

INSPECTION REPORT

Park Hall Junior School
Walsall

LEA area : Walsall

Unique Reference Number : 104257

Headteacher : Mr P. Griffin

Reporting inspector : Mr G. Timms
T12529

Dates of inspection : 13th – 16th September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706706

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Junior
Type of control :	Foundation
Age range of pupils :	7 to 11
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
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Appropriate authority :	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr G. Deakin
Date of previous inspection :	29th April 1996

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Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Geof Timms, RgI	Information Technology Music Physical Education	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Ann Moss, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Equal opportunities
Mike Duggan	Mathematics Design and technology Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Michael Lafford	English Geography History	The curriculum and assessment
Debbie Kerr	Science Art	The efficiency of the school English as an additional language Special educational needs

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MAIN FINDINGS

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils:	403	(above average)
Pupils with English as an additional language:	41%	(very high)
Pupils entitled to free school meals:	1.0%	(well below average)
Pupils on register of special educational needs:	71	(about average)
Average class size:	33.6	

The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is above the national average.

What the school does well

Standards in English and mathematics are above the national average.

- The leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff is very good and the school administration is excellent.
- The governing body is very effective, especially in planning and controlling the finances.
- The teachers' planning is detailed and very effective. It has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced successfully and is proving effective in raising standards.
- The quality of information provided for parents is very good.
- The behaviour of pupils is very good. The relationships in the school are very good and enhanced and enriched by the cultural diversity of the pupils.

Where the school has weaknesses

Insufficient provision is made for investigative work, especially for the higher attainers, in science

- Teachers' expertise and subject knowledge in science need further development
- Subject co-ordinators do not monitor the teaching of their subjects in enough depth
- Some children miss the same lessons on a regular basis due to their being withdrawn for extra support and music tuition.

The many strengths of the school clearly outweigh the weaknesses. The school has identified its own areas for development, some of which are also in line with the findings of the inspection. The governors' action plan will explain to parents how improvements are to be made.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has maintained the good standards found at the last inspection. In addition, improvements have been made in a number of areas. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise, particularly in literacy, numeracy and information technology have improved. The use of space in the school has improved and the new computer suite is already having a positive impact on standards. A policy to ensure more challenge for the higher attainers has been introduced but this is too new to have yet had a real effect on provision. Planned assessment procedures have been introduced although these are not fully used in the planning of work in science.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
			<i>Well above average</i>
			<i>Above average</i>
			<i>Average</i>
			<i>Below average</i>
			<i>Well below average</i>
			A
			B
			C
			D
			E
English	B	C	
Mathematics	B	C	
Science	C	E	

This table is based on children who have now left the school. It shows that when compared to schools nationally, standards are above average in English and mathematics and broadly in line with the average in science. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards in English and mathematics are in line with the average, while in science standards are well below average. The inspection evidence, and the early indications from the 1999 test results, shows that standards have risen in all three subjects and that good progress is continuing to be made. The trends over the past four years show that, despite the drop in 1998, standards are rising at a rate faster than that found nationally.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English			Good
Mathematics			Good
Science			Good
Information technology			Good
Religious education			Satisfactory
Other subjects			Good

The quality of teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. In almost three quarters of lessons (72%) it is good. In 18 per cent of the lessons it is of high quality. Teachers have worked very hard to introduce successfully the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Other strengths are the planning and the effective use of the correct terminology and mature vocabulary in most lessons.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The children's behaviour is very good and has a positive impact on their learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The rates of attendance and unauthorised absence are broadly in line with the national average.
Ethos*	Good. Pupils' attitudes to work, the relationships in the school and the commitment to high standards aid the good progress evident.
Leadership and management	Very good. The leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff is very good and the governing body play an important part in the life and work of the school.
Curriculum	Provision is good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enhanced by extra-curricular activities and lessons in Italian.
Pupils with special educational needs	The provision for special educational needs is good.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. The cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is aided by the cultural diversity of the pupils and their families.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. However the accommodation is cramped although the school now makes good use of the space available. Resources have been improved recently but are still unsatisfactory in music and physical education.
Value for money	The school provides good value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The pupils like school. •There are high standards of behaviour. •The pupils achieve a high standard of work. •The values and attitudes which the school teaches. •They feel able to approach the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The arrangements for homework •They do not receive clear enough information about their children's progress

Twelve parents attended a meeting with the inspectors and 117 returned questionnaires. In addition, a number of parents wrote comments attached to the questionnaires. The response from parents throughout the process was extremely positive with only a small minority expressing any concerns about the work of the school. The inspection findings agree with the parents positive views. Homework arrangements are generally appropriate and effective, although the school does not provide enough feedback on homework. The information received about children's progress is

satisfactory.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

Key Issue 1: to improve standards in science, the Headteacher and staff should:

- develop more opportunities for investigative and independent learning, especially for the higher attaining pupils;
- extend the use of assessment to inform planning and work matched to pupils' prior attainment;
- improve the subject knowledge, understanding and expertise of all staff. (paragraphs 77-82)

Key Issue 2: to improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching further, the Headteacher and staff should:

- extend the role of subject co-ordinators to include the monitoring of pupils' work, teachers' planning and classroom observation; (paragraph 48)

Key Issue 3: the Headteacher and staff should ensure that pupils withdrawn for extra support and music tuition do not regularly miss important parts of the curriculum. (paragraphs 59,84)

In addition, the governing body should consider including the following in their action plans:

- improving the resources in music and physical education (paragraphs.57,120,125)
- improve the planning in art, history, geography, music and physical education by developing the assessment of pupils' knowledge skills and understanding. (paragraphs. 31,100,111,115)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Park Hall Junior School is situated in the town of Walsall in the West Midlands. The school was built in the 1970's as a community school. It took grant maintained status in January 1994 and has now taken Foundation status under the Education (School Government) (England) Regulations 1999.
2. The majority of the pupils come from well-established private housing in the Paddock district of Walsall, although many travel much further to attend the school. Only one per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Seventy-one pupils are recognised as having learning difficulties. Five children have a statement of special educational need, which is below the national average. Over 41 per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and have English as an additional language.
3. The majority of the pupils transfer from the nearby infant school, although a number also enter the school from a much wider catchment area. Their attainment on entry to the school is above the national average for children of their age. At the age of eleven, they transfer to local secondary schools in Walsall. At the time of the inspection there were 403 pupils on roll, which is above average for junior schools nationally.
4. The school's published aims are intended to ensure the 'educational advancement of the children, enabling them to realise their full potential', by:
 - a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which is relevant and meaningful,
 - positive attitudes towards learning social and academic skills,
 - fairness and equality of opportunity for all,
 - a partnership between children, families, school and community,
 - a happy, caring, creative and enlivening environment, and
 - standards of excellence and the celebration of success.
5. The school's targets for the end of Key Stage 2 in 2002 are for the following percentages of pupils to reach Level 4 or above:

English	- 95%
Mathematics	- 92%
Science	- 90%

Key Indicators Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	47	52	99

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	31	31	29
	Girls	46	38	35
	Total	77	69	64
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	78	70	65
	National	65	59	69

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	32	31	31
	Girls	48	41	44
	Total	80	72	75
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	81	73	76
	National	65	65	72

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)
missed through absence for the
latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.4
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.1
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age)
during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	18%
Satisfactory or better	100%
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

6.The 1998 national tests showed that by the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of the pupils were

achieving standards which were above the national average in English and mathematics and average in science. These results were caused by a drop in attainment due to a large number of less able pupils in the cohort and were disappointing when compared to the overall trends over the past three or four years. These indicate steady improvement and at a greater rate than that found nationally. When compared to schools with similar pupils, attainment is in line with the average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. Attainment at above average levels has been maintained since the last inspection.

