

INSPECTION REPORT

Barlaston Church of England First School

Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124233

Headteacher: Mrs Hilda Sharp

Reporting inspector: Mr Stafford Evans
21217

Dates of inspection: 19th - 21st March 2001

Inspection number: 193245

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Broughton Crescent Barlaston Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST12 9DB
Telephone number:	01782 372543
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Sue Walsh
Date of previous inspection:	8 th December 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr S. G. Evans (OIN 21217)	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr L. Kuraishi (OIN 11450)	Lay inspector		Attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs T. Galvin (OIN 21020)	Team inspector	Under fives English Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Assessment

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Barlaston is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School with a total of 80 pupils on roll aged from four to nine. The school is smaller than similar schools nationally. Attainment on entry ranges from well below to above that expected for children this age. Overall attainment is broadly in line with national expectations, but there is significant variation between year groups. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs - 19 per cent - is about in line with the national average. There are two pupils who have statements of special educational need. This is proportionately higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is near to the national average. No pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.

The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving good school with very good features. It gives good value for money. Pupils attain above national expectations by the time they leave the school. This means pupils make good progress during their time at the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils' attitudes, their behaviour and personal development are very good. The school provides a rich and broad curriculum. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school.
- Throughout the school there is a very significant amount of good and very good teaching that positively affects pupils' learning. Support staff enhance the quality of pupils' learning.
- The pupils like school. Their attitudes to school, behaviour, personal development and relationships with one another are very good. This very positively affects the pupils' good quality of learning.
- Teachers provide a broad and interesting range of work for the pupils, including those with special educational needs. This promotes the high achievement of all pupils.
- There is a strong emphasis on provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and the relationships they form with one another.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She, very ably supported by the staff, creates an atmosphere within the school in which pupils are very keen and able to learn. The governors contribute substantially to the effectiveness of the school.

What could be improved

- Subject managers are increasingly effective in their role. However, this role needs to be further developed to include more thorough monitoring and evaluation of standards of pupils' work, and more involvement in the strategic planning in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- The school's policy for special educational needs requires updating. Also, special educational needs issues should feature in school development planning.
- The school's aims do not accurately reflect all that the teachers, support staff and governors are trying to do.
- There are unsatisfactory outdoor facilities for Foundation Stage.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. They are all identified in the school's current development planning.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Following the last inspection in February 1997, inspectors placed the school in special measures because the standard of education the school provided was unsatisfactory. Her Majesty's Inspectorate took it out of special measures in December 1998 following an inspection when the standard of education was judged to be satisfactory. It is now a good school, with a number of very good features. The improvements made in the last four years are considerable. The school is well placed to consolidate the improvements and, in time, build upon them further. Standards of attainment are higher than they were, particularly in writing. The good and very good teaching identified at the last inspection is still evident in the school. Also, the overall quality of teaching is now significantly better than at the last inspection. The very good or excellent teaching is almost three times greater. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning, personal development and relationships with one another are better than in 1997.

The work teachers prepare for the pupils to do is planned more effectively, and procedures for assessing pupils are very significantly better. The leadership and management is much more effective now when compared with the last inspection. At the time of the inspection in 1997 there were a number of statutory requirements not in place. All statutory requirements are now met. All the key issues identified in the last two inspections have been addressed successfully.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	B	D	C	C
Writing	C	C	C	C
Mathematics	A	B	D	E

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E

Inspection evidence indicates that standards in writing and mathematics have improved compared with those in the table above for 2000. Standards are now above average in writing and mathematics, and remain average in reading. The school places a strong emphasis on the teaching of writing. This contributes significantly to the improvement in writing standards. In mathematics, this year's standards reflect the high standards of previous years. The main reasons are the good quality of teaching and the fact that, when compared with last year, there is a lower proportion of current seven-year old pupils who are identified as having special educational needs. Attainment on entry to the school is wide ranging. Children under five years of age make good progress, and by the age of five attain at least in line with nationally expected standards. Pupils aged from five to seven continue to make good progress. This good progress is built on very well for pupils aged from seven to nine. By the time pupils leave the school they make at least good progress, and a significant number make very good progress. By the age of nine, standards in English and mathematics are above average, and well above average in science. Pupils also attain high standards in art and design. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and have very good attitudes to their work. They are very interested in school and willingly involve themselves in the range of activities the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. They are polite to each other and to adults, and they look after their own property as well as that of others. There are no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships with one another and with adults in the school. Their personal development is very good. Pupils respect other people's differences, take responsibility and show initiative.
Attendance	The attendance figures are above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good or better in all lessons. It is excellent in five per cent, very good in 26 per cent and good in 69 per cent. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. The quality of teaching throughout the school has many strengths and no significant weaknesses. The strengths of the teaching include the teaching of basic skills, the very good management of pupils' behaviour and good use of time, support staff and learning resources. Support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers teach literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills effectively in other subjects. The quality of teaching of pupils identified as having special educational needs is good.

The quality of pupils' learning is good. They are keen to learn and clear about what is expected of them. They understand what is good about their work and how it can be improved. They use effectively their basic skills of literacy and numeracy in many subjects. They work co-operatively and collaboratively. They work hard.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The well-planned curriculum for the under-fives covers all the national Early Learning Goals ¹ . The school provides a broad range of work that is interesting and relevant to pupils aged from five to nine. There is a statutory curriculum in place.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school's programme of support for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is effectively organised to identify pupils who need additional help. This ensures they make similar progress to that of their classmates.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This provision is very good overall and is set within a strong Christian ethos. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and good for their spiritual and cultural development. Pupils clearly understand what is right and wrong, and show a high degree of respect for all people.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. Members of staff treat the pupils with understanding and respect. Procedures for child protection are in place. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and have good quality information to tell them what pupils have done well and where they need help. Therefore, support is directed effectively to the pupils who need it most.

Parents have a very high regard for the school. There are good links between school and parents. The impact of parents on the work of the school is very good. Less well developed is the contribution some parents make to supporting their children's learning at home.

