit each term, as well as other trips within the surrounding community. There are visits to the theatre as well as visits from touring groups provided through the West Midlands Arts Association. The "Life Bus" visits school each year and provides a useful additional resource that supports the school's ongoing and effective programme of personal, social and health education. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching of the "Life Bus" staff observed during the inspection ensures that the children learn a lot at a very swift pace. At the end of each school day, the teachers provide a very good breadth of extra curricular clubs and activities including sport, art, music and computing.

25. There is particular strength in the opportunities for longer, residential visits that the staff provides for the children each year. As a result of concerns about the behaviour of some of the current Year 4, it was decided to take them camping last summer term. This had an extremely positive effect upon relationships within the class and has clearly contributed to the good start that has been made this year. During the inspection, the same class set off for another three-day visit; this time to the local outdoor pursuits centre at Great Malvern. Conversations with these children revealed great excitement and a genuine appreciation of what was being provided.
26. The headteacher, governors and staff are strongly committed to ensuring that all those who want to benefit from such activities are enabled to do so. There are effective systems for keeping the parents informed of what is going on and how the school might bear some of the costs involved in order to help those families facing financial hardship. The school's strong links with the local "John Martin Charitable Trust" contribute significantly to the success of these ventures.
27. The decision to invest in the development of an independent playgroup on the school site is also paying dividends. There is a close working relationship between both sets of staff that is lifting the children's attainments and preparing them effectively for school. There are similar close links with the local middle school that ensure most Year 5 pupils make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.
28. The provision for the many pupils with special educational needs is good. The improvement in the use of the teachers' assessments means that these pupils are now identified at an early stage, the parents informed promptly and the necessary support identified in well-written individual education plans. The expertise of the special needs co-ordinator in the field of dyslexia and other early reading difficulties enables her to provide closely targeted support for those with the greatest need in this area. She also helps the teachers and their assistants in planning appropriate activities in support of the other pupils on the school's register of special needs. The close team-work of the staff and the generally consistent application of the behaviour management policy means that those pupils who find it difficult to settle to work receive consistent messages and are helped to learn what is expected of them. The inspection team agrees with the views of several parents who expressed considerable satisfaction at the support that the school was providing in meeting the special needs of their children.
29. Taken overall, the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good. There is a strong spiritual strand that runs through many aspects of what the school provides for its pupils. The act of worship is frequently of high quality and when the children are reciting the school prayer, singing or reflecting quietly on what they have seen and heard, it is evident that this daily gathering plays an important part in the lives of everyone connected with the school. This willingness to think more deeply about life's mysteries is evident in many other areas of the curriculum. During his first visit to the school, the Registered Inspector found the reception class rapt as they looked at a week-old baby who had been brought into school by the mother. Fundamental questions about the miracle of existence were clearly being raised in the children's minds. In a physical education lesson Year 5, the teacher read a poem on the theme of fireworks. Many pupils spontaneously closed their eyes to visualise the scene and subsequently produced a good range of imaginative responses when composing a dance.
30. The very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development emanates from the consistent approaches of the staff team. The teachers and their assistants always speak to the children politely and show a genuine interest in listening to what they have to say. This contributes strongly to the positive relationships evident in many lessons and in the many

pleasant exchanges observed, and experienced, by the inspectors in the course of their time spent at the school. School rules are sensibly kept to a minimum, but there are clear expectations of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour that are understood by all and reinforced by the reminders displayed in every classroom. The teachers take care to make the pupils aware of life's big questions and contemporary issues within both local and national news. As a result, the children are frequently involved in events that raise funds for both local and national charities.

31. The teachers make effective use of art and music to broaden the children's cultural awareness, especially in terms of Western European influences. They listen to music by composers such as Vivaldi and study the work of artists like Monet and Klimt. Other wider, cultural reference points are picked up through the much-improved provision within the teaching of religious education. For instance, the pupils in Year 3 have a good grasp of the story of Rama and Sita and the significance of their tale within the celebration of Diwali held by Hindus. The staff is currently developing an anti-racist policy in liaison with its local partnership of schools. A useful next step would be to deepen the pupils' awareness of the ethnic diversity of contemporary Britain by extending further the range of cultural reference points within the school's curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. This school cares very well for its pupils because all members of staff are committed to raising standards for all pupils in every aspect of their development. In the 1997 inspection report, pastoral care was regarded as a strength of the school and this is still the case. Since then, the arrangements for assessment of this aspect of the children's development have become very good, so the provision overall has improved. The pupils' behaviour is very good, and is underpinned by the positive systems the school has in place. Parents are more confident that the school encourages good behaviour than they were at the time of the 1997 inspection.
33. The safety and welfare of all the pupils is a priority for the school. The pupils feel comfortable talking to their teacher about any concerns they may have and are confident that they will be helped. The school's procedures to govern health and safety matters, including first aid, are very good, and there is appropriate record keeping. Elements of personal safety are covered during the personal, social and health education sessions and the pupils receive suitable sex and drugs awareness education. There is a designated member of staff for child protection who has received a satisfactory level of training and is fully involved in multi-agency meetings. The school follows recognised guidelines and staff are aware of their responsibilities in respect of this aspect of care. The quality of supervision and support during breaks is very good. The teachers know the parents and carers well, and take care to ensure that younger pupils are handed to a recognised person at the end of the day.
34. The children in the Foundation Stage are very well cared for. There are very good induction procedures for both children and parents, and the children settle quickly and happily into the routines of the classroom. At the start of each day, the parents have very good opportunities to speak informally to staff about any small matters of concern. This useful arrangement continues in Key Stage 1. The children quickly learn what is expected of them and the various members of staff reinforce good work and behaviour with praise. There are very good systems for assessing and monitoring the children's abilities and progress based on careful observation and discussion.