7. The early indications from the 1999 results are that the standards have again risen and to a greater extent than that found nationally. The differences in attainment between boys and girls is broadly in line with the national average. There are no significant differences in attainment between the majority of the pupils and those with English as an additional language.
8. The results of Key Stage 1 tests, taken at the end of pupils' infant school, show that attainment on entry to the school is good. During their time in the school the pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. The school tracks pupils' progress by assessing how much improvement is made from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. This shows that the value added to pupils' learning is above the national average.
9. In English, the number of pupils reaching higher levels was above the national average. Taking into account the three years from 1996 to 1998, attainment has consistently been higher than the national average. Inspection findings show that attainment levels in speaking and listening of pupils are above those expected nationally. They demonstrate the ability to listen attentively and most speak with confidence to the rest of the class and listen attentively while others speak. Most pupils read aloud confidently and accurately. Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national average. The best readers are fluent and accurate and they read with expression. The standard of writing is above that found nationally. Spelling and punctuation are good. Handwriting is mostly neat and presentation and is of a high standard.
10. Attainment in mathematics is above the national average. In the Key Stage 2 1998 national tests almost three quarters of the pupils achieved the expected level and of these over one in five attained the higher levels. The results of the 1999 Standard Assessment Tasks indicate an appreciable improvement, especially with the significant increase of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence confirms this, and that the school has been successful in maintaining the high standards evident in the last inspection. Standards in numeracy are good.
11. The results of the school's 1998 national tests for eleven year olds in science were close to the national average but well below average when compared to similar schools. The judgement made from lessons seen during the inspection is that standards are now above average and the majority of pupils make good progress. Evidence gained from the scrutiny of last year's work confirms that pupils receive a broad science curriculum. The school has sought to improve pupils' experimental and investigative skills by providing a planner sheet for pupils to use when carrying out their investigations. This has had a positive impact on progress and pupils' books show that they are more confident about carrying out a practical science activity. Evidence from lessons observed during the inspection indicates that the school is continuing to work at raising standards.
12. Information technology is satisfactory and the standards reached are broadly in line with those expected nationally. However, the recent improvements to the teaching and resource provision have already raised the standards being achieved and should result in further improvement in the near future. In religious education standards of attainment are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
13. The school has set appropriate targets for the years leading to 2002. They reflect the different abilities of the pupils in each year group. The targets for 1999 were met.

14. Progress is good overall and rarely less than satisfactory. The good progress is evident in the lessons with the best teaching which is challenging and interesting. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language also make good progress. This is also true when they receive extra support from teaching and support staff. In English, mathematics, science and information technology progress is good. In religious education it is satisfactory. Progress is also good in art, history, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in design and technology and geography. The good progress found at the last inspection has been successfully maintained.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

1. The pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. They are well behaved at lunchtime and the school functions as an orderly and happy community. The children clearly understand what is expected and respect the rules and conventions that exist to safeguard them. There has only been one fixed term exclusion during the past year.
2. The standards of behaviour have remained very high throughout the school since the last inspection. This is true in lessons and at breaktimes. The children are interested and responsive, taking part in all the activities provided for them. They are keen and eager to learn. They work and play well together as part of a group, even when they are not being directly supervised. They confidently share their knowledge and skill with the class, and this has a positive effect on learning.
3. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and they are benefiting from being given more responsibilities and by being encouraged to take more initiative. Year six organise a bank each week, and some of the children meet with the governors to discuss ways of saving energy. Pupils' response to the values and standards set by the school is positive. They develop good habits of working and settle down quickly to tasks and persevere with them throughout the lessons. They work well together and are interested in their learning.
4. The personal development of pupils is good. The children settle happily and enjoy school. They are confident and establish very good relationships with other children and adults. They are encouraged to think of other people and to be polite. Girls and boys mix well together, and pupils treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect, and they are now being made more aware of other cultures. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language, respond positively in line with their peers. They are well accepted by others, and those with language difficulties benefit from working alongside a friend who can help.
5. The school environment is safe, secure and supportive. Pupils are able to make good progress in their personal development and thus grow confidently in their awareness of themselves and others. Pupils' self-esteem is regarded as important and achievements are celebrated with awards presented in assemblies.

Attendance

1. Pupils' attendance levels are broadly in line with the national average. The effect on pupils' continuity of learning and access to the curriculum is positive. Registration procedures are properly documented and effectively implemented. The registers are called efficiently and no time is wasted. The registers meet statutory requirements.
2. Very few pupils are late for school. There are appropriate procedures in place for monitoring lateness. Lessons begin and end on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

3. The quality of teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. It is good in almost three-quarters of lessons and one in five lessons is of very high quality. There are strengths and weaknesses in the teaching in all year groups. The consistently good teaching throughout the school has a significant impact on the pupils' progress. The school has maintained the good standards evident at the last inspection, and has improved the identified weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and expertise. In addition, the national initiatives such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, together with involvement in the National Grid for Learning, have been successfully introduced.
4. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has resulted in more direct, whole class teaching of skills. The detailed planning produced by subject co-ordinators and year groups enables teachers to plan lessons which build effectively on previous work, and which correctly meets the needs of most pupils. Following the recent introduction of the policy for higher attaining pupils, teachers more regularly provide work which is challenging enough to enrich and develop further their knowledge and understanding. The methods used in the literacy and numeracy strategies are also evident in other lessons, where whole class teaching is followed by group or individual work, and rounded off by a summing up session at the end of the lesson to reinforce the learning which has taken place. For example, this happened in most of the information technology lessons observed.
5. In addition, the teachers make a point of sharing the learning objectives for the lesson with their class. This means that at the start of the work the pupils are clear about what is expected of them by the end of the lesson, and which important new learning they should have made. A further strength of the teaching is the very good use teachers make of the correct vocabulary and terminology in lessons such as information technology and science. Teachers' subject knowledge, especially in information technology, has clearly improved since the last inspection and better use is made of the available expertise in subjects such as music and physical education. This is clearly having a positive impact on standards of attainment.
6. The unusual nature of the building, and its number of very small teaching areas, makes the management of practical subjects such as art and science difficult. However, teachers work hard to make the best of the available space and this has greatly improved since the last inspection. The rooms are colourful with some good displays even though it is early in the school year. The need to use the squash court for music lessons and the multi-purpose nature of the hall makes it particularly difficult for staff to ensure that progress is always good.
7. Teachers provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language. They are set appropriate work and support staff are well deployed to give extra help where needed. The management of the withdrawal of a few pupils means that they miss important input in some subjects. Although it was early in the new school year good relationships have already formed in the majority of classes and pupils are disciplined effectively and their movement around the school is well managed.
8. The pace of lessons is generally very good, with an urgent emphasis on the learning objectives. On a few occasions the teacher input at the start of lessons is too long or contains too much information for most to assimilate. This was partly due to the inspection taking place at the start of the year when routines were still being developed. Teachers demonstrate good questioning skills. The marking of pupils' work is good and largely consists of developmental comments which help them understand how they need to improve further. A variety of homework is set for pupils and, although parents' views differed over the amount and difficulty of the work, much of

the work evidently helps consolidate and extend the learning done in school. The results of the homework are not always communicated effectively enough to the parents who have supported their child at home, although there is a new policy now in place which seeks to ensure that this happens more regularly.