¹ These goals are based on the areas of learning during the Foundation Stage. They also help prepare children for future learning when they enter compulsory education at the age of five. The goals mainly refer to literacy and numeracy skills, and personal, social and emotional development. Most children should reach the early learning goals by the time they are five.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a very clear vision of what sort of school it should be, and puts pupils and their achievement first. The headteacher, ably supported by the staff, has a definite commitment to high standards. The leadership of the co-ordinator for science is high calibre. Subject co-ordinators provide sound leadership overall. They need to monitor and evaluate pupils' standards more rigorously. Also, they need to play a more prominent role in the strategic planning for the subjects for which they are responsible.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very well organised and thorough in their approach. They have a very good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They work very closely with the staff in their efforts to achieve high standards. The agreed aims of the school do not fully reflect all the school is trying to do.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors closely and evaluates effectively its performance. It knows its strengths and areas that require development, and takes very effective action to secure improvement. There is no reference to special educational needs provision in the school's strategic planning. This makes the monitoring and evaluation of this aspect of school life less secure than it is in other aspects.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are managed very well and the principles of best value applied effectively. The school is adequately staffed and the quality of accommodation is good. There are sufficient learning resources in all subjects, but resources for outdoor activities for children in the Foundation Stage are insufficient.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Forty-three questionnaires were returned. This was 54 per cent of those sent out. Five parents made a written response. Eight parents attended the pre-inspection meeting for parents.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school enables their children to make good progress. • The teaching is good. • Their children behave well at school. • The school is very easy to approach with concerns. • Staff have high expectations for their children. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • The provision for their children's personal development is good. 	<p>A small minority of parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feel their children do not receive the right amount of homework; • say they are not well enough informed about their children's progress; • believe the school does not work closely enough with parents; and, • there are insufficient extra-curricular activities.

The inspectors support the parents' positive views. Inspectors judge that homework provision enhances pupils' learning. Also, the school strives to attain the right balance in the amount of homework set, and succeeds in the view of most parents. There is an annual report of very good quality and formal occasions when parents discuss work with teachers. Teachers are available to meet with parents informally to discuss any issues of interest or concern that a parent might have. These arrangements are sufficient to keep parents well informed about their children. Parents are very welcome into school. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement. There is a thriving parents' and teachers' association. Inspectors judge that the school does a great deal to foster close ties between home and school. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that significantly enhance pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 2000 national tests for pupils aged seven years, attainment was average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics. In the teacher assessment for science, results were in line with the national average. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 together, standards exceeded the national average in reading and mathematics, but fell below the national average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, standards in the national tests of 2000 were average in reading and writing, but well below average in mathematics. The mathematics results were lower than usual because there was a higher than normal proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs in mathematics.
2. Inspection evidence indicates, when compared with the 2000 results, standards are higher in writing, mathematics and science this year, and in reading they are the same. By the age of seven, standards reached by pupils are above average in writing, mathematics and science. Reading standards are in line with the national average. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Good teaching and effective deployment of support staff to where the need is greatest positively affects current standards of pupils' attainment. The school places a strong emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills of writing. Another factor to influence standards positively is the effective teaching of writing and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics respectively. Thus, by the age of seven, pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy is above that expected of pupils this age. Science standards are rising because there is very good use made by teachers of developing pupils' investigative skills. This ensures pupils have a secure understanding and knowledge of what they are learning.
3. By the time pupils leave school at the age of nine, standards of attainment in science are well above the national average, and English and mathematics standards are above the national average. Standards are higher than those reported on in the last inspection. The very good teaching and learning of pupils aged seven to nine ensures pupils make at least good progress, and they often make very good progress.
4. Standards in religious education by the ages of seven and nine are in line with those recommended in the locally agreed syllabus, and broadly reflect similar standards to those at the time of the last inspection. Standards by the ages of seven and nine are in line with national expectations in information and communication technology. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. A considerable investment of time and money has included staff training and far better resources. This contributes significantly to the improvement, as have the good quality teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning in the subject.
5. Pupils aged seven and nine attain in line with national expectations in design and technology, geography, history and physical education. In art and design, pupils attain above nationally expected standards by the age of nine, and in line with them by the age of seven. In music, standards are in line with national expectations by the age of seven. However, inspectors are unable to make a judgement for pupils by the age of nine because music was not timetabled for these pupils during the inspection.
6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Many pupils aged seven to nine achieve very well. This is an improvement compared with achievement at the time of the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory for a significant number of pupils aged five to

seven, and for pupils aged seven to eight. There is no significant difference in the achievement or attainment of boys and girls. The school assembles a wide range of information on pupils' attainments and uses this information to set targets for what they are to achieve. The targets set reflect the variation in the groups of pupils, but are realistic, challenging and high enough.

7. Through good teaching and very good attitudes to their learning, children under five make good progress. By the time they reach Year 1 the majority of children achieve well. They attain the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical, and creative development. In personal, social and emotional development they attain above the expected level. Higher attaining children achieve above the expected level in communication language and literacy, and in mathematical development. Children with special educational needs make good progress through the effective support they receive from all staff. For example, these children have their own programmes of work, for instance in mathematical development.
8. Pupils, aged five to nine, with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and the targets set in their individual education plans. This is an improvement since the last inspection when their progress was satisfactory. Pupils with behavioural difficulties achieve well in their personal development and behaviour. This is due to the school's very good ethos of positive behaviour management. Pupils with speech and communication difficulties achieve very well because of very good support from outside agencies, such as speech therapists, and because teachers make good use of individual planning to meet their needs. Teachers deploy support staff in lessons to help, when necessary, pupils with special educational needs. This help positively supports pupils' learning. As a result, all pupils with special educational needs are integrated fully into school life.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour, personal development, and relationships with everyone in the school are very good. This has a very positive effect on their learning. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when these areas were satisfactory in the main. Parents overwhelmingly feel that their children like school and that their behaviour is good.
10. Children's attitudes and behaviour in the Foundation Stage in the reception class are very good. Children show good levels of concentration, initiative and independence for their age because members of staff encourage this. Children share resources and work together as friends. In a mathematics lesson a group of children worked very well together in pairs, sharing resources and helping one another to work out calculations to 10. These very good attitudes continue throughout the school. Pupils are courteous and polite, for example they readily say please and thank you. Throughout the school, pupils show respect for equipment and one another's property. For instance, they use the computers with care. They listen with courtesy and respect to their teachers and to each other, showing that they value what people say. In a Years 1/2 music lesson, pupils watched the conductor (another pupil) carefully and waited patiently for their group's turn to play the percussion instruments. Pupils show care and consideration for others. In a discussion, higher and average attaining Year 4 pupils showed a mature understanding of the needs of lower attaining pupils. 'They have to try very hard and they need (and get) more help from the teacher with their work than we do.'
11. The behaviour of most pupils is very good. It is often exemplary in assemblies and in the Years 3/4 class. Pupils move around the school in a very orderly manner, for example,

when they enter the hall at assembly times. The great majority of pupils play together as friends and are kind towards one another at playtimes. For example, they readily include others in their play. Boys and girls get on very well with each other. There are no pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Interviews with pupils show that they know the rules for good behaviour at playtimes and what to do if they are bullied. They are confident that the teachers would deal with any incidents effectively. No pupils have been excluded from the school. This is the same as reported in the previous inspection.