35. The school has very good procedures for recording and monitoring any persistent instances of poor behaviour and, in such cases, the parents are always involved at an early stage. The pupils are well motivated by a system of rewards and the majority try hard to live up to the school's expectations. There are very good and effective procedures to deal with bullying and harassment and both parents and pupils are fully involved in resolving any persistent, serious disputes. The staff is very good at dealing with challenging behaviour. They are especially vigilant to ensure that pupils are neither intimidated nor bullied. The school now has a very clear policy for dealing with these matters, leading to another improvement in practice since the last inspection.
36. Educational support and guidance are very good in nearly every class because the teachers are committed to their pupils, know them very well, respect them and are working with them on an agenda of academic and personal development. Targets are used very well to support the pupils in all these aspects. The school lays firm emphasis on the pupils' personal development during assemblies, circle time and personal, social and health education. It also makes very good use of school trips, including weekend camps, to enhance provision in this area.
37. The pupils understand clearly how good their work is because the teachers mark it regularly and write clear comments to tell them how to improve. The school has thorough procedures for measuring attainment in literacy and numeracy through an annual programme of tests in all classes. The results are used to monitor the progress of both individual pupils and year groups. They also form the basis of the school's target setting procedures in English and mathematics. The school's analysis of test data is well developed so the teachers know which topics the pupils find difficult and can compare the results of different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls. This information, alongside the very good lesson evaluation, is used very effectively in planning to improve teaching activities so that they are more challenging. Individual pupil targets are now set each term and reviewed with the pupils and their parents. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
38. The procedures for monitoring and supporting attendance are very good. The registration process complies with the statutory requirements, and the headteacher monitors overall rates of attendance on a regular basis.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The parents are supportive of the school and pleased with the provision being made for their children. In particular, they appreciate the progress their children are making, the quality of the teaching, and the way the school expects the children to work hard and achieve of their best. They also appreciate the ease of contact with staff and the attention given to any concerns. Most of those who expressed an opinion were pleased with all aspects of school life, but a small number of parents were dissatisfied on a number of points. They include the amount of homework, the information they receive about their child's progress, the way the school works with them, and the manner in which it is led and managed. The inspection evidence confirms the positive views of the great majority of parents and finds little to justify the negative comments.
40. The school works hard to keep the parents and carers informed about what is being taught, particularly in English and mathematics, and on ways to support their child's learning at home. For example, the regular newsletters contain valuable advice on how to help children learn to spell and how to make reading enjoyable. A good level of information is provided about the day-to-day life of the school generally and about trips away from the school site. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress vary in quality. When they are good, they convey a clear

picture of what the child has experienced and learned and go on to set targets for the future. The parents are encouraged to come in to school at the start of the day and can see the sort of work their children are doing. Ease of informal contact with the teaching staff and regular formal meetings with parents provide further information on the progress being made.

41. Although not all parents are supportive of the work the pupils are required to do at home, a great many are and a good dialogue is maintained through the use of home/school liaison notebooks. The parents are appreciative of the good range of trips and visits arranged for their children and are always ready to help with supervision off the school site. There is an active supporters association, which raises valuable funds and has helped provide a wide range of books and equipment for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The previous inspection report was unequivocal in its identification of the many weaknesses in the management of the school. This is no longer the case because there has been determined action by the headteacher, governors and staff to address these issues. Their efforts have resulted in significant improvement in the quality of education offered to the pupils and the standards that they achieve.
43. The strong leadership of the headteacher has been central to the effectiveness of the school's response. He thought long and hard about the tough messages of the last report and set about putting things right in a determined fashion. He continues to exercise an excellent pastoral leadership through his regular contact with the children, staff and parents, but has added considerably to his effectiveness as a result of the greater rigour with which he tracks the quality of the teaching and the pupils' attainment and progress.
44. A further strength of the headteacher's leadership is the way he has helped the school community to develop a clearer vision for its work. Following discussion between governors, teachers and parents a mission statement was agreed; "Our central purpose is to help your child to learn and achieve." This objective and the supporting core statements lie at the heart of the extremely effective way that the school sets about planning for future improvement because they shape the structure of the school development plan. For instance, the broad statement that "the school seeks to add value to children's education" is currently exemplified by "raising standards of reading and writing in Key Stage 1." This aim is then broken down into the actions required, the time-scales, the responsible people and the related costs. Finally, there are precise criteria against which success can be measured. The plan is very useful because everyone plays a part in its creation and review, and is, therefore, familiar with the document. For instance, each spring the governors and teachers spend a day evaluating the progress of the past year and set about deciding what needs to be included in next year's plan. It is this type of process that has produced a team that is working together with increasing effectiveness. So much so, that it was recently recognized by the award of "Investors in People" status.
45. As a result of these improvements in the school's approaches to strategic planning, the subject co-ordinators have a very clear appreciation of their roles and responsibilities and carry out their duties extremely effectively. For example, it was quickly and repeatedly clear that each co-ordinator not only provides strong support for curriculum planning and development, but also has a clear appreciation of the standards being achieved in their subject and what needs to be done next to improve them. The successful introduction of Performance Management has also provided additional impetus to the development of the staff team because the regular conversations held between the headteacher and senior staff and all the adults who work at the

school ensures that everyone know what is expected of them. There are several good examples of this successful practice. For instance, the two newly qualified teachers receive very good support from an experienced teacher/mentor. The “Career Entry Profile” of each teacher has been carefully analysed and appropriate time and support provided so that each has time to work alongside more experienced colleagues. Similarly, the regular meetings held with the teaching assistants and school meals supervisors acknowledge the importance of their work and provide important opportunities for feedback.

46. The governing body contains a useful mix of backgrounds and experience that combines to very good effect in its support of the school. Since the last inspection, the governors have improved considerably their oversight of what goes on in school. Their meetings are informed by the headteacher’s reports and by regular presentations by the subject co-ordinators about current school initiatives. In addition, the governors check their impressions by visiting lessons, attending worship and joining in many other aspects of the school’s life. The management of the school’s finances is now carried out with far greater rigour in order that maximum use is made of all available resources. Although the figures for the end of the last financial year show a small deficit in the school’s budget, it is explained by complications surrounding the end of year accounting procedures. An analysis of the current budget reveals that the school is on course to achieve a small surplus to be carried forward in April 2002. The knowledge and experience of some of the governors has ensured that serious consideration is given to issues such as acquiring best value from expenditure. For instance, the issues surrounding the behaviour of some of the children at lunchtimes and the effect this was having on the afternoon session led to the provision of additional school meals supervisors. After a successful programme of recruitment and training, each class now has their own supervisor who knows the children individually and how best to support them in line with the school’s policy. The staff and governors recognise that this has been money well spent because lunchtimes are calm and peaceful and the lessons now run smoothly throughout the day.
47. The governing body also demonstrates a strong entrepreneurial spirit. The lack of a local nursery and the low levels of attainment of many pupils entering the school led to consideration of ways that this situation might be improved. Following negotiation with a local charity the school has purchased a temporary classroom that is being leased to an independent playgroup. The early signs are that this is having a positive effect in preparing children for school. Moreover, the school will have a valuable source of rental income once the initial loan is repaid in two years time.
48. There have been several recent changes amongst the teaching staff. As a result, the teaching team now includes a good number of appropriately trained, experienced and effective teachers. The provision of teaching assistants and school meals supervisors is very good. The levels of educational resources are good with recent improvements having been made to both the school library and the depth and range of resources available for the teaching of information and communication technology. The school’s accommodation is adequate. However, three classes are housed in temporary accommodation and the heating system in the main building is inefficient.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. There are no major weaknesses in what the school provides. The inspection team endorses the priorities for continuing school improvement that are set out within the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