The curriculum and assessment

9. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school complies with statutory requirements for all National Curriculum subjects and collective worship. Religious education satisfactorily reflects the locally agreed syllabus. There are satisfactory policies and schemes of work for all subjects including sex education and personal, social and health education and these enable continuity across the year groups. The school has made good provision for the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy and the school governors are strongly involved in these and other curriculum issues. There is sufficient time allocated to the subjects for them to be taught effectively and good use is made of homework so that pupils can carry out investigative work in the foundation subjects such as art and history. The curriculum is enriched by the inclusion of the teaching of Italian to all year groups.
10. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. These are taught daily and the time allocated to them is well used. Teachers make good use of other subjects to further literacy skills. Information technology is taught as a discreet subject, in addition to being used in other subjects, and this also strongly supports pupils' literacy. Since the last report the school has initiated a policy to make better provision for the highest attaining pupils. This is very much in its infancy but some work has been done on identifying such pupils, mainly in English. The curriculum is well supported by local visits and by visiting speakers. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available to pupils. These include a choir, orchestra, recorder groups and clubs for computers, technology, chess and Italian as well as sports which include football and netball.
11. The school is careful to ensure that the pupils are given equal opportunities. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good support, as do those who have English as an additional language. However, pupils who are withdrawn for specialist tuition because of their special educational needs or for additional language work, currently miss the same subjects each time. This applies also to those who receive tuition in musical instruments. In English and mathematics grouping arrangements allow work to be varied according to the need of pupils but this is little in evidence in science.

12.Procedures for assessment of pupils' attainment are good in the core subjects : mathematics, English and science and meet statutory requirements. Assessment information is used to inform the planning of work in mathematics and English but this is not yet the case in science. Assessment procedures in the foundation subjects are not yet in place. This affects the teachers' ability to provide lessons which build upon skills previously learned. The quality of written reports is good overall. The marking of pupils' work is good and teachers often write comments which clearly let children know how they can improve their work.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1.The school provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils and has successfully built on the strengths evident at the last inspection. These aspects feature strongly in the school aims and all staff are committed to creating an environment in which pupils can flourish. The daily act of worship and arrangements for religious education fulfil statutory requirements.

2.The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. A series of themes have been collated for assemblies which develop the values important to most faiths. These allow pupils an effective opportunity to learn about other cultures, religions and traditions. They are able to learn from stories, prayer, reflection and song in a collective act of worship. There is some evidence of 'awe and wonder' across the curriculum, such as in mathematics where pupils display amazement how quickly a large figure is reached by doubling numbers. Very few parents have requested their children to be withdrawn from the daily act of worship. Spiritual provision is further developed in religious education lessons.

3.There is good provision for the moral development of pupils. The school teaches clear and consistent moral values which contribute to pupils' personal development. Staff provide good role models for pupils. Class and school rules are clearly displayed and pupils and staff have collaborated in drawing many of these up. Pupils are rewarded with praise and house points, and academic, sporting and other notable achievements are acknowledged at the weekly celebration assembly. Pupils fully understand acceptable behaviour and behave in an honest, fair and respectful manner. They know right from wrong. The school's strong ethos promotes good relationships, care and consideration for others.

4.There is good provision for the social development of pupils. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work in groups, especially during the literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils are elected to posts of responsibilities such as monitors and house captains, having presented themselves as candidates and spoken to support their election. Relationships amongst the pupils and between pupils and adults are good, and a strong, caring bond is created. Good opportunities for social development are provided for all pupils through a variety of trips to museums, galleries, and for Year 6 an annual residential week at a venture camp in Devon. Pupils are made aware and are actively involved in helping those less fortunate than themselves in this country and abroad. They support a variety of charities and many pupils display initiative by organising fund-raising events, such as Blue Peter appeals, or after having watched the plight of refugees on television. The broad ethnic mix found in the school enriches the social development of all pupils.

5.The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Many opportunities exist within the curriculum for pupils to study other cultures. For example, in the literacy lessons a variety of stories, fables, myths and poems are used as a basis for much of the work. Art and music lessons also contribute to this aspect of pupils' development, especially with regard to European culture. Pupils' multi-cultural awareness is heightened by visits of families from different cultures to school to demonstrate their traditional musical and cooking techniques. The celebrations within other faiths, such as Diwali and Hanukkah, which are included in the curriculum add a further dimension. This is an area of cultural provision which has particularly improved since the last

inspection. Regular and useful visits to places of historical, geographical, religious and scientific interest also contribute as do the visits into school of authors, artists and musicians. The wide range of displays and artefacts throughout the school are constant reminders of cultural diversity. Pupils are benefiting from these experiences.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

6. The school continues to provide a secure, happy and caring environment for the pupils and has satisfactory procedures for ensuring pupils' support, guidance and welfare. This provision has been maintained since the last inspection. It communicates effectively with parents about welfare and guidance providing, for example, clear and practical advice about uniform, session times, teaching methods and extra-curricular activities.
7. Procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development are satisfactory for all pupils. Staff have high expectations for good behaviour and effective procedures are in place for promoting discipline. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are also satisfactory, and those for child protection and the promotion of pupils' health and safety are firmly established, although a formal risk assessment of the premises is now due. The procedures for dealing with any bullying are effective and very few incidents occur. Teachers and support staff all make a significant contribution to providing a caring atmosphere and a safe environment for learning.
8. The pupils are confident in their dealings with each other and in approaching any member of the teaching and support staff. Emphasis is put on raising self-esteem and politeness. Close liaison with parents has a positive effect on the quality of the induction of new pupils, and there is good preparation for transfer to secondary school. The school has good links with external agencies and pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are identified early and their progress is carefully monitored through their individual educational plans and teachers' records. Their needs are well known to teachers who respond quickly to any problems which may arise, and they receive good support and guidance.
9. The staff receive appropriate training to enable them to keep up-to-date with aspects of care and welfare, and responsibility for health and safety is clearly defined.

Partnership with parents and the community

10. As they did at the time of the last inspection, parents appreciate the quality of the information they receive from the school. Relationships with parents and the community are good, and parents feel welcomed into the school where they make an effective contribution to the children's learning, by supporting homework and extra-curricular activities. They take an interest in what the school has to offer their children. This is manifested, for example, through fund-raising efforts and helping in classrooms. There is an active Parent-Teacher Association, and they hold many functions to raise money and to support their children's learning.
11. Parents speak highly of the systems of communication, and they receive good information regarding the curriculum and topics. The method of induction of new children and the transfer of children to secondary school are highly valued. Parents appreciate the school brochure which is very informative, and the Governors' Annual Report to the Parents. Regular parents' meetings are held.
12. Staff are regarded as very approachable and their knowledge of the pupils is detailed. Written reports to parents about the attainment and progress of their children are good. Parents of pupils with special educational need are kept fully informed of their children's progress. They know what the school is doing to meet their needs and appreciate the efforts the school makes to keep

them informed. Parents of pupils with English as an additional language value the help their children receive.