12. Relationships within the school are very good. Staff set a very good example of caring, friendly behaviour and this fosters the very good relationships between pupils and teachers. It is the cornerstone of the teachers' successful management of pupils' behaviour and has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils show courtesy and respect when speaking to staff and to visitors. Pupils of all ages willingly take responsibility in the classroom and around the school when they are given the opportunity. This promotes their personal development, sense of community and citizenship. They readily access their own resources, make decisions about their work, evaluate meaningfully their own and others' work and present their work in a variety of ways. For example, five to seven-year-olds choose pieces of work to place in a special book they have made themselves. They write the work out neatly by hand or word-processor and display it attractively in the pages of the book. Year 4 pupils sell snacks to younger pupils at break time. All pupils help to raise funds for charity.
13. The school has further improved the level of attendance since the last inspection, which is now above the national average. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually at the school, and morning and afternoon sessions start promptly. Attendance registers are completed twice daily and the school meets statutory requirements for safe keeping of the attendance records. This is also an improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good, with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching that has a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. The good and very good teaching identified at the time of the last inspection is still evident in the school. It has been built on successfully so that the quality of teaching is now significantly better than it was at the time of the inspection in 1997. It has also improved since Her Majesty's Inspectorate in 1998 judged it to be satisfactory. Teaching is now good or better in all lessons, with 26 per cent very good and 5 per cent excellent.
15. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage in the reception class is good and this has a positive effect on children's learning. Staff manage children's behaviour very well. The very good relationships that they have with them, clearly established classroom routines and the good organisation of resources underpin the staff's approach to managing the children's behaviour. Staff frequently praise children's efforts and achievements and this fosters their confidence and learning. They teach basic skills well, such as number work in mathematical development. There are good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress, which staff use successfully to plan the next steps in children's learning. Support staff are deployed effectively in lessons and make a positive contribution to children's learning.
16. The quality of teaching in nearly all subjects is good for pupils aged five to seven years. It ranges between very good - 25 per cent - and good. The teaching of science is very good. The quality of teaching for pupils aged seven to nine years is very good or excellent in nearly all subjects. It is very good or excellent in 67 per cent of lessons. It is good in design and technology.

17. Throughout the school, teachers work very hard to plan and prepare lessons. The planning shows clearly what is to be taught and learnt. This ensures pupils know what is expected of them in lessons and their learning is very focused. Teachers develop effectively pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in various subjects. For example, Years 1/2 pupils wrote good accounts in history of the life of Florence Nightingale. In geography during their work about a village study, they read and answered such questions as 'Are all houses made from brick?' Years 3/4 pupils designed and made books. This linked design and technology with literacy in a very successful way. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in curriculum areas such as science and design and technology. Years 3/4 pupils measured accurately when they constructed windmills, waterwheels and carts. They measured and recorded in centimetres the results of their work about friction in science. Teachers give good opportunities to develop information and communication technology skills in different subjects. It is used extensively in science to record the results of pupils' investigative work. Much of the pupils' written work is word-processed. Pupils create advertisements for the school's open-day. This combines pupils' artistic skills and their literacy skills whilst developing their information and communication technology skills.
18. An effective use of pupil assessment ensures that activities mainly match pupils' varying needs and prior attainment. This means pupils neither struggle with the work nor find it too easy. This enhances their learning significantly. The exception to this is in some lessons for pupils aged five to seven when higher attaining pupils do not have sufficiently difficult work to complete. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is mainly good. All work is marked and the best marking places an emphasis on what pupils need to do to improve their work further. This helps pupils develop a good understanding of their own learning. Satisfactory homework procedures are effective in extending pupils' learning when they receive support at home.
19. Teachers use a range of appropriate teaching methods. These include whole-class teaching, group and individual work, involving practical, investigative and problem-solving activities. These teaching approaches motivate pupils and give them the chance to work co-operatively and collaboratively, and thereby significantly contribute to their personal development. Teachers use time and resources efficiently. Their use of computers to support pupils' learning is a particular strength. Pupils respond by being attentive and keen learners. Teachers have secure subject knowledge so they answer pupils' questions accurately and teach with confidence. This in turn extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work they complete. Pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively. As a result, little time is wasted in lessons and the pupils have more time to work hard. A strength of the teaching is the very good relationships between staff and pupils. This ensures all pupils, whatever their background, are fully involved in lessons and feel valued. This greatly enhances the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers deploy support staff effectively to support pupils' learning. Support staff contribute positively to pupils' progress.
20. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers know their pupils well and, through good use of individual education plans, work is set that meets pupils' needs. Pupils are supported effectively by staff who, when appropriate, repeat and explain questions so pupils are involved fully in lessons. A very effective strategy for supporting pupils with special educational needs occurs during the introduction to numeracy lessons for pupils aged five to seven. Support staff withdraw pupils with special educational needs from the whole-class situation for specific questioning to extend their ability to calculate mentally. This ensures they have very many more opportunities to answer questions than they have in a large group situation, and the work is relevant to their specific needs. Following this part of the lesson they then rejoin the rest of the class. Teachers explain clearly individual and group work, and

good class routines are established so those pupils with special educational needs start work quickly and make an effort to work individually. Staff use praise and rewards to help manage pupils' behaviour, increase pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence, and extend effort.