52

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	25	13	0	0	0
Percentage	6	21	48	25	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y5

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

182

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y5

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

78

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

8

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

15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.54
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	14	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	9
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	19	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (81)	88 (74)	96 (94)
	National	[84] (83)	[86] (84)	[91] (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	10
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	19	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (81)	88 (84)	100 (84)
	National	[84] (84)	[83] (88)	[89] (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001			

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	()	()	()
	National	[] (75)	[] (72)	[] (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	()	()	()
	National	[] (70)	[] (72)	[] (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y5**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92.5

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	4	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	388,897
Total expenditure	400,091
Expenditure per pupil	2,053
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,304

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	187
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	45	6	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	58	6	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	43	16	3	3
The teaching is good.	55	42	7	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	35	16	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	35	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	32	6	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	42	39	13	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	35	42	13	6	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	42	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	42	10	0	3

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

50. The school has conscientiously and successfully adapted its reception class curriculum to incorporate the requirements of the Foundation Stage. It takes good account of all the areas of learning required for the age group and prepares the children well for the subjects of the National Curriculum. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The children experience an interesting variety of activities, through which they gain in confidence and independence, and make good progress in acquiring the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
51. When children enter the reception class at the age of four, the initial assessments carried out by the teachers show a very wide spread of ability, but a general level that is below average. The children's skills in mathematics are better than their skills in language, which are well below those expected. The children make good progress and by the time they are ready to move into Year 1, most have achieved the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. However, their attainment in communication, language and literacy is still below the expected levels for the age group.
52. The quality of the teaching is good overall. This and the good liaison with the pre-school playgroup, recently incorporated on the school site, have had a positive impact on the provision and standards of attainment.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. The school provides the children with a positive start to school life, and they settle happily into well-established routines and organisation. Relationships between the parents, teaching assistants and children are very good. When the children arrive in the morning, they confidently choose from a suitably wide range of stimulating activities, well organised into areas of learning. They are taught to accept responsibility for themselves in a number of ways, such as putting on bands to visit the toilet, looking after their own snack boxes and recording their own books to take home. After painting activities, they wash their hand, without being asked to do so. The adults encourage the children to tidy up and they mostly co-operate with one another to put resources away in the right place. The children are learning to share equipment and take turns, although some still find this difficult and depend on adults to sort out occasional conflicts. They line up sensibly and know they must put up their hands before they speak in a group. The children willingly follow instructions and directions from adults, for instance, at the end of the day when they collect and organise their belongings before listening to a story. The teaching is good overall, and sets a good balance between the children choosing what to do and being told what to do by adults. The adults set good examples for children and make good use of an effective star system to reward them for good behaviour and work. As the school year proceeds, they further develop their social skills when they mix with older children at playtime and join in the whole-school assemblies.

Communication, language and literacy

54. The children are making good progress in learning to listen and are mostly attentive to adults during group activities, including interesting introductions to literacy and numeracy sessions, stories and singing. They are able to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively, though

not always with clarity of speech. There is a wide range of ability in speaking skills. Some children are articulate and confident, initiating conversations and using talk during role-play activities, but most are usually quiet and respond to questions with only brief replies.

55. The children enjoy looking at books, but have low levels of concentration and do not persevere in this activity for very long. They eagerly choose the recently introduced Story Sacks, comprising a book and a variety of related activities, to take home to share with adults. The children recognise their names when they register their arrival at the start of the day and when they put their belongings in a named tray. The most able find their own record cards to match the book, showing a high level of word recognition. The children are beginning to recognise letters and sounds by singing the alphabet and matching sounds to objects, but many are still at very early stages in this learning.
56. The children are developing satisfactory pencil control and most of them make recognisable attempts at writing their names. They frequently use the writing area to practise and experiment with a variety of pens and pencils. They write for real purposes when they make get-well cards for the dolls in the role-play area, which is currently set up as a hospital. Good teaching effectively fosters the early reading and writing skills and an enjoyment of books. There is an inviting, well-stocked book corner where children can choose their own books and listen to stories on tapes. Labels and name cards are very much in evidence around the room, providing good models for children. Occasionally, the aim and purpose of some of the play activities are insufficiently clear and the adults sometimes miss opportunities to involve themselves in the play activities in order to develop the children's language and vocabulary more widely.

Mathematical development

57. The children reach the expected learning goals in mathematics. There is a well structured programme based on the national numeracy strategy and a colourful, stimulating environment rich in numbers to enhance the children's knowledge of the order and formation of numerals effectively. There are many opportunities for children to sort, match and count, using a good variety of equipment and materials. They recognise numbers up to ten, matching them correctly to symbols and accurately putting them in order. The older children are beginning to understand the importance of zero and many recognise numbers to twenty. They are also showing some understanding of the principles of addition and subtraction by using vocabulary such as 'more' and 'less'. The teaching is good overall. The sessions are purposeful with lively and interesting introductions and opportunities for practical activities. The children enjoy finding numerals hidden in the classroom and delight in spotting that the number three is the wrong way round, or that four and twelve are in the wrong places on their row of green bottles. The adults make well-judged interventions with the more able children to reinforce number language. Sometimes the planned activities are restricted to a rather narrow learning objective and there are too few opportunities for the children to manipulate and compare numbers in a variety of different situations and at various levels.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children talk about themselves, their families and where they live, and many know their birthdays. They use their senses to investigate changing materials, such as sand, water and dough, thus developing their scientific and technology awareness. Following Bonfire Night, they assemble chosen materials to make fireworks, using various sticking and joining techniques from an appropriate range of materials. The children have suitable opportunities to work independently on computers where they enjoy controlling the

cursor to create colourful patterns. During the inspection, they visited the 'Life Caravan' on the site to learn about healthy living. The teaching is good, with well-planned activities and high quality resources. The children achieve the expected learning goals and are suitably prepared for the subjects of the National Curriculum.