13. The school's work is effectively enriched by links with the community. The choir has sung in local town halls and concert halls. Pupils visit local shopkeepers as part of geography topics, and the Vicar is a regular visitor to assemblies. Visitors are invited into the school to share their skills and interest, such as the fire service, the police and artists and storytellers. There are no formal business links, but pupils visit a local firm and a superstore has been helping the school by providing materials at special prices. The pupils have been on many educational outings, for example to old houses and local museums. These visits are linked to class topics and play an important part in extending the curriculum.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

1. The leadership provided by the Headteacher is very good. Together with the deputy Headteacher and the senior staff, he provides a clear educational direction for the work of the school which is focused on raising standards and largely achieves the school's aims. The strengths in the leadership and management of the school have been maintained since the previous inspection and this has enabled standards to continue their overall improvement. The Headteacher is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the development planning is clearly focused on further improving teaching and the quality of education offered to pupils. The deputy Headteacher has an important role in the school in the day-to-day management of issues such as discipline, and also in helping the governors and Headteacher in developing their strategic vision for the future.
2. The school has been through an unsettled period due to its taking grant maintained status and the present change from that to foundation status and the control of the local education authority. However, the experience that the senior staff and the governing body gained while taking full control of the budget has meant that there are now very efficient systems in place for the running of the school.
3. The school has devised a detailed and effective system for discussing and assessing staff professional development. The Headteacher and deputy Headteacher have monitored and evaluated teaching through lesson observations and professional discussions. They also sample pupils' work and see teachers' planning in their efforts to continue to raise standards. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategy has been very well managed and is clearly beginning to have a positive effect on standards. Literacy lessons have been monitored by staff and by the nominated governor. The Headteacher also monitors progress by analysing test results to see how much progress is made during the four years pupils are at the school. He also checks on any differences in attainment between groups of pupils of different abilities, gender or background. Appropriate targets are set and the planning is intended to help achieve them.
4. The role of subject co-ordinators has been extended since the last inspection. They have been involved in the monitoring of teachers' planning and samples of work. They do not have enough opportunities to support and monitor teaching in their subjects and so be in a better position to spread the good practice which exists throughout the school.
5. The school's approach to equal opportunities is very successful in practice. The integration of a wide range of pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds is effective and enriches the experience of all pupils. They have extra help where necessary and this is generally well managed. However, the withdrawal of pupils for extra support means that on occasion they miss important classwork. The introduction of a policy for higher attaining pupils since the last inspection has improved the management of provision for them. This is still very new and there is not yet any evidence of its effectiveness. The management of the provision for special

educational needs is good and the support staff are effectively deployed.

6. The school development plan is as effective and practical a document as it was at the time of the last inspection. It is produced through a very efficient system involving all staff and the governing body. The action planning which followed the last inspection has had a positive effect on the standards achieved by the pupils, which have risen steadily over the past four years. The new foundation status, and its financial implications, will require a new strategic plan, and the governing body and staff are aware of this.
7. The governors fulfil their statutory duty and they are fully involved in the work of the school. The governing body has a good structure of committees and is effectively involved in budget setting and monitoring expenditure. The curriculum committee also monitors the school development plan and has successfully overseen the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies.
8. The school has an appropriate mission statement and a detailed set of aims which cover both the academic and the social development of the pupils. There is a range of good policies which are reflected in the life and work of the school, and which help in achieving the majority of the aims. There is a very positive, purposeful and caring ethos with a high commitment to raising the attainment of all pupils whatever their backgrounds.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

9. The school continues to have a good staffing level for the number of pupils on roll and the teachers have sufficient knowledge, understanding and experience to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a suitable match of staff expertise to core curriculum responsibilities and teachers also provide extra support with after school activities and Italian lessons. The school has a very good range of committed support staff who work with pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language as well as providing support for teachers during, for example, literacy lessons. There are sufficient administrative and mid-day supervisory staff to enable the day-to-day life of the school to operate effectively. Site management is good and greatly contributes to the good standard of maintenance.
10. The school's two special educational needs assistants are well trained and experienced, and the school also benefits from extra support from the local education authority for special needs and some of the pupils with English as an additional language.
11. Arrangements for the professional development of all staff are good and have been an important part of the improvements shown in subject knowledge and understanding since the last inspection. In-service training is linked to the development plan and is matched to both the curricular needs of the school and the professional needs of the staff. There is an effective system in place for the induction of newly-qualified teachers, including support from experienced colleagues, and a very good policy for the mentoring of trainee teachers. The school has effective and appropriate arrangements in place for the assessment of professional development needs. These have helped the school achieve an 'Investors in People' award.
12. Most of the classrooms are small and the corridors are narrow but the accommodation is well used and maintained. The school still has difficulties with practical subjects such as art, science and music because of the lack of space, but the classrooms are, nevertheless made to look very attractive. The school has a fiction and non-fiction library which contains books for the more able pupils, and also a hall for physical education activities and assemblies. Since the previous inspection the conversion of an old kitchen into a computer suite has provided a much improved facility for information technology. The outdoor areas are secure and well maintained. There

is a playground and a large field, together with a recently built adventure play area.

13. The range and quality of educational resources are good overall and much improved since the previous inspection. However, there are too few good quality percussion instruments and equipment for games lessons. Resources are very accessible and easily available to staff and pupils. The good computer network now enables whole classes to make full use of e-mail and internet facilities.

The efficiency of the school

14. The school makes good use of the resources available to it. Much care and thought goes into school development planning into which staff, governors and parents all have an input. In order to take full account of the school's future requirements, and as part of the return to local authority control, the Headteacher and governors employed consultants to help with and cost the five year strategic plan. Priorities within the plan are based on sound educational principles and take account of national initiatives such as the numeracy hour. Money spent on staffing and educational resources is used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The impact of this spending can be seen clearly in examples such as the new computer suite. Pupils are already benefiting greatly from this provision and standards are rising rapidly as a result. The effectiveness of spending decisions is monitored by the Headteacher who reports regularly to the governing body. For its part, the governors' finance committee keeps close checks on spending.
15. Staff at the school are well deployed to make best use of their skills and expertise. For example, specialist teaching in science this term is already having a positive impact on standards. Small teaching groups in maths lessons support progress in the numeracy hour, particularly for lower ability pupils. Specialist teaching in Year 4 supports progress in physical education, music and religious education, as it does for music in Year 6. The extra support by teachers and classroom assistants given to pupils for whom English is an additional language enables them to take a full part in lessons. However, there are regular times when the withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language causes them to miss important input in their own classrooms. Classroom assistants support individuals and groups well, but there are occasions in some lessons when they sit passively for long periods while the teachers is talking to the class, missing opportunities to monitor responses or maintain records.
16. The school's small classrooms limit what can be done in practical lessons. However, careful consideration has been given to the way space is used and improvements have been made since the last inspection. Teaching areas, the computer suite and the library are now well used and all pupils benefit from the improved accommodation. Good use is made of resources beyond the school to extend learning. The children use the local swimming pool and tennis club, and there are visits to, for example, local museums. Year 6 has a good residential venture week in Devon. The pupils also go on appropriate visits to historical sights. There are very good displays in the classrooms and around the school providing information for current topics, and these all make a good contribution to the quality of the education and the standards achieved.
17. The school's financial administration is excellent. Administrative staff are well qualified and experienced and a tight check is kept on spending. The school runs very smoothly on a day to day basis, enabling teachers to carry out their work effectively. In view of the high standards achieved and the good progress pupils make, the school is judged to give good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