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

21. The school provides a very good curriculum for its pupils. Teachers give an appropriate amount of time to all the subjects of the National Curriculum. However, in English teachers do not give reading the emphasis that they give writing. The school has focused specifically on writing recently and this has been successful. It now needs a similar approach to promoting reading. Teachers give a suitable time for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education, drugs awareness and citizenship. Teachers teach religious education according to the locally recommended guidelines. Teachers make most lessons interesting because they use a good range of resources and activities. The curriculum is made significantly better by the very good links that teachers make between subjects. For example, in Years 3/4, music from *The Firebird* was used very effectively as a stimulus for pupils' ideas in art and writing. This led to pupils producing very effective pictures and pieces of writing. Additionally, teachers make the curriculum richer through a range of trips and visits by pupils of all ages. For example, reception children visit the supermarket and a sea life centre, Years 1/2 pupils visit a zoo and Years 3/4 pupils the premises where a newspaper is produced.
22. The school uses its good links with the local community to add further to the curriculum. People from the community visit the school and share their expertise when classes learn about particular topics. A nurse visited the Years 1/2 class when they were learning about Florence Nightingale in history. Pupils grew marrows and pumpkins on a local allotment. The pupils have the choice of a very good range of clubs that they may attend, such as football, keyboard, recorder, gardening and French clubs. Extra-curricular provision is very good. Teachers prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education through effective links with the local middle school. The school also has good links with neighbouring schools and initial teacher training institutions.
23. The Foundation Stage curriculum planned for the reception class covers the six curriculum areas recommended for young children. In the main, the curriculum is relevant to children's needs. Although the school has plans to develop the outdoor play area, the current provision is unsatisfactory. The school provides a good variety of stimulating activities that prepare children well for the National Curriculum and the next stage in their learning.
24. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies works effectively. The strong features in the school's approach are that teachers have clear learning targets for what pupils are to achieve in the lesson, match the work carefully to pupils' differing capabilities, and check the pupils' work effectively.
25. The school provides good systems to ensure that all pupils receive a curriculum that takes account of their ages, attainment, gender and needs. The school has good arrangements in place to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. The provision for these pupils is good and the school implements the Code of Practice² fully. There are very effective screening processes to identify pupils with special educational needs, and their individual education plans set

² Code of Practice – this gives advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

clear and achievable targets. They are supported in class by classroom assistants, visiting specialists and by being set work that is sufficiently challenging. Boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum.

26. The provision for pupils' personal, moral and social development is one of the things that the school does very successfully. Spiritual and cultural development are good. The provision is very much better than it was in the previous inspection. Collective worship makes a significant contribution to spiritual development. Teachers give a very strong emphasis to prayer and reflection on these occasions and to caring for others. In an assembly, pupils reflected on the special gifts or talents that God had given them and the need to share them with others. On another occasion the local vicar gave a thought-provoking assembly. He showed the pupils a simple prayer method based on the fingers of one hand. Lessons in religious education also contribute positively to pupils' development. The school could extend this further by providing planned activities to promote spirituality through other subjects, such as science and music.
27. The school promotes moral development strongly through the very good example that staff give of care and respect for others. For example, they listen carefully and with genuine interest to what pupils say and value their contributions. Adults use a range of rewards for good behaviour and effort, including certificates and stickers, and pupils' achievements are celebrated each week in an assembly. As a result most pupils' behaviour is very good and sometimes it is exemplary. Staff manage effectively the challenging behaviour of a few pupils. This means that the learning of the other pupils is not disrupted. Pupils know the rules regarding acceptable behaviour at lunchtime, playtimes and in lessons. Pupils have a clear sense of the difference between right and wrong.
28. The very good relationships between everyone in the school underpin the very good provision for pupils' social development. Teachers encourage pupils to work together as friends in pairs or groups in lessons, for instance in English, mathematics and science. In two assemblies seen during the inspection, pupils were also given time to discuss their ideas in pairs. Staff also took part. They paired up with pupils from different year groups who did not have a partner. The community spirit and friendship is reinforced by greetings in assemblies or at the end of the day, such as, 'Good morning friends', and 'Good afternoon friends.' Pupils' sense of citizenship and care for others is fostered through good links with the local community, such as the environmental studies area in the school grounds known as the Millennium garden that was funded by a local pottery business. Pupils also raise funds for charity. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development.
29. Teachers promote effectively through subjects, such as art, music and history, pupils' own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. Pupils listen to the music of a wide range of composers, such as Smetana and Brubeck. They study the work of famous artists, such as Mondrian and Van Gogh, and study important periods in British history, such as Roman and Victorian times. Christianity and other faiths are studied in religious education, for example Judaism and Islam. Teachers provide a wide range of educational visits that make a positive contribution to pupils' development, for instance to the theatre, zoo and airport, and to the Roman town of Chester. There are regular visits to the local library. Visitors from the community also enhance the provision. For example, they contribute to pupils' work in music and science.
30. The school has made very good improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection, when it was unsatisfactory in the main, including teachers' lesson planning. Additionally good progress has been made in implementing the changes to the National Curriculum introduced nationally last September.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school is a calm and caring establishment, which has well organised procedures for ensuring the well-being and safety of its pupils. As a result, pupils are very happy to come to school. Child protection procedures are in place and close attention is paid to health and safety issues. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety matters, particularly in physical education and science lessons. General cleanliness of the buildings and the up-keep of the grounds are of highest standards.
32. Parents' response to the questionnaire shows they strongly agree that their children like to come to school. All teachers make it a priority to ensure children settle well into school, beginning with effective pre-admission arrangements where children are introduced to the school through short pre-school sessions. Teachers ask parents to stay and listen to a story with their children. This establishes good relationships between parents and the school and enables children to become familiar with their new surroundings. Teachers pay good attention to pupils' educational needs and appropriate support is provided for less able children at an early stage of their learning. For example, the school targets pupils with additional learning needs early in their school life and then provides extra group work and support in classes through learning support assistants. This enables them to make good progress. The teachers and support staff know the children and their families well and are sensitive to their needs. They provide suitable opportunities for children and parents to discuss any concern or problems.
33. The health and safety policy has been revised since the last inspection and contains procedures for dealing with emergencies. Regular checks are made on the safety of the buildings, grounds and equipment. The school adopts proper safety procedures for checking and maintaining electrical equipment in the school. There are formal records for inspection of fire fighting equipment. The school holds regular fire drills and records them correctly. There is a governor with responsibility for overseeing school health and safety matters. He monitors very effectively the implementation of health and safety procedures and undertakes regularly risk assessments of the premises. Teachers and support staff promote hygiene effectively as part of the curriculum, and there is very good attention to health, safety and hygiene matters throughout the school.
34. Account is taken of pupils' medical needs and, within a caring environment, the staff ensure that sick and vulnerable children are properly looked after. The staff are aware of the procedures in case of an emergency. However, there is no medical room for sick children. There are sufficient numbers of trained first aiders, and the school makes appropriate safety arrangements prior to the school visits.
35. Overall administrative procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. However, the use of information technology to monitor attendance and punctuality is not in place. Therefore, the school secretary faces the cumbersome task of preparing by hand periodic attendance statistics. Registers are marked in accordance with legal requirements and the school secretary ensures their safe-keeping. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
36. Members of staff promote good behaviour through developing self-discipline in pupils and informal monitoring of the school's code of conduct. The school is a relaxed place, and there is a friendly working atmosphere where pupils feel safe and valued. Therefore, they behave well. All pupils know that good behaviour is required whilst they work and play. There are few written rules, but pupils know what to do in case of bullying or harassment, although no such behaviour was seen during the inspection. There are no exclusions from the school. Parents feel that their children are safe and secure in the school and that good procedures are in place to deal with emergencies.