Physical development

59. Most children reach the expected learning goals for physical development by the end of the foundation stage. During their outdoor play and in lessons, they move confidently with good levels of co-ordination and control. They show a good awareness of space and of others as they walk, run, jog and skip freely. In response to the teacher's directions, the children stop and start appropriately. They throw, catch and roll a variety of balls and engage in a range of climbing and balancing activities. Their handling of the strong, sturdy wheeled toys is impressive as they pedal forwards and backwards, often at speed. They have opportunities to create large structures with building blocks, and they develop fine motor control by using a range of construction equipment and small toys. During everyday activities, they handle scissors and other tools safely and effectively. There are frequent and regular planned lessons in the hall and outside in which the teaching is good. The school has recently introduced a secure fenced outdoor area, shared with the adjacent playgroup that has improved the provision for children's physical development. The reception class also makes sensible use of the large playground.

Creative development

60. By the time they leave the reception class, the children reach the expected early learning goals in this aspect of their work. They have good opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape using a wide range of media and materials. For example, they create splatter paintings and use various materials, paint and glue to make models of fireworks after Bonfire Night. They enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes, and have good opportunities to experiment imaginatively with sounds and percussion instruments. During physical education lessons, they make appropriate rhythmic responses to various pieces of music. They participate in role-play activities, such as a hospital and a shop where real money is used. The children co-operate well with one another and use their imagination to act out familiar situations. The teaching is good and provides a wide range of creative experiences.

ENGLISH

61. The standards in English have improved considerably since the last inspection. This is as a result of the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and of some very good teaching of basic skills throughout the school, particularly in Key Stage 2.
62. Pupils enter the school with well below average ability in language skills and make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, particularly at the end of the key stage where there is very good teaching in a Year 2 class. Although standards are below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing by the age of seven, the numbers include a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and there is a wide spread of ability. Pupils reach broadly average standards by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5, aged ten. This represents good progress for a group who entered the school with below average ability.
63. By the age of ten, pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening, increasing in confidence as a result of the very good relationships established throughout the school. The

majority of pupils are confident and enthusiastic talkers, using clear speech and appropriate vocabulary to express their thoughts and ideas clearly in a variety of different contexts. They discuss their current reading habits, their favourite activities and debate issues about religion and features of other countries with assurance. Teachers provide good models for spoken English and there are ample opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in lessons, assemblies and public occasions such as church services and school productions. There are many younger pupils who have immature patterns of speech or specific speech difficulties and standards are below those expected for seven-year-olds. Pupils are learning to listen to clear instructions and interesting introductions to lessons and when they are sufficiently engaged they listen well. They show by their enthusiastic responses to good questioning that they have listened and understood. Although at times, pupils speak indistinctly with consonants frequently missed from the ends of words, they make their meaning clear and speak with growing confidence. Many, however, do not use Standard English correctly and there are frequent instances of the misuse of tenses and parts of speech. In Year 2, pupils use phrases such as, 'Did you saw my book?', and 'I done my work', for example. Pupils make good gains in their learning, giving thoughtful and carefully considered responses by the time they reach the end of Year 5.

64. Standards in reading meet those expected of ten-year-olds by the end of Year 5 and show clear signs of improvement. Pupils have many good opportunities to read aloud, with the whole class, in groups and individually, developing their confidence to a good extent. As a result, the majority of pupils are confident, expressive, independent readers, using a range of strategies to read their chosen books accurately, although not always with fluency. Following the good examples set by teachers, they readily assume the roles of different characters. They read an increasing range of short novels, stories and poems for pleasure and enjoyment. They express their preferences and give reasons for their choices. One pupil, for example, enjoys Dick King Smith and Michael Rosen because she says they write about their families and personal experiences. Less able pupils have many strategies for working out unfamiliar words and although they read haltingly, they show understanding and read familiar words accurately with expression. They recognise the difference in style between fact and fiction books in Year 4 and by the end of Year 5; pupils readily use books to find information they need to help them with their research. Pupils find their own 'fascinating facts' on a range of interesting topics, such as dinosaurs, which they enjoy sharing with the rest of the class. All pupils are familiar with library terms such as contents, index and glossary. Although standards the age of seven are slightly below average the children are clearly developing a love of reading because many speak with interest and enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors. Many of the pupils show increasing discrimination as they choose from the good range of fiction and non-fiction that has been carefully organised by the teachers. Occasionally, in Key Stage 1, the pupils read books easily and would benefit from more challenging texts. The majority has a secure knowledge of sounds and letter blends, giving them a firm foundation for tackling unfamiliar words. They recognise familiar words and read simple texts with accuracy and good expression. The most able pupils are highly motivated readers and pupils of all abilities are strongly encouraged to take their books home to read. Pupils use their knowledge of sounds to identify words such as 'dressing'. They have a rather limited knowledge of authors, however.
65. The majority of seven year olds are gaining in confidence and the most able independently produce accurately written simple sentences. Most pupils copy reasonably accurately with well formed letters, although there is a significant minority that reverse letters and depend heavily on adult support and guidance. By the time pupils leave the school, the standard of writing is in line with that expected of ten-year-olds. Pupils are confident, independent writers who write for a wide range of genuine reasons relevant to their experience and understanding. They acquire grammatical skills in logical progression. They make good use of chosen texts to develop

comprehension, parts of speech, and punctuation and in Year 5, for example, write their own playscripts and read and understand the genre well. They write letters, use bullet points to make notes, label diagrams, produce lists, tables, charts and posters to present information and communicate messages in a meaningful way. Spelling of basic, frequently used words is largely accurate and pupils make good attempts at unfamiliar words, using their knowledge of phonetics confidently. Through a systematic programme of work and good teaching, pupils achieve well and make good gains in their learning. They add to their secure knowledge of grammatical skills gained over time and gain a good understanding of simple punctuation and parts of speech. However, as yet, very few reach higher levels of knowledge. Only the more able make accurate use of apostrophes, speech marks and exclamation marks. Teachers have high expectations of presentation and accuracy and as a result, pupils take great pride in their work. Writing is carefully set out, completed neatly and legibly and often illustrated. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards of spelling, handwriting and presentation were felt to receive insufficient emphasis.