18. In the 1998 national tests for the end of Key Stage 2 showed that attainment was above the national average. The number of pupils reaching higher levels was also above the national figure. Taking into account the three years from 1996 to 1998, attainment has consistently been higher than the national average. Girls performed better than boys but not by a bigger margin than that found nationally. The 1998 test results are close to the average when compared to schools with similar circumstances. First indications are that the results for 1999 show an improvement over those for 1998.
19. Inspection findings show that attainment levels in speaking and listening of pupils nearest the end of Key Stage 2 are above those expected nationally. They speak with confidence to the rest of the class and listen attentively while others speak. Most pupils read aloud confidently and accurately. They are keen to take part in class discussions, often sharing ideas as when talking about the features of a good opening for a story or the difference between fact, opinion and fiction.
20. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national average. The best readers are fluent and accurate and they read with expression. The lowest attainers use phonic skills well to work out unknown words and the correct pronunciation. During the literacy hour pupils experience a wide range of fiction, including poetry and they also develop a good appreciation of various types of non-fiction such as biography and autobiography. Pupils make good use of the school library and are well versed in the Dewey system of classification. Most make use of the library for guided research in English, art and history.
21. The standard of writing of pupils nearest to the end of Key Stage 2 is above that found nationally. Spelling and punctuation are good. Most pupils are confident when writing direct speech and many can organise their work into paragraphs. Handwriting is mostly neat and presentation is of a high standard. Pupils have acquired a good appreciation of root words and derivatives and most use and understand grammatical terms. Most pupils are able to write in a range of styles for different audiences and the highest attainers use imaginative vocabulary.
22. Pupils make good progress in English. This is because of the well-planned, effective teaching, The good provision in the literacy hour has had a positive effect on the progress made by pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special needs. Pupils progress equally well in speaking and listening as well as in their reading and writing skills. Pupils who have English as an additional language make equally good progress because of the strong support they receive.
23. Pupils' response in English is very good. In all year groups they listen well and react quickly and quietly to instructions. They relate well to teachers and to each other so that they are able to work productively in groups and pairs. The standard of behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils are able to sustain concentration very well and they respond well when encouraged to carry out their own investigative work.
24. The quality of teaching in English is good. Teachers usually plan their lessons effectively, making provision for pupils of all levels of attainment. They make good use of the time during the literacy hour, ensuring that lessons move at a brisk pace. The minority of lessons which were satisfactory were characterised by a lack of pace during whole class teaching sessions. Teachers have clear learning objectives and these are well supported by the resources they use. They usually set tasks which are sufficiently challenging and use effective questioning techniques to elicit what pupils have understood. These factors contribute strongly to pupils' enthusiasm and to their good

progress as do the teachers' high expectations of their pupils' attainment and behaviour. Teachers promote independent learning by encouraging the use of dictionaries and sometimes setting tasks which require the use of the school library. Some teachers make good use of the literacy hour to develop further understanding of other subjects. An example of this was when pupils wrote about life as an evacuee during lessons about World War 11.

25. The strength of the leadership in English is reflected in the good progress made by pupils and in the very successful implementation of the literacy hour. Planning enables good continuity across the year groups and assessment procedures are thorough. The outcomes of assessment are well used to inform the planning of work in literacy. Other subject areas, notably information technology and history, make strong contributions to pupils' literacy. Teachers and support staff have received appropriate training in the National Literacy Strategy and teaching is regularly monitored. The accommodation is cramped but teachers succeed in creating a pleasant learning environment. Resources for English are good and the library, which is effectively managed by a member of the support staff, has a good range of fiction and non-fiction books which pupils make good use of.

Mathematics

26. Attainment in mathematics is above the national average. In the Key Stage 2 1998 national tests almost three quarters of the pupils achieved the expected level and of these over one fifth attained the higher levels. Compared to the previous year these results showed a slight decline in standards due to Year 6 containing a large group of pupils on the special educational needs register. Although still higher than the national average, these results were broadly in line with standards attained in schools with similar pupils. The results of the 1999 Standard Assessment Tasks indicate an appreciable improvement, especially with the significant increase of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence confirms this, and that the school has been successful in maintaining the high standards evident in the last inspection. Over the past three years there has been little significant difference between the performance of boys and girls or between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

27. Throughout the school pupils use and apply their mathematical knowledge well. They use their knowledge to investigate and solve mathematical problems and increasingly apply it to other subjects. Good use is made of numeracy skills in geography and on occasions in art, design and technology, and science. Higher attaining pupils understand place value, multiply three digit by two digit numbers accurately, and are confident when adding, subtracting and multiplying numbers to two decimal places. They also recognise complex patterns of numbers and know the link between percentages and fractions. Average attaining pupils show a similar range of attainment, although they make more errors, particularly when working with decimals. Lower attaining pupils can add and subtract numbers to thousands accurately, and divide similar numbers to give answers including remainders. Almost all pupils attain good standards in shape, space and measure. They accurately measure lengths to millimetres, read scale accurately and use angles to define bearings. In data-handling all pupils draw bar charts accurately by hand. They understand terms such as mean, mode and average. Since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy lessons begin with appropriate and challenging mental activities, which increase in difficulty as pupils proceed through the school. These reinforce and test pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

28. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall. This is evident both in the standard and quantity of work completed. Numeracy skills develop well and are used effectively throughout the school. Pupils' progress is assisted by the setting arrangement in year groups which ensures that work is matched to their ability. In respect of higher attaining pupils this is an improvement since the last inspection. Progress is good in almost all classes but occasionally in a small number of classes it is less successful due to a lack of pace and excessive exposition by the teacher. Pupils in Year 3 understand place value to thousands, add and subtract numbers accurately, and know a range of simple fractions. In Year 4 they know different two-dimensional shapes, calculate area by adding squares and accurately measure lengths using rulers. They draw and interpret simple bar charts well. In Year 5 pupils explore probability and progress to time/distance graph work. By Year 6 they have a ready facility with number, can convert decimals to vulgar fractions and use clinometers to measure height accurately. Pupils are routinely required to discuss their methods and justify their answers. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class could confidently explain their reasons for multiplying two digit by two digit numbers, using partition.

29. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They enjoy working on set tasks. The vast majority listen well and respond quickly to questions. Their response to new challenges is positive. They are keen to extend and apply their mathematical skills as was observed in a Year 6 class successfully working with inverses. They settle quickly to pencil and paper tasks, and co-operate well. The presentation of their work is very neat and their behaviour is generally good and well managed. Concentration of pupils in mathematics classes is good and they complete a large volume of accurate work. This strength is also demonstrated by lower attaining pupils. The majority of pupils persevere well, especially during the introductory phase of lessons.

30. The quality of teaching observed is good overall and never less than satisfactory, with some of very good quality. Teachers plan consistently, using the school scheme which is closely linked to the National Numeracy Strategy. They focus appropriately on all aspects of the National Curriculum, with a strong emphasis on numeracy skills which are consolidated well in other subjects, such as science, design and technology, and geography. Teachers give clear explanations and are enthusiastic, encouraging pupils to think. They are generally able to assess pupils' responses well and target their questions to extend their thinking. The best teaching combines the skills pupils learn with problem-solving, discussion and explanation. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils worked effectively in pairs to investigate and recognise that a given sum of money can be equalised using different combinations of coin and notes. Another examples was noted in a Year 4 lesson where pupils collaborated to extend accurately number chains and to give sensible reasons for the evolving sequences. Occasionally weaker teaching causes slow pace, over-exposition and not ensuring that a pupil has completed a task before moving them on. The quality of assessment, including marking, is good and usually includes helpful developmental comments. Lessons are well organised with an efficient use of time and resources, and smooth transition between activities.

31. The school places a high emphasis on numeracy and the development of other mathematics skills. The delivery of mathematics is very well planned and this, together with the use of setting by prior achievement, results in a broad and challenging syllabus. Topics are addressed systematically with good opportunities to review and consolidate progress. Assessments are carried out on a half-termly basis and the analysed data is used very well for future planning in order to increase success. This is an area which has improved since the last inspection. National Curriculum test data is also analysed very carefully to assess which are the weaker areas needing more focused teaching.

32. The subject is well led by an experienced teacher. Together with the Headteacher, she monitors planning and systematically reviews samples of pupils' work. Few opportunities are available for

her to observe teaching directly and so to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Overall standards are continuing to rise and the school is well placed to implement successfully the National Numeracy Strategy, which was introduced at the beginning of this school year. The governor with responsibility for numeracy has undertaken appropriate training and has already observed one lesson. Mathematics displays in classrooms are of good quality and encourage pupils to practise their skills and to draw their own mathematical conclusions.