37. The assessment procedures for children in the Foundation Stage are good. The school makes an initial assessment of children's achievements on entry to the reception class and uses it effectively to group children for communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The teacher regularly checks children's achievements in these areas of learning and uses this information effectively to match the work to children's differing needs. Adults also check children's knowledge, understanding and skill in the other areas of the curriculum and this information is used to target children who require additional support with their work.
38. The school has good procedures for checking the knowledge and understanding of pupils aged five to nine years. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection when the procedures and the use of them were unsatisfactory. The school's national test results for seven-year-olds are used to group pupils for literacy and numeracy and to provide the best possible support for them. The analysis also includes differences in the performances of boys and girls. However, teachers tend to underestimate pupils' achievements in teacher assessments in speaking and listening and science.
39. Pupils undertake nationally recommended assessments at the age of nine. The school analyses the results of the tests for seven and nine-year-olds and uses this information to evaluate its curriculum and to make changes to it if these are required. Throughout the school, teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding after a series of lessons in English and mathematics. The school has plans to extend this system to other subjects. Pupils carry out a piece of independent written work in English, mathematics and science each term and these are placed in special books that are passed from class to class. This enables teachers to track pupils' progress throughout the school. Teachers also use a range of procedures for checking pupils' learning in lessons. The school assesses and monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, in more detail than other pupils. For example, members of the local education authority's special educational needs support team monitors regularly pupils' progress. The headteacher also monitors their progress through the use of standardised tests. This complements very effectively the teachers' thorough monitoring of pupils' individual education plans. The annual reviews of statemented pupils are rigorous and there is an effective procedure for monitoring their progress.
40. The school keeps careful records of all the assessments that are carried out. It analyses the results thoroughly in order to identify where pupils require additional support or more challenging work. Teachers then use this information to plan the next step in pupils' learning and to track their progress over time. There is a rigorous approach to this analysis to help raise attainment, and all pupils benefit. For example, the analysis of the 2000 national tests for seven-year olds showed that the school needed to improve the standard of handwriting, punctuation and vocabulary of some pupils. These areas were targeted for teachers to focus on in future lessons. The headteacher discusses pupils' assessment results in detail with the class teachers. As a result, the school's systems for assessing pupils' achievements in their learning have a positive effect on the curriculum, teachers' lesson planning and what pupils do.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The school has successfully maintained good relationships with parents since the last inspection. The response to the questionnaire, at 54 per cent, is comparatively high and all parents who responded are satisfied with the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their children. They feel the quality of teaching is good, that most pupils' behave well in the school and that this enables their children to develop positive attitudes to school and to make good progress. Inspectors agree with these views.
42. Fourteen per cent of the parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they are not well informed how their child is getting on in the school. A similar proportion feel that the school does not work closely with the parents and a slightly lower proportion expressed concern about lack of extra-curricular activities outside lessons. The evidence gathered during the inspection and through meetings with parents does not support these views. The school is committed to working closely with parents. There are three parents' evenings, curriculum evenings, open days for informal chats, weekly opportunities to share a book with children and informal meetings between parents and teachers. There is a strategically placed school notice board which parents can easily refer to and check dates and events related to the school diary. The annual pre-admission sessions focus on promoting the partnership between home and school so that the new children settle in happily. There are regular monthly newsletters regarding sporting activities, school visits, diary dates and other school events. These keep parents and carers well informed about the school life. The school provides a number of after school clubs, mostly supported by parents, which enable pupils to make progress in physical education and music.
43. Under a quarter of parents who responded feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework. The inspectors found that the homework given is appropriate to pupils' ages and a majority of parents support their children with homework. Reading books and spelling work are sent home regularly. Reading diaries, which are sent home, are used as two-way communication between some parents and all teachers. Most parents are happy about the information received from the school and they feel comfortable in approaching the school with concerns about their children's progress.
44. Good links between parents and school contribute to pupils' positive attitudes to school. This is instrumental in ensuring good attendance and punctuality. Easy access for parents to the class teachers and the headteacher ensures prompt attention to suggestions. The annual reports to parents are good and contain information on pupils' attitudes and progress. The school prospectus and governing body's annual report to parents have been revised since the last inspection and provide easy to read information and meet statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
45. Parental and community involvement for pupils' education at home and in the school is generally good. This is centred on raising a substantial amount of money for school funds, providing equipment and regular voluntary support within classrooms and with homework. Parents and carers undertake extra-curricular activities, such as a French club, football club and reorganisation of the school library.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governing body is very significantly better than at the time of the inspection in 1997. It is now very good. The school is well placed to build on this improvement after a period of consolidation.
47. The headteacher ensures very clear direction for the work and the development of the school. She provides influential and supportive leadership. This sets a first-rate climate for learning that includes very good attitudes to work and harmonious relationships, and a strong commitment to high standards. She sets the tone for the school in terms of clear expectations in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils within a strong Christian ethos. She leads very well by example in her dual role of class teacher and headteacher.
48. All staff ably support the headteacher. There exists a very good team spirit among all the staff and there is a shared commitment to maintain the high standards. This creates a very positive ethos, which reflects the school's commitment to a very effective atmosphere for learning, very good relationships and equality of opportunity for all. The headteacher monitors thoroughly teaching and learning. The teacher with responsibility for managing science provision in the school provides very good leadership. Overall, leadership of subject co-ordinators is sound. Their monitoring and evaluating of standards within the subjects for which they are responsible are not rigorous enough. Also, they do not play an effective enough part in the school's strategic financial planning. Co-ordination of special educational needs provision has lacked continuity. The school is aware of the need to update the policy that covers special educational needs provision so it reflects current practice.
49. The chair of governors provides very good leadership. The governors are very well organised and thorough in their approach. They are open to new ideas and adapt quickly. This enables them to take opportunities when they arise; for example, consulting with other 'small schools' in the area to determine how best to use the allocation of funds specifically for 'small schools' provided by the local authority. The governors are active in the life of the school and keep themselves very well informed about what is going on in school. They make regular visits and report back to meetings of the governing body. They have a very clear picture of how the school performs. The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements.
50. School development planning is good. It clearly identifies appropriate priorities and makes the raising of standards the basis of all developments. The school takes effective action to meet its targets. There is no reference to special educational needs provision in the school development plan. This is an important omission. It makes monitoring and evaluation of the provision difficult to complete effectively. There is effective long term strategic financial planning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The carry forward of funds from one year to the next is used effectively to maintain current staffing levels, replace old resources and equipment. The school applies effectively the principles of best value. The money allocated to the school per pupil is above average in comparison with other schools in the country. The day-to-day administration and management of the school are good. The recommendations in the latest auditor's report have been implemented. The school ensures it allocates its grant for staff training to support targets in the school development plan, and in this way relates them directly to pupils' learning. The school has the potential to be a good provider of initial teacher training.
51. The school has published aims focused on the faith and care that underpin the life of the school, broad curriculum and working in partnership with parents. There is no explicit