66. The quality of teaching is good, with very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, resulting in rapid gains in learning by the time pupils leave the school, aged ten. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and provide an increasingly broad and interesting range of purposeful language activities to help to develop pupil's speaking and listening, reading and writing skills effectively. Lessons are well structured with the learning objectives clearly identified and shared with pupils. Energetic and enthusiastic presentations successfully engage their interest and involvement in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2. Teachers use good questioning skills, listening carefully and valuing the spoken contributions from pupils of all levels of ability, developing their confidence to speak in front of others. They challenge pupils to think carefully and extend their thoughts and ideas into words. Whilst pupils are keen to take books home, there is variable use of the homework books by teachers and parents, however and comments are often limited to the title of the book being read and do not show sufficiently how parents can help. Teachers use their conscientious assessments of pupil's understanding of basic skills to ensure that they all have a secure knowledge of basic principles of sounds, sentence structure and rules of grammar. A strong feature of English lessons is the way in which teachers frequently and regularly reinforce and revise basic skills whilst introducing new learning. In a Year 3 lesson on verb endings, for example, pupils learn that a consonant is doubled before adding 'ing' and the teacher frequently reminds pupils about the use of capital letters and full stops. This gives pupils a secure foundation and high degree of accuracy in their work. There is a systematic programme of spelling and handwriting modelled effectively by teachers both in their classroom displays and on boards and charts during lessons. Pupils in Year 4 work hard with enthusiasm, to find mnemonics for because, thought and heard, developing strategies for spelling to good effect. Effective management of an interesting variety of language activities leads to little time being wasted on discipline and pupils work hard, making good progress and producing their best work at all times. Good standards of marking give guidance to pupils as to how they can improve their work. There is good support for the pupils with special educational needs and from well-qualified and trained teaching assistants.

MATHEMATICS

67. The school has worked very hard since the last inspection and has achieved a remarkable improvement in the provision for mathematics. At that time, standards were below the national averages, but have risen significantly and are now above the national averages in both key stages. There has been a corresponding improvement in the teaching, which is now good rather than satisfactory. Very effective assessment arrangements, appropriate subject training and monitoring by a skilled subject manager have also contributed to this improvement.

68. The results in the Year 2 national tests for 2001 were well above the national average and those achieved by similar schools. However, the current Year 2 includes a significant number of pupils with special educational needs so the very high results reached in 2001 are unlikely to be matched this year. Even so, the analysis of the children's work shows that they are achieving well and have made good progress since they started school. The standards of work in Year 5 are above average. This view is confirmed by data from non-statutory tests. The majority of pupils are achieving the expected standards and a significant number of higher-attaining pupils exceed these. Throughout the school the pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress.
69. By the age of seven, the pupils are able to recall basic number facts and are developing accurate, reliable mental methods for calculating with two digit numbers. Most of them have appropriate knowledge of addition and subtraction facts and can count on in twos and tens from different starting points. They also have appropriate spatial and statistical knowledge, and are developing the skills that will enable them to apply their mathematical understanding in problem solving activities. The younger pupils can count to ten and read and write the numbers involved; some can add and subtract numbers to ten and count on mentally. Most pupils have a good grasp of mathematical language and satisfactory understanding of number operations; many are beginning to understand place value well. They are beginning to understand that subtraction can be used to 'reverse' addition. Most pupils use standard units for measuring length and can tell the time. They can construct simple graphs and show a good knowledge of the names and properties of shapes.
70. The pupils increase their capabilities well in Key Stage 2 and by the time they are in Year 5 they have acquired accurate, reliable methods for adding and subtracting three digit numbers. They can multiply and divide whole numbers by ten and a hundred. The average pupils can multiply and divide by a reliable method and can use simple fractions. The higher-attaining pupils multiply and divide large numbers and decimals. Year 5 pupils can classify shapes and have a secure knowledge of diagonals and other geometric attributes. The more able pupils measure and draw angles to the nearest degree. Their ability to do mental arithmetic is developing well, allowing them to make good use of informal methods and jottings when appropriate. The pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and take a pride in their work. The standard of presentation in their books is high throughout the school.
71. The pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to develop their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding is developing well; for instance, in data handling they can select and draw appropriate graphs and charts. In Year 4, information and communication technology was used imaginatively to develop ideas on fractions and in Year 2 to extend the pupils' understanding of place value. Links between mathematics and other subjects of the curriculum, particularly science, are well established. The pupils' problem solving techniques, including procedures to aid a systematic investigative approach and the drawing of conclusions, are developing well. This was evident, for example, when they were identifying diagonals in a polygon.
72. The teaching of mathematics shows that the teachers have very good grasp of the powerful strategies advocated by the National Numeracy Strategy. The teaching seen during the inspection was good overall, and in a quarter of the lessons it was either very good or excellent. The lessons are very well planned and managed; the teachers' presentation of the work is lively and engages the pupils well. In particular, the teachers make very good use of simple resources to demonstrate mathematical ideas and principles. In consequence, the pupils concentrate and

learn well, including a carefully selected vocabulary. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2 the pupils used number lines to 'reverse' addition, thereby gaining a good preliminary understanding of a challenging topic. The abler pupils in this class tackled more challenging work. In Year 5, very well chosen activities enable the pupils to use and apply their newly acquired mathematical language. For example, in pairs they played a guessing game that required them to discuss parallel lines, perpendiculars and diagonals. The mental "starters" in nearly all classes contain a very good range of activities designed to improve mathematics. During an excellent lesson in Year 5 the teacher used a number stick to demonstrate the 8 times table. By relating this table to the 4 and 40 times tables, she dramatically extended the pupils' learning.

73. The teachers use both informal observations and regular tests to assess the pupils' attainment. They also evaluate carefully the outcomes of each lesson. Their marking of the pupils' work is very thorough and provides them with additional, good information about progress and areas for improvement. The school makes effective use of a range of other tests and assessments and has established procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils and cohorts as they move through the school. The results are passed to the mathematics co-ordinator, who analyses them in order to identify areas of strength and weakness. This information is used in the planning of subsequent work.
74. The management of the subject is very good, and the mathematics co-ordinator is working well to make further improvements. Through lesson observation, checking the teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' work, she is systematically monitoring the quality of the provision. With individual education plans, she is also effectively supporting any under-achieving pupils who have special mathematical needs. All of the Key Stage 2 teachers have benefited noticeably from five days of additional training.

SCIENCE

75. Since the last inspection, the provision for this subject has improved, including the leadership, teaching, monitoring and assessment. As a result pupils are now achieving higher standards.
76. The Year 2 pupils are now reaching the standards expected for their age in all areas of science - physical, biological, material and investigative. In Year 5, they exceed the national expectations across the subject. This is a significant improvement in both areas of the school since last inspection.
77. The development of the pupils' investigative skills is a strong feature of the school's science programme. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were generally underdeveloped. For instance, in Year 5, when the teacher asked the pupils to place their hand on their heart, a quick visual assessment showed most were not touching the correct place. The pupils ran on the spot for a minute and felt their chests again, this time locating the heart accurately. This small experiment was typical of the very good interactive, practical teaching seen in nearly all classes.
78. During the inspection, the pupils were seen to be making good progress in their science lessons as a result of effective teaching. The Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of materials and their properties, such as the ability to change when subjected to heat. This is because their teachers plan an effective range of activities, which are mostly practical and which enable them to extend their knowledge, understanding and technical vocabulary. In Year 5, the work in the pupils' books indicates that they have a good knowledge of the properties of gases and are able

to draw sensible conclusions from their experiments. These pupils are reflective in their evaluation and are able to consider improvements to create a fairer test, for example, during a soil experiment. They are given very good guidance on planning investigations to find out, for instance, how the opposite ends of a magnet either attract or repel. These pupils really enjoy their work. The older pupils write good accounts of their work, and a strong feature in most classes is the way in which the teachers pay careful attention to the correct use of scientific vocabulary. Most teachers provide helpful worksheets and writing frames. The pupils with special educational needs are given good support in all classes.

79. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils and set an appropriate level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. For example, when presenting experimental ideas on the ways in which materials respond to heat, the teacher challenged the most able to think about the possibility of reversing the process as well as focussing the lower attainers on making accurate observations of the current experiment. The pupils behave responsibly and work well together because their teachers have high expectations of them.
80. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of science are good, and they prepare their lessons thoroughly and well. They devise imaginative methods of reinforcing that the pupils' knowledge and relating it to their everyday experiences. All lessons are carefully evaluated and any misconceptions that the pupils might have are corrected. In Year 5, excellent use was made of resources to explain the workings of the heart and the circulatory system. The pupils not only gained understanding, but also a sense of wonder and reverence for this key anatomical process. In Year 4, the teacher has planned to use a field trip to Malvern to provide practical experiments on friction. The pupils will engage in activities, such as grass sledging and canoeing, to reinforce imaginative class-work in which the pupils measured the force needed to drag a tray across a variety of surfaces. Good planning for practical science was evident in Year 1, where the teachers had taken the pupils to the park to use swings, seesaws and roundabouts. They then used this experience as a basis for their work on forces (pushing and pulling). Activities of this sort enable the pupils to place the science work that they do into the context of their own lives.
81. The school's improved teaching of numeracy has given most pupils a good range of measuring skills, which they apply in science. For example, they use the correct units for length and temperature and communicate their findings in the form of graphs and tables. During the inspection effective use was made of the school's computers when the pupils carried out simple research by using information stored on a CD Rom. The teacher's planning indicates that the pupils have appropriate opportunities to use simple control devices during practical experiments, including temperature sensors in Year 5.
82. The pupils know how well they are doing in science because the teachers mark their work promptly, and most put helpful suggestions for improvement in pupils' books. Assessment is thorough at the end of each module of work, and the teachers keep careful records of pupils' progress, noting which aspects of the curriculum are met and understood, so that the next stage can be successfully planned. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
83. The subject is well managed by an experienced subject specialist who monitors the curriculum by checking the pupils' books and the teachers' plans, and by a structured programme of classroom observation. He also gives the teachers excellent support by demonstrating lessons, providing expert subject knowledge and advice on planning. One teacher has benefited greatly from attendance at a twenty-day course. The resources for the subject are good, and the co-ordinator has made them more accessible by allocating them to topics covered in the very

thorough scheme of work, which is very well adapted from the national guidance. The scheme of work and the procedures for monitoring of the provision are improvements since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. There has been considerable improvement in the standards of both subjects since the last inspection. The co-ordinators have expertise and enthusiasm and their effective leadership has made a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve. They have established common formats to provide a clear framework and good guidance to all teachers. This has led to better teaching and good progress in pupils' development of skills in both subjects. As a result, pupils reach standards above those expected in design and technology and considerably exceed these in art and design by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5.
85. The presentation of artwork throughout the school is of an exceptionally high standard. Displays, such as impressive drawings of pastel flowers based on the work of Georgia O'Keefe, reflect the flair and artistic style of the co-ordinator. They enhance the school environment and make a significant contribution to pupils' aesthetic awareness. Pupils experience a wide range of media and materials to produce sculptures, ceramic tiles, observational drawings, landscapes, collage pictures, portraits and designs of a high quality. By the time they reach Year 5, pupils show a good eye for shape, form and colour. They have gained skills of colour mixing and shading techniques well above those usually found. Observational drawings of plants using chalks, pastels and paint show imagination and individuality. They reach levels of sophistication and design rarely found at this stage. Many pupils speak of art as their favourite subject and know their finished work is valued and of a good standard. They recall the names of artists such as Van Gogh and Monet and a minority describe individual styles and characteristics. One identifies Monet as being 'sort of blurry with flowers on deep water.' Pupils make good progress in a Year 3 lesson on portraits as a result of expert guidance from the teaching. They learn how to use proportions and position features by careful observations. They benefit from a very good presentation of famous artists' work to demonstrate different styles and techniques when pupils sketch portraits of one another. As a result of good questioning skills pupils make thoughtful comments about portraits by Modigliani, Picasso, Cezanne and Van Gogh, developing their knowledge and understanding of art to a good extent. They choose sensibly from a good variety of types of charcoal and pencils to achieve the desired effect and portraits have individual character and energy.
86. In design and technology, pupils enjoy an interesting variety of activities. They use their well developed skills to investigate and evaluate materials to a good level by the time they reach Year 5. The effective teaching in food technology motivates the pupils to work hard. For instance, in a very good link with science, they use their senses to explore and evaluate types of bread from around the world. Photograph frames in Year 3 incorporate thoughtful design, techniques of cutting, joining and sticking and curling, using a variety of materials and techniques. The process of evaluation is well established and pupils change features as a result, in order to strengthen, support and improve their designs. The results are of a high standard of finish. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils use a range of tools safely to create moving pictures of creatures jumping out of the sea incorporating a simple sliding mechanism. They follow clear instructions well and use their imaginations to adapt the original idea to their own design. Pupils enjoy the subject and talk about past projects, such as the making of chairs for specific characters in books and stories, including the Tooth Fairy and Cruella Deville, for example, with pride and enthusiasm. They talk about the joining and strengthening techniques they used and the difficulties they encountered, with high levels of understanding. Pupils work very well in

pairs and in groups. They are very interested and involved in their tasks and record their findings with confidence.