Science

33. The results of the school's 1998 national tests for eleven year olds in science were close to the national average but below average when compared to similar schools. These results were disappointing for the school as they were not as good as the results gained in the previous two years. Data from the results of the summer 1999 tests suggests the school has made significant improvements over the past year and raised standards considerably. The judgement made from lessons seen during the inspection is that standards are now above average and the majority of pupils make good progress.
34. Evidence gained from the scrutiny of last year's work confirms that pupils receive a broad science curriculum. The time given to the study of living things, materials and physical processes is equally balanced. Pupils' knowledge and understanding develops well in each of these areas, and progress is good from year to year. The school has sought to improve pupils' experimental and investigative skills by providing a planner sheet for pupils to use when carrying out their investigations. This has had a positive impact on progress and pupils' books show that they are more confident about carrying out a practical science activity. The scrutiny of last year's work also highlighted some weakness for the school to address. In several classes, no account is taken of the range of ability within the class and most tasks are pitched at the same level of difficulty. On too many occasions in investigative work, predictions given by the older pupils, or more able pupils in the class, are simplistic and they have not been required to extend or explain their thinking in any way. Neither have they been given enough opportunities to plan experiments for themselves or make choices about their work.
35. Evidence from lessons observed during the inspection indicates that the school is continuing to work at raising standards. In a Year 4 lesson on simple circuits, pupils were confidently using the terms filament, cell and circuit when explaining how electricity would flow. They could use a large scale model of a circuit to demonstrate to the rest of the class the different ways it could be set up to light the bulb. By the end of the lesson these pupils understood well the essential requirements for completing an electric circuit and could explain them using the correct terminology. Year 6 pupils who had received systematic teaching about electricity in the past discovered through experimentation how lengthening the wire in a circuit affected the brightness of the bulb.
36. Across the school generally, pupils are good at using correct scientific vocabulary and their literacy skills are developed well through class discussion and explanation. Older pupils represent their findings on simple graphs and develop their numeracy skills through handling scientific data. Pupils with special needs are well supported. Worksheets are adapted as necessary and in some lessons the teacher gives individual attention. Ethnic minority pupils progress equally as well as their peers. Pupils enjoy their science lessons. Their good behaviour and willingness to work together and share equipment supports their learning.
37. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was consistently good. For this half term, many of the lessons are being taken by the science co-ordinator. Her subject knowledge is good and pupils benefit from her clear explanations. Pupils in other classes also benefit from carefully structured lessons.

38. The subject co-ordinator and the Headteacher have both worked hard to support colleagues whose expertise in science is less secure. This has resulted in very carefully planned lessons which are well structured to ensure that pupils make progress. However, the leadership shown, and co-ordination of the subject across the school, does not have a positive effect on the standards of many pupils, especially the higher attainers. In a good lesson observed in Year 5 on seed germination, the teacher explained the objective of the lesson clearly, gave a clear and concise recap on what the pupils had already covered and demonstrated the experiment efficiently. Teachers are aware of the need to carry out experiments safely and stress this appropriately. Minor weaknesses in teaching occur when pupils are given too much information at the beginning of an experiment, so that there is little left for them to find out. Teachers are good at monitoring progress during lessons and assessing what pupils have learnt at the end. They mark work carefully but there is no evidence in pupils' science books that they are given the opportunity to correct their work or respond to the teacher's comments. Formal assessments of what pupils have learnt are carried out periodically but teachers do not use the information to make appropriate provision for the higher attaining pupils.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

39. The overall attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and this has been maintained and built on since the previous inspection. The improvements made to the curriculum, resources and teaching since then is resulting in good attainment amongst pupils now in the school which should be reflected by the time they are in Year 6.

40. The progress made by the majority of the pupils is good in all year groups. There are no significant variations to the progress made by boys and girls. The pupils who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs also make good progress. However, the withdrawal of pupils for support in these areas, especially in Year 5, means that they miss some important teacher input and this is certain to impact on their learning eventually.

41. By the age of 11 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of word processing and the use of spreadsheets. At times an advanced level of skill is evident as, for example, when pupils combine text and graphics using different font sizes and shapes to create an advertisement for a local country park. They can create a spreadsheet and enter a simple formula to enable it to function like a commercial program. When their work is finished they can save and file it ready for later retrieval. In Year 4 pupils are starting a program of study about drawing using a screen 'turtle' They are already capable of drawing an accurate square and using the 'repeat' command to simplify this procedure.

42. A particular strength in the subject is the effective planning to ensure the computers are used in other subjects. For example, a rota of classes use the computer suite for the occasional literacy and numeracy lesson, cleverly blending the work with computer use, such as word processing. In history lessons in Year 4 pupils re-order sentences so that they have the correct chronology. In mathematics spreadsheets are used to create the addition of sales from a shop, merging information technology with its practical use in the outside world. This is also evident when Year 6 pupils confidently use the library computer to access books using a barcode reader. Older pupils also use the music centre in the hall to play entry and exit music for assemblies.

43. The pupils attitudes to the subject are good. They use computers confidently and are able to work independently and collaboratively. Many have experience of computers at home which is reflected in the work they produce at school. The behaviour of pupils using the computer suite is very good and they treat the resources with respect. The majority of pupils maintain a good level

of concentration. Although the room is fairly small, pupils share computers in twos sensibly and they often co-operate well on the given tasks. They demonstrate a good level of enthusiasm when they discuss their work with adults.

44. The quality of teaching is good in all year groups and has a good impact on the progress pupils make. The teachers' subject knowledge and expertise have been improved since the last inspection through in service training, especially with the introduction of the new resources and network. Further training is planned on the use of the internet and e-mail. The lessons are very well planned and extremely thorough preparation goes into the creation of work on the network which the whole class can be introduced to. The good deployment of a knowledgeable classroom assistant helps promote the good teaching and progress which is evident. The lesson plans are effective but not enough guidance is given to pupils on basic instructions, such as saving work or opening files, through wallcharts or individual notes, which would enable more independence in their accessing the programs. The resources available are well used by teachers.
45. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has a growing expertise in the subject. She has supported staff well since the updating of resources and plans and has provided training where appropriate. The future development plans for the subject are appropriate, including the use of cameras and video. The school provides an opportunity for Year 6 pupils to extend their skills at an after school club.

Religious education

1. Only a limited number of lessons were able to be observed during the inspection. Other evidence included examination of teachers' plans, discussion with subject co-ordinators and discussion with pupils, and scrutiny of their work. The major religions studied in the school are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism.
2. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are in line with those laid down in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This judgement is similar to the findings of the last inspection and statutory requirements are being met. Pupils have a sound working knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism and other faiths, and a variety of festivals are celebrated. They are able to see the connection between respect for and value of relationships with friends and family, for instance when they write about belonging while reflecting on the meaning of the parable of the 'Good Samaritan'. They identify with Christianity's and Islam's message of caring for each other. They talk knowledgeably about the Easter, Christmas, Diwali and Ramadan seasons. In church they recognise features such as altar, font, pew and kneeler.
3. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are beginning to understand the importance of ritual in the major faiths, and the use of signs and symbols. They know the importance of washing before prayer in Islam, and the significance of Tallit during Jewish worship. They know why Muslims face Mecca and are familiar with features such as Qur'an and mu'ahin. Pupils know the artefacts used by Christians in expressing their faith, for example chalice, cross, Bible and candle. They retell stories from the major religions such as Noah and the Flood from the Old Testament, the Five Pillars of Islam relating to the Muslim faith, and about the Hindu deities Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva.
4. Pupils listen in lessons and respond positively. They take to heart and talk confidently about the moral messages of assemblies and religious education lessons. Such an example was observed in a Year 4 class where pupils drew up laws to enhance the quality of life world-wide, following a discussion on membership of faith communities. Pupils in the upper school have the opportunity to practice the values they learn, when they act as monitors with various duties or as role models for younger pupils.