reference to attainment or high academic expectations. Yet there is plenty of evidence, in the work of the school and the depth of curriculum planning, that there is a commitment to such objectives. There is now a need to establish clear aims that match the school's real intentions.

52. The headteacher leads an experienced and dedicated team of teachers who meet the needs of the curriculum well. There are sufficient classroom assistants, who provide good support for pupils who need extra help with literacy and numeracy skills. The school has responded well to the national requirements for performance management and support for new and supply staff is in place.
53. There are sufficient lunchtime staff and they have good relationships with pupils. Catering and cleaning staff are sufficient in numbers and make a positive contribution to pupils' welfare. The site manager leads a hardworking team of ancillary workers who maintain the highest standards of hygiene and safety.
54. Accommodation is good and is used well to support learning. The present provision will improve even further when the new library functions fully. There is an adequate sized hard surface area for safe play and a large field for games and athletics. Attractive wall displays and a welcoming atmosphere enhance the interior of the school. There is a large hall, which is used for physical education, games and as a dining area at lunchtime. The outdoor play area for children under five is under-used as a resource for children's physical and creative development, and the range of outdoor resources for them is unsatisfactory.
55. All subjects are at least satisfactorily resourced, with music, mathematics and English having good quality resources, which are appropriately stored and easily accessible to staff and pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In the context of a very much improved school, the headteacher, staff and governors should implement their current strategic planning to:
 - develop further the role of subject co-ordinators to include the monitoring and evaluation of standards, throughout the school, within the subjects for which they are responsible. Also, ensure subject co-ordinators play a meaningful role in the school's strategic financial planning; (paragraphs 48, 76, 94, 100, 105, 110, 115 and 121)
 - review and bring up to date the school's policy for special educational needs, and include special educational needs issues in the school development plan; (paragraphs 48 and 50)
 - improve the outdoor facilities and resources, and their use for Foundation Stage pupils; (paragraphs 54 and 57)
 - review the school's aims and, if necessary, rewrite them so that they fully reflect, for parents and others, all that the school is trying to do. (paragraph 51)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

19

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

15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5	26	69	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR- Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	80
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	10
Special educational needs	YR - Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1³

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	5	11	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	88 (85)	88 (95)	94 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	75 (95)	81 (85)	88 (80)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

³ As the school has fewer than 11 boys or girls in the year group, the table omits totals for boys and girls..

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	60
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.2
Average class size	26.7

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	206,077
Total expenditure	194,559
Expenditure per pupil	2,093
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,000
Balance carried forward to next year	19,518

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 54%

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	43

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	42	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	44	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	40	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	44	12	5	5
The teaching is good.	48	40	5	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	37	14	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	47	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	42	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	40	44	14	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	33	9	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	53	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	51	12	2	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

57. The school has made good progress in the teaching, learning and planning for the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Teaching and children's progress were satisfactory then; they are now good. The school had no policy to ensure that it met the needs of children of this age and it now has one. This could be improved by giving more information about the areas of learning and the school's approach to teaching them. The school was not using the appropriate curriculum for children of this age. The teacher's lesson planning is now based upon the new curriculum for children of this age. The school has made insufficient progress in developing the outdoor play area and providing outdoor activities. Although the school has plans to attend to this the provision is currently unsatisfactory.
58. Through good teaching, children make good progress and, by the time they reach Year 1, the majority of children achieve well. They reach the Early Learning Goals for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical, and creative development. Higher attaining children achieve above the expected level in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development. In personal, social and emotional development the majority of children achieve above the expected level. Children with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive from all staff. The teacher provides these children with their own programmes of work, for example in mathematical development.
59. Adults promote children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively. Teaching and support staff are caring, supportive and encouraging, for instance in praising children's efforts and achievements. Adults set a very good example for children to follow. They listen with genuine interest to what children have to say and speak with courtesy and consideration. This leads to trusting relationships and helps children to understand other people's point of view. Children work together as friends in pairs and groups, take care of and share equipment. They know the classroom rules well; one child said to another, 'You have to share the glue sticks'. Adults encourage children to take responsibility for resources, such as tidying equipment away at the end of a lesson. Children respond very well and their behaviour is very good. They settle readily into daily routines, such as registration, and are developing a good awareness that some actions are right and some are wrong.
60. The achievement of most children is good in communication, language and literacy. Adults place a strong emphasis on developing children's speaking skills. They give children many opportunities to discuss their work individually. Children listen carefully to what others say, and to adult questions and explanations. They show increasing confidence in speaking to others in a large group. The teacher uses a variety of activities that successfully promote writing, such as creating stories. They write about their experiences, and write postcards and e-mails to a person in New Zealand. One child wrote 'I am 4. I like my furry cat'. Many children form letters correctly and write their name independently. The school has plans to teach a style of letter formation that makes it easier for children to join their writing when they move into the Years 1/2 class.
61. Children enjoy listening to the stories that adults read to them, such as *Mrs. Honey's Hat*. They join in with familiar phrases with enthusiasm, 'But Mrs Honey didn't notice'. Higher attaining children recognise capital letters and full stops and identify familiar words, such as 'Mrs', 'hat' and 'day'. Adults encourage all children to look carefully at the pictures and use these and the sounds of letters to read the unfamiliar words they meet. As a result, many children name sounds in words and use them well in their reading and writing. A