87. Teaching in both subjects is good overall, with examples of very good teaching in both subjects. Co-ordinators set exemplary standards in their subjects, motivating pupils and teachers well. Lessons are very well planned and structured to provide an interesting variety of activities building on pupils' previous work. Resources are plentiful and of good quality. They are well organised, readily accessible to adults and pupils and used well.
88. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum, particularly literacy, where teachers use the correct terminology, developing pupils' vocabulary well. Pupils in Year 2 write clear instructions for making Torah scrolls they have learnt about in religious education. In Year 5, pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of adjectives, such as flaky, crisp, spicy and speckled, when they make lists of words to describe the appearance, texture, taste and smell of the various types of bread they investigate.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

89. The inspection team saw some geography lessons, but no history lessons as the school studies these topics alternately as part of a rolling programme. Additional evidence was taken from a scrutiny of the teachers' planning, the pupils' previous work and discussions with groups of children. When compared to the national expectations, the standards of the pupils' work in history and geography are satisfactory and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. A major improvement is the establishment in both subjects of schemes of work based on national recommendations. The resources for both subjects are also improving.
90. The standard of the work in geography is satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and by the time the pupils leave school in Year 5. The pupils in the year 1 classes are able to recognise features of the school grounds and can describe them in terms of a route. In Year 2, the pupils are studying the Scottish Island of Struay and are able to use correct vocabulary to describe its physical and human features. They understand the difference between mainland and island. They are also learning to use symbols and a key to read a map. However, their grasp of the effect of physical processes on the landscape, including rivers and volcanoes, is more limited. In Year 3, the pupils have a good grasp of their place on the globe and their 'world address'. After taking a local walk, these pupils can distinguish between human and physical features, and make good use of a map and key to record position. The Year 5 pupils are able to identify the various features in the school building that are associated with water. They appreciate that some features deal with rainfall and that others relate to the piped systems that provide the school's water supply. These pupils also have good recall of their previous work and are able to talk about Egypt and India. They can describe climate and physical and human geography. For example, they know about the flooding of rivers and the link with rice growing. They can also use an atlas well.
91. History lessons provide the pupils with a sound understanding of the lives of people in different eras, knowledge of important events of the past and a real enthusiasm for the subject. Through the use of very good first-hand experiences and the use of secondary sources of information, they gain a good understanding of the past and its influence on the present day, and a sound knowledge of historical terms. Extended topics enable the pupils to build a good picture of life in the past. The Year 2 pupils really enjoyed their recent topic on Florence Nightingale. They are able to discuss the impact of her actions and can describe in graphic detail the state of hospitals

in the Crimea before her intervention. For instance, their independent research had uncovered the fact that some nurses were drunk when in charge of patients! The Year 5 pupils enjoyed a topic based on the Vikings. They made good use of maps to chart origins and journeys. Some of the work, including an interview with a monk following the raid on Lindisfarne, was imaginative and demonstrated empathy as well as factual understanding. The pupils have a grasp of cause and effect and know that some sources of evidence are more reliable than others.

92. The teaching of geography is good overall. The teachers have good subject knowledge, and their lively teaching engages the interest of the pupils. The lessons are thoroughly planned, have clear geographical objectives and are often exciting and inspiring. They are planned in blocks and teachers make good use of critical evaluations to improve the next lessons in the series. The teachers give good planned support to the pupils with special educational needs and the more able. These pupils are suitably challenged and do well. No history lessons were observed during the inspection. However the quality of work in the pupils' books, the thoroughness of planning and the children's very good recall of their previous learning indicate that they are well taught. The inspection team agrees with the views of the several parents who commented on the imaginative teaching in these subjects.
93. The pupils' attitudes to their geography and history studies are very positive. The quality of their work is satisfactory overall, and there are numerous good features, one of which is their ready involvement and interest. In most topics, the pupils use their literacy skills effectively when writing and about historical and geographical subjects. The pupils have some opportunities to use technology to obtain information and to carry out research, and these should increase when they become more familiar with the new computer equipment.
94. History and geography have taken a lower profile in the school's recent programme for improvement. Nevertheless, both subjects beneficially maintain a strong position in the pupils' overall learning experiences. They are led by newly appointed enthusiastic co-ordinators who offer growing support throughout the school. The national guidance materials have been adopted well to include local studies such as Weston Super Mare and Evesham.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

95. Over the course of the past year, the school's provision for this subject has started to improve. The new co-ordinator has a very good level of knowledge and expertise and has been involved in the national training initiative to improve the teachers' knowledge and competence in the subject. His experience was extremely useful in helping the staff and governors to decide how best to spend their national grant for updating their computers and other equipment. The recent investment in a collection of laptop computers with radio link to the school server and the Internet has proved to be an imaginative and successful first step to providing enough equipment for a whole class to work together at the same time.
96. Currently, standards are broadly in line with the levels expected of seven and ten year olds. Throughout the school, the pupils are starting to apply the power of new technologies more effectively in an increasingly wide range of settings. For instance, the Year 2 pupils are designing their own post cards from the island of Struay, based upon the story of Katy Morag that they have studied in literacy. The pupils are increasingly familiar with the program "Dazzle" and understand how to click on icons in order to select a variety of tools for drawing their pictures. They add text successfully to their designs and many know how to save their work to

disk. Regular use is made of programmable electronic toys, so that the pupils know how to enter commands to determine their movement.

97. In Years 3 to 5, the breadth of the pupils' knowledge increases markedly. For instance, when Year 4 use "Dazzle" they incorporate more advanced commands in order that they can create "tiles" that can be repeated and arranged on the screen to form complex designs and patterns. These pupils are also using the computers to word process their writing, sort and analyse data in mathematics and carry out research in history, science and geography on CD Rom. In one particularly effective mathematics lesson, the pupils' understanding of the equivalence of fractions was considerably enhanced by the teacher's effective use of a simple computer program that illustrated the principle visually.
98. On the basis of the few observations made, the overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is doing a very good job in building the staff's confidence and expertise. He is familiarizing the teachers with an increasing number of programs and developing their understanding of the how computers might be used across the full breadth of the National Curriculum. As a result, the teachers are planning appropriate work and have sufficient knowledge to ensure that the pupils learn what is expected.
99. The children clearly appreciate the new computers. They treat the machines carefully and understand that they are costly to repair and replace. At the moment most pupils have to share a machine, but their levels of co-operation are very good and they take turns sensibly. Whilst watching the pupils at work, it is evident that those who have computers at home are generally far more confident and competent than those who do not. As more machines become available and teaching equipment such as a screen projector is installed, the next step for the teachers is to ensure that the level of challenge for the higher-attaining pupils extends their skills and learning even further.