5. Progress throughout the school is satisfactory. At the end of the key stage, pupils' knowledge about the culture and knowledge of sacred books is further increased as they compare and access information from them. A good example was a test in which Year 6 pupils successfully located the passage in the Bible relating to David and Goliath. Pupils also become more aware that these sacred books contain guidelines about how the believers should live. Important moral issues such as kindness, caring, right and wrong are more fully developed by both study and example as pupils move up the school. Teachers' planning and good use of educational support staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Visits to places of worship and visitors from the local religious communities into school help to enhance pupils' development further.
6. In the limited lessons observed teaching was satisfactory. Lessons are well planned. Questions are used appropriately to extend pupils' thinking, to enable them to express opinions and reflect on their own experiences. For instance pupils in a Year 3 class were encouraged to formulate invitations inviting a fictitious friend to join their religion or close community. Teachers use an appropriate range of strategies including exposition, discuss artefacts and other resources such as 'special clothing' to stimulate lessons.
7. The co-ordinator is an enthusiastic advocate of the subject. She has produced good, detailed plans which cover all the required aspects. Resources are adequate and used well. They include books and videos about the major religions studied in the school.

Art

8. As the inspection was at the start of the school year, there was only a small amount of pupils' art work on display and little evidence on which to make a judgement. From the evidence available, and from the work seen in the four lessons observed, the school is maintaining the good standards noted in the last inspection and pupils continue to make good progress. The school has responded positively to criticisms in the last report that there was insufficient emphasis on the value of ethnic art. For example, photographs in the school album reflect artwork on the Chinese year of the dragon and displays of artefacts from Africa, India and Thailand.
9. The striking Millennium Flag displayed in the hall is a collage of colourful images which demonstrates the high standards pupils achieved with the support of an 'Artist in Residence'. A wide range of materials and techniques, including batik, embroidery and quilting, were used and every pupil contributed. The result is a large scale wall hanging which has strong visual impact and which makes a positive contribution to the school's ethos. Other art work on display around the school, both two and three dimensional, is of an equally good standard, enhances the school environment and demonstrates the good progress from year to year. Year 4 pupils had made papier mache face masks which linked with their history topic on the Tudors. High quality chalk and charcoal drawings of a Victorian industrial town and miniature collages of Egyptian burial masks are typical of the standard reached in year 5. Year 6 had produced carefully painted abstracts in the style of Mondrian. A study of pupils' sketch books showed that they had had opportunities to plan and experiment before attempting their final work.
10. In the lessons observed, teaching was judged to be good. Lessons are well planned and little time is wasted in getting out and putting away art materials. There is an appropriate balance between teaching skills and techniques and allowing pupils to experiment and respond in their own way. In a Year 5 lesson on the work of William Morris, the context of the work and the lesson objectives were clearly explained. Good resources including examples of Morris's designs stimulated pupils' interest. The teacher took time to demonstrate the pencil techniques required for shading and gave pupils the opportunity to practise these before they started their drawings. The well structured lesson ensured that pupils were clear about what was required and had an understanding of the skills needed.

11. The school has reduced the time spent on art to accommodate the requirements of the literacy and numeracy hours. Nevertheless, the curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils are offered a good range of art activities within the year. Pupils study the work of other artists. They can talk about their own work and how they might improve it but there is little recorded evidence that they routinely review their work or appraise the work of other pupils'. The school has no formal procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress, a weakness also noted in the last inspection report. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan work which builds effectively on previously learned knowledge, skills and understanding. The provision of resources for art is good and this has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' work.

Design and technology

1. It was only possible to make a small number of observations during the inspection week. However, discussions with pupils and teachers and evidence from planning and displays show that pupils' skills in designing and making develop steadily as they move through the school. Pupils' progress, including those pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory.
2. Throughout the school pupils use a process diary to record their design, state materials needed, include changes that were made and evaluate their final design. By Year 6 pupils have sufficiently well developed their skills to design, cut and assemble pieces to make flowers or leaves on to a felt panel. In Year 5 pupils design flowers on thin wood and cut them out using a reciprocating saw. In another Year 5 class pupils designed and made percussion instruments having selected the appropriate materials. The complete work was evaluated in both pictures and writing so that the activity was accessible to all children. In the lesson observed pupils used technical language correctly and were aware of safety. Work is precise and care is taken to finish the product well. A good example was in an upper school class where assembling and disassembling technique was used effectively to produce models of pyramids in relation to a project on Ancient Egypt.
3. Attitudes to learning are good and pupils work sensibly together. They are interested in their work and sustain concentration in trying to improve it. They make appropriate choices about the types of materials and tools needed.
4. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Appropriate interventions and questioning help pupils to develop skills and understanding in the making process. Teachers' management, organisation and planning are generally effective. However, some activities are over-directed by teachers, resulting in a lack of opportunity for pupils to become independent learners. This was noticeable in a Year 5 class where pupils transferred given designs on to material, using needles and thread.
5. There is an appropriate balance between the designing and making components of technology. Lessons are planned from the school's medium term plans. There are good links with other subjects, including mathematics, history and art. The emphasis on technical terms and discussion ensures that literacy skills are being further developed.
6. The subject is led by an enthusiastic new co-ordinator who is keen to promote it, having attended a recent design and technology course. She has plans to develop further teachers' record systems and update the policy to increase its links with numeracy and literacy. Assessment, which is regular, is set against the level descriptions in the National Curriculum.
7. The subject is further promoted by class visits to a local engineering works, and the opportunity for pupils to attend an after-school technology club.

Geography

1. Although only a limited range of lessons was able to be observed during the inspection, the scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that provision is made for satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum. Teachers' plans cover geographical themes including physical geography, weather and climate, the development of settlements and world geography. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are familiar with the names and locations of the continents, oceans and major rivers. The written work shows sound understanding of the water cycle and convectional and relief rainfall as well as the stages of a river. Pupils use appropriate terminology such as meander, flood plain, valley and estuary. Their work also shows that they have good appreciation of influence of water supply, bridging points, relief and defence have on the developments. They further their understanding of contrasting areas by studying a settlement in Cornwall. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time.
2. Pupils' response in lessons is good. They show interest and are keen to take part in whole class work. Whether working individually or in groups they concentrate well. Pupils develop the skills necessary to use atlases and other sources to find information. Work is well presented.
3. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers plan their lessons well and are very clear about what pupils are to learn. Lessons move at a satisfactory pace and teachers make careful use of question-answer techniques to further pupils' understanding. Teachers promote research skills by encouraging pupils to obtain information from other sources, including the school library.
4. The subject is well co-ordinated. There is a satisfactory scheme of work in place and short term planning is good although there are no formal procedures to assess pupils attainment in geography making it difficult for teachers to provide work which builds on pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers have sufficient resources at their disposal.