higher attaining child read unaided 'I can see my mum'. Higher and average attaining children recognise the words in the early stages of the reading scheme. Higher attaining children are beginning to use this skill when sharing books with an adult. The teacher could improve children's learning by providing more opportunities for children to browse with books. This could be included in the group work the teacher plans or the independent choices that children make.

62. The achievement of most children is good in mathematical development. The teacher gives considerable time to basic number work. This is taught successfully through games that gain children's interest and motivate them to learn. For example, children stand in a circle counting to 10 and the tenth person sits down. Children count to 10 and beyond. The teacher matches the work effectively to their differing needs and works effectively with a specific group during the lesson, such as the lower attaining children. During this time, the teacher ensures that she checks and supports sufficiently the work of other groups. These children are beginning to add numbers to 10 and to record this work. Through effective adult support, average attaining children solve simple problems to 10, for example by adding the dots on dominoes. Most of the lower attaining children recognise and count numbers to 10. Adults promote children's learning successfully at other times during the day. Through careful questioning they encourage the children working with sand to use accurately the words 'heavier', 'lighter', 'more' and 'less'. Children are beginning to recognise and sequence patterns accurately. They make 'caterpillars' by sequencing coloured beads on a string.
63. Children's achievement is good in knowledge and understanding of the world. They use the mouse confidently to work a variety of programs, such as a drawing program. They use this to produce attractive pictures related to their work, such as butterflies and people. Through work that is planned carefully, the teacher encourages children to investigate the world around them. Children use their senses and magnifying glasses to investigate ice and make predictions about what will happen when it is placed outside or in water. Adults encourage them to use precise words such as 'air' and 'dissolve'. As a result, children develop successfully early scientific skills. Their drawings of the ice show close attention to detail, such as the bubbles of air within it. Children talk about things that have happened in the past, for example when they were babies. The teacher places a strong emphasis on children recording their work and children spend considerable time on this. This time could be spent more effectively on practical work that extends the learning of these young children.
64. Although the teacher does not make planned use of the outdoor play area for children's physical development their achievement is good. This is because of the teaching that takes place in lessons in the school hall. In a well-structured games lesson, the teacher develops children's co-ordination and ball skills successfully. She also promotes effectively their personal social and emotional development by planning for them to work together as friends in pairs and small groups. This motivates children and extends their learning, for instance in a game of 'Roll Goal' they increase their accuracy in rolling and retrieving a ball. Adults join in with the game and this ensures that all children have a turn. Within the classroom, adults also teach children the skills of finer movements, to help them gain safe control of, for example, glue spatulas, paintbrushes and cutting with scissors.
65. Children's achievements in creative development are good. The teacher gives them many activities for making pictures. They mix primary colours and paint self-portraits. Children cut a variety of materials carefully, such as paper to produce shape pictures in the style of Matisse and fabric to make a mask. They shape play dough into patterns. The teacher could improve this further by making greater use of the imaginative play area to extend children's play and their vocabulary.

ENGLISH

66. By the ages of seven and nine the standard of pupils' work in English is above that found in other schools. The school has improved the subject very considerably since the previous inspection when attainment in English was unsatisfactory by the age of seven and satisfactory by the age of nine.
67. The school's results in the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds showed that standards in reading and writing were average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that standards in writing are now better than in the tests and are above average. Standards in reading remain average. Girls and boys achieve equally well. The improvement in writing is because the school has specific targets for its development. As a result, teachers develop pupils' writing very successfully in literacy lessons and through other subjects.
68. Inspection evidence shows that, by the ages of seven and nine, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are above those found in other schools. This judgement does not reflect the teacher assessment for seven-year-olds. This is because teachers tend to be over cautious in their assessments. Throughout the school, teachers use the correct technical words and they encourage pupils to use them in English and in other subjects. This leads to pupils' good learning. For example, seven-year-olds use the terms 'compound words' and 'index' and nine-year-olds use 'rhyming couplets' and 'glossary'. Teachers provide many activities to extend pupils' speaking skills in English and in other subjects. They use planned discussions in pairs and larger groups and provide opportunities for pupils to act out a role and for drama, for example in religious education lessons. As a result, pupils extend their everyday vocabulary and raise their self-esteem and their confidence. This is evident in a Years 1/2 lesson when pupils describe the cat in the story *Home Cat* as 'Twitching whiskers with sharp ends' and 'Spiky claws which will scratch'. Most pupils listen very carefully to teachers' explanations and instructions and to the views of others. This contributes positively to the good rate of learning in all aspects of English.
69. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach average standards in reading. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils read aloud confidently, accurately and with expression. Average and lower attaining pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds and this helps them tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. By the age of nine, pupils discuss what they read, showing that they understand the text well. Higher and average attaining pupils read confidently and with good expression. However, their knowledge of authors is not wide and their reading is not as fluent as it should be for pupils of their age. Lower attaining pupils read less confidently and relate the reading to their own interests and experiences. Pupils of all abilities know how to use the library system to locate books on particular shelves, and they use index, page heading and subheadings to find information in the books.
70. The school has good stocks of fiction and reading scheme books for pupils to use in literacy lessons and these make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school has recently developed an attractive library area for non-fiction books. However, some of the books are outdated and need replacing, for instance in the religious education section. The school could improve reading standards further by, firstly, providing for all pupils more planned activities for reading outside the literacy hour; secondly, by giving seven to nine-year-olds more time to use the library to find information related to their work in other subjects; thirdly, by ensuring that the books that pupils take home to read support effectively the school's approach to reading that is evident in literacy lessons; fourthly, by continuing the effective parent and child reading initiative that the school started this term. This latter initiative is beginning to have a beneficial effect on pupils'

learning. It is an important initiative because a significant minority of parents do not support their children's reading at home.