MUSIC

100. The school has maintained its high standards. Pupils exceed the expected levels for pupils of their age by the time they reach the end of Year 5.
101. There is a strong musical tradition within the school, which is being successfully maintained. Pupils sing tunefully, with confidence, clarity of diction and a good sense of control and timing. They pitch their voices accurately and modulate them according to the song or occasion. Pupils thoroughly enjoy singing to the regular accompaniment of the guitar during assemblies and other times. By the time they leave the school, they have built up a good repertoire of hymns and lively songs they know well. Throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to listen to music from other cultures and traditions. Pupils in Year 2, for example, listen very carefully and recognise music from India and China, identifying the use of stringed instruments during the playing. In effective links with religious education, pupils learn a Jewish song for Hanukkah. Pupils have fewer opportunities for composing, however and this aspect of music is not as strong as their performing skills. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress in their understanding of tempo during a well-planned lesson based on American jazz music representing the rhythm of a train. They listen very carefully and are totally involved in either setting or following the tempo.
102. Seven year olds have a good understanding of rhythm, pitch, pulse and dynamics. They learn to play the recorder. As a result of very good teaching and a varied and interesting programme of work, pupils recognise individual musical notes when they play the recorder and play a simple sequence of notes with good levels of control. To the accompaniment of lively music, pupils

move their shoulders and tap their knees, keeping good time and showing a strong sense of rhythm, tempo and beat. They distinguish accurately between high and low sounds and recognise long and short notes. Pupils use hand signals to identify high and low notes accurately in a sequence. Younger pupils are encouraged to handle musical instruments with care but need many reminders.

103. Teaching is good overall, in both key stages. The headteacher and other members of both teaching and non-teaching staff have experience and personal expertise in playing and singing and lead by example and enthusiasm, setting high standards of singing throughout the school. Where pupils benefit from a visiting specialist, such as in Year 2, teaching is very good. There are plans to extend this facility throughout the school.
104. In an improvement since the last inspection, the school has introduced a commercial scheme of work. This provides clear continuity and progression and covers the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study adequately. It gives good support and guidance to non-specialist teachers, developing confidence and knowledge. The curriculum is further enhanced for some pupils, by opportunities to participate in violin lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. Three lessons were observed in Years 4 and 5 involving the teaching of games and dance. No observations were made in Years 1 and 2.
106. The standard of the pupils' work in games is in line with the expected levels. By the age of ten most pupils know how to pass and catch a netball in a variety of ways, such as a bounce pass and a chest pass. They control the ball successfully and are learning to dribble the ball as required when playing basketball. The Year 4 pupils show increasing skill in the ways that they use their hockey sticks to pass and control a small ball and then shoot accurately towards the goal. The pupils' progress in both lessons speeded up as a result of the teachers' good subject knowledge and the tactful way that they intervened to help improve performance. For instance, they drew attention to the importance of weight transfer in speeding the pace and trajectory of a pass in basketball, and the need to move the feet to sustain balance when attempting to receive the ball in hockey.
107. It is clear that the pupils enjoy physical education. They work hard together and show good levels of co-operation when working in pairs and small teams. This is best illustrated by the highly successful dance lesson in Year 5 when the pupils responded with great enthusiasm and sensitivity to the teacher's well-conceived lesson. The reason why the lesson worked so well was that the level of demand increased steadily throughout. First of all, the pupils worked individually to practice different ways of exploding like a firework. They showed good levels of skill and awareness of space because they understood the variety of levels at which they might work, in the air, on the ground or spiraling between. The introduction of a piece of poetry was extremely effective in firing the children's imagination. Many listened with their eyes shut before taking their ideas and sharing them within their group. At this point, the pupils had to work together to devise a sequence of movements to represent a firework. They are clearly used to working this way because their concentration and commitment was intense. The teacher provided sharply focused help and guidance so that within a few minutes the pupils were thoughtfully evaluating each other's performances as they danced to the music of "1812 Overture." By the end of the lesson, everyone had a sense of achievement and the quality of the pupils' work had clearly improved.

108. One strength of the school's provision in physical education lies in the good range of resources available to the pupils. For instance, there are always enough balls and hockey sticks for every pupil to have one of their own. This means that they do not waste time waiting for equipment to become available. A further strength is the school's commitment to providing regular opportunities for adventurous activities by taking the children camping and on residential visits to the local outdoor pursuits centre where they can experience, climbing, canoeing, orienteering and walks at night. Conversations with the children show that this type of curriculum enrichment adds greatly to their confidence and self-esteem.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

109. The standard of pupils' work broadly meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus both at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school aged ten, in Year 5.
110. There has been considerable improvement in the planning and organisation of the subject since the last inspection. There is a well-established and suitably structured programme for learning about other faiths. It gives clear guidance to teachers and makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. The subject now has a suitably high profile within the school's curriculum, evidenced through classroom and whole school displays and regular work in pupils' books. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the subject throughout the school. When they learn about Judaism, seven-year-olds re-tell the story behind the Hanukkah festival and record information about the Torah, the holy book. There are good cross curricular links and pupils have recently made copies of Torah scrolls in design and technology, helping them to remember that this is a special book in the Jewish faith. They discuss belonging to a family in preparation for their work about festivals. Pupils compare the rules of Judaism with the rules in their own classroom, suitably relating their knowledge to their own lives. Discussions with pupils show they have a growing knowledge of world religions but their learning is not always based on secure foundations and there are still a number of basic misconceptions, often about Christianity.
111. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5, they have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. They know the significance of special festivals, including Christmas and Easter, Diwali and Hanukkah. Many show secure knowledge of details of these religions, comparing beliefs and symbols with suitable levels of understanding of the underlying values. The most able have a good understanding of the significance of the gifts of the Wise Men, for example. They recall details of the Moslem faith, knowing how important the Qu'ran is to Moslems and that it is as special as the Bible is to Christians. When they learn about the life of Mohammed they consider times when they like to be alone to think. The majority, however, do not always relate their knowledge sufficiently to their own lives and as yet, they lack understanding of how beliefs influence people.
112. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of the wide range artefacts and visual aids now available to the school, to give pupils accurate information, bring stories to life and to illustrate the reverence involved in religious customs. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school, gradually developing both their knowledge and their understanding. They develop their understanding of the importance of religion in the world to a good extent in Years 3 and 4, when they learn about Hinduism. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' contributions, building successfully on their prior knowledge. There is a good balance between teacher demonstrations, contributions from pupils and discussion. Good questioning skills from the teacher in a Year 3 lesson helps pupils to understand the significance of the story of Rama and Sita, which they recall accurately.

113. Leadership is strong in providing a clear direction for the subject. There is a good understanding of the need to provide pupils with greater knowledge and understanding of the beliefs from religions besides Christianity, in an area where they are seldom represented in the community. There is sometimes an assumption of a basic knowledge of Christianity that is not always present.