History

1. Pupils attain standards at least in line with those expected. By the end of Key Stage 2 they are able to use source materials independently and distinguish between primary and secondary sources. For example, they are strongly aware of the importance of census returns as a source of information about life in past times. Pupils also understand the need to consider the causes and consequences of the events they are studying as well as what happened. Pupils have a good understanding of life in Victorian times as well as having a sound appreciation of Britain during the Roman occupation. They make a study of the history of the local area and compare it to the present day and so they acquire a good understanding of the changes which have taken place. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in history. They make good progress in their research skills.
2. Pupils are enthusiastic in history lessons. They are generally keen to take part in discussions and they respond well to the challenge of conducting their own investigations. They work well both individually and collaboratively. The standard of presentation shows that pupils take pride in their work.
3. The quality of teaching in history is good. Lessons are characterised by good planning and a variety of activities. Teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn. There is appropriate emphasis on the use of source materials and good use is made of artefacts to further pupils' understanding. Teachers expect pupils to understand the reasons behind past events and the consequences. For example, they learn why the Romans invaded Britain and the impact on the inhabitants. Good use is made of homework to encourage pupils to conduct their own investigative work, using the

school library and other sources.

4. The subject has good leadership. A satisfactory scheme of work is in place and the good planning ensures continuity although there are no formal assessment procedures in history. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan work which effectively builds on pupils' previous learning. There is a satisfactory supply of resources for the subject and these are well used.

Music

1. Pupils make good progress in music and this has improved since the last inspection. The improvement is largely due to improved teacher subject knowledge and more detailed planning using, but not slavishly following, a commercial scheme, as well as some specialist teaching. Little evidence was available during the inspection of pupils composing but the planning shows that this does take place. The performance aspects of the curriculum are mostly met through singing, while opportunities to listen to a variety of types of music is evident.
2. When singing pupils can keep to the correct tempo and sing enthusiastically but with good control. Most Year 5 pupils know what a lullaby is and what are the necessary characteristics of one. They can compare this to a more lively piece of music. Older pupils can keep a beat and follow the pulse of a song accurately. They demonstrate familiarity with the correct terminology and volunteer terms such as coda and introduction when appraising a piece.
3. The pupils can clap a rhythm copying and following the teachers' lead. They sing very tunefully, in classes and in assembly. The choir is of very good quality and regularly performs in public. Two and three part singing is common. The interest pupils have in music is also evident by the number who take up instrument tuition. Local authority teachers come in to the school to teach strings, brass, woodwind and percussion. In addition the music co-ordinator puts together a school orchestra as well as the choir, and there are recorder lessons for beginners and more advanced players. These enable pupils with talent to extend and develop their skills.
4. The behaviour of pupils in the majority of lessons is good. Music has a high profile in the school and most children sing with enthusiasm and join in lessons correctly. Only when listening to music does the concentration of a few slip and opportunities for silliness arise.
5. The quality of the teaching observed was generally good and this has improved since the last inspection. The commercial scheme is used effectively as a resource and the specialist teaching in Year 4 and Year 6 is clearly having a positive impact on standards. The planning is very detailed and lessons are well prepared. Teachers make the best of the necessity of using the attached squash courts for music lessons because of space and noise considerations, but this is far from ideal. The percussion resources are unsatisfactory and in need of renewal. Technical vocabulary is used appropriately. Although music is played on entry to assembly this is not linked to the theme or discussed by the staff, thus missing an opportunity to practice listening and appraising skills. The music co-ordinator is personally skilled and very enthusiastic about the subject. This has a positive effect on the pupils and helps create a high profile for the subject.

Physical education

6. The majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. There are strengths and weaknesses in all year groups and these are due to varying subject expertise and the unsatisfactory provision of games apparatus, particularly a wide variety of good quality balls. Progress was best in gymnastics. In a Year 3 gymnastic lesson which contained very effective warm up activities and a detailed discussion of the effect of exercise on pupils' bodies. Pupils created a good variety of curled, twisted, long and wide body shapes. In Year 4 pupils learned a variety of ways of jumping and landing safely and

this work built on previous lessons. By Year 5 pupils demonstrate satisfactory balancing skills. Year 6 pupils can build symmetrical balances and extend this by working in pairs developing symmetrical rolls and spinning movements. By the end of the key stage pupils demonstrate a sound level of games skills using large balls for passing and receiving in a variety of ways, although little progress is evident as many of the same activities are evident in Year 3. This work is hindered by the poor level of resources for the task and the number of pupils involved.

7. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are enthusiastic about the subject throughout the school. The majority of the pupils work well together in pairs or larger groups and their behaviour is good. Only where the teachers' subject expertise is less evident does off task behaviour and a lack of progress become evident. Most pupils respond to the teachers' instructions quickly and safely.
8. The quality of teaching is good overall and none of it is unsatisfactory. Health and safety issues were always uppermost in teachers' minds and they ensured that the hall was as safe as possible when its multi purpose nature is taken into account. Subject knowledge is variable and where there is too little direct coaching progress is less successful. The teachers have not yet developed a satisfactory method for pupils to make evaluations of each others' work, and there is little day to day assessment of progress evident. This makes it difficult for teachers to ensure that they build on the skills pupils have previously learned.
9. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has devised a good scheme of work which covers all necessary aspects of the National Curriculum. An annual visit to a residential centre for Year 6 enables the teaching of outdoor and adventurous activities to be extended. After school clubs for cricket, rounders, football and netball are offered and a good number of pupils take advantage of them. The football team demonstrated their skills by winning their first match of the year during the inspection. In addition specialist coaching is encouraged and the staff make good use of local tennis, rugby and football clubs.
10. The accommodation is satisfactory. It is enhanced by two community squash courts although these are used for music rather than physical education. The hall is used for dinners and assemblies as well as physical education and also forms a corridor through the school. This makes concentration for pupils difficult especially just prior to lunchtime. The resources are unsatisfactory and games equipment in particular is in need of updating and improvement.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

11. The team consisted of 5 inspectors, including a lay inspector, who spent a total of 20 inspector days in school. The inspection team:

- spent approximately 80 hours observing 74 lessons and reviewing children's work
- attended a sample of registration sessions
- attended assemblies and extra-curricular activities
- observed pupils' arrival at and departure from school
- observed all teachers at least once and most several times
- had discussions with the Headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff, the Chairman of Governors and other governors
- reviewed all the available written work of a representative sample of three pupils from each year group and heard pupils read
- held informal discussions with many pupils
- analysed a large amount of documentation provided by the school both before and during the inspection, including:
 - the school prospectus;
 - school policies
 - the Governors' Annual Report to Parents;
 - minutes of governors' meetings;
 - financial statements;
 - the School Development Plan;
 - subject policies and planning;
 - pupils' reports and records, including special educational needs records
 - the previous inspection report and action plans
- held a meeting attended by 12 parents and considered 117 responses from parents to a questionnaire asking about their views of the school.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y3 – Y6	403	5	73	7

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y3 – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

15.4

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

26.2

Education support staff (Y3 – Y6)

Total number of education support staff

14

Total aggregate hours worked each week

142

Average class size:

33.6

Financial data

Financial year:

1998

	£
Total Income	710 830
Total Expenditure	717 472
Expenditure per pupil	1849
Balance brought forward from previous year	40 210
Balance carried forward to next year	33 568

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

395

Number of questionnaires returned:

117

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	36.8	53.8	7.7	1.7	-
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	44.4	51.3	2.6	0.9	0.9
The school handles complaints from parents well	26.5	53.8	14.5	2.6	2.6
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	32.5	53.0	11.1	3.4	-
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	29.9	51.3	13.7	5.1	-
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30.8	59.0	9.4	-	0.9
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	35.9	52.1	8.5	3.4	-
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	26.5	50.4	6.0	16.2	0.9
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	28.2	63.2	6.8	1.7	-
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	27.4	66.7	6.0	-	-
My child(ren) like(s) school	37.6	53.8	8.5	-	-

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by parents.