71. By the ages of seven and nine writing is above average and this shows good achievement by the majority of pupils. Throughout the school, teachers develop pupils' use of words very effectively. They check, discuss and give pupils very good feedback on their work during lessons. This increases the rate of pupils' learning. As a result, by the time pupils reach the age of nine their work is a delight to read. This is a strength of the school and has a positive effect on pupils' work in other subjects. Another strength of the subject is the accuracy of punctuation. Spelling is not as strong as the other aspects of pupils' writing. Seven-year-olds are starting to use interesting words; 'Sam crept downstairs...he could not see a thing through all the swirling snowflakes', and 'The tabby cat is like the wind'. Lower-attaining pupils try their best and write simple sentences. Pupils of all abilities use full stops and capital letters accurately. Pupils do not join their writing.
72. Nine-year-old pupils use different forms of writing very well, for instance in poetry and stories. A higher attaining pupil writing in response to the music from *The Firebird* wrote 'Her yelping cry was hardly ever heard and her soft movement made the forest look so peaceful.' A lower attaining pupil wrote 'The path was sparkly in the light. Then she flew away into the light sky.' An average attaining pupil wrote in rhyming couplets 'Winter's song twists and twirls/ And does fantastic curls/ Ice is slippy snow is falling/ Children warming, dads snoring.' Another pupil after painting an attractive picture of reflections wrote 'Sharp twisted silhouettes/ Shimmering on the water's surface...Gnarled black trees/ Walking the sun's golden path.' The teacher has high expectations that pupils will present their work neatly and pupils of all abilities respond very well. The majority of pupils produce work in which the punctuation is accurate and the handwriting is joined and fluent.
73. The teaching for pupils aged five to seven is good and for seven to nine-year-olds it is very good. This is much better than in the previous inspection when in the main teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching for eight to nine-year-olds remains very good. A strong feature of all the lessons is that teachers manage the different parts of the literacy hour successfully. They give clear explanations in the introduction and use the end of the lesson successfully to review pupils' understanding of the work. As a result, pupils cover a good deal of work during the lesson. Teachers make good use of assessment to group pupils and to identify what pupils need to do next in their work to extend pupils' learning further. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.
74. Teachers use attractive resources and interesting methods to gain pupils' interest. As a result, most pupils enjoy their work, concentrate well and are keen to learn. They get on very well together when working in pairs or groups. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. This underpins their successful management of pupils' behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is very good and this makes a positive contribution to their learning.
75. Support for pupils who have special educational needs is effective. Many pupils with special educational needs lack confidence and acquire slowly new skills and knowledge in reading and writing. Teachers plan the work for these pupils carefully. Also, pupils receive effective support from specialist classroom staff. As a result, they make good progress in their learning in relation to their prior attainment.
76. Standards in many aspects of the subject are now better than in the previous inspection. This is due firstly to the very good improvement in teaching, and secondly to the good

system for assessment. Thirdly, teachers are strongly committed to improving standards. The subject co-ordinator is new to the role. She is not yet involved in monitoring teaching and learning, analysing the results of pupil assessments or in strategic planning for the subject. The school has plans to develop the role.

MATHEMATICS

77. In the 2000 national test for seven-year-olds, standards of attainment were below the national average, and well below average in comparison with similar schools. Taking together the three years 1998 to 2000, standards exceeded the national average for this age group. Current standards are above average. This reflects the standards pupils' attained prior to last year. The reason for the dip in standards last year was the higher than usual proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs in mathematics. Standards by the age of seven are higher than those reported in the last inspection. By the age of nine, pupils attain standards above the national average. There are a significant proportion of pupils aged nine who attain well above levels expected for pupils this age. Throughout the school pupils make at least good progress, and some nine-year-olds make very good progress. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
78. By the age of seven, pupils recall accurately addition and number facts to 10, have a good understanding of the place value of each digit in a number and order numbers to 100. They recognise and name correctly the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They measure accurately using standard measures, such as centimetres. They have good mental calculation skills for their age.
79. By the age of nine, pupils have a very good knowledge of the value of digits in numbers over 1000, and many pupils know the value of digits to two decimal places. Pupils round up and round down decimal numbers very accurately. They construct precisely graphs to represent the results of their science investigations. Pupils have a sound knowledge of negative numbers. They construct accurately solid shapes. For example, as a homework exercise pupils made cylinders. They use, with great accuracy and artistic effect, dodecahedrons to make 'flower' and 'bowl' designs.
80. Pupils respond very well in lessons and work at a good pace. Pupils aged from five to seven behave well in lessons. The behaviour of pupils aged from seven to nine is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to contribute to discussions and settle quickly to their work. They persevere with difficult or complex tasks, working independently or co-operatively as the work demands.
81. The quality of teaching for pupils aged five to seven is good, and excellent for pupils aged seven to nine. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress they make. The quality of teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection.
82. In a Years 1/2 lesson, the teacher made good use of skilled questioning to make sure pupils understood and knew different ways of adding numbers to make 29. The teacher maintained a brisk pace and the pupils responded enthusiastically. This meant that pupils completed a lot of work. The classroom assistant took a group of pupils, identified as having special educational needs, to do work that was specific to their needs. This meant they had many more opportunities to answer questions and have mathematical concepts explained at a pace appropriate to their needs. This strategy very positively affected the quality of their learning. The work set by the teacher for all pupils to

complete individually was very well matched to their prior attainment. This meant pupils made good progress in relation to their prior attainment by the end of the lesson.

83. Another example of how the quality of teaching positively affected pupils' learning was in a Years 3/4 lesson on representing information using bar graphs. This was preceded by an excellent introduction involving mental calculation work. The teacher ensured pupils thought carefully about their answers through very skilful questioning about how the calculation was made. This meant the higher attaining pupils gave very detailed mathematical explanations of how they arrived at the answer. The teacher was very adept at involving all pupils of all abilities in this introduction. This was done through a very good awareness of the less confident pupils to whom she directed effective questions to develop their confidence. The teacher's very high expectation of good behaviour was the cornerstone of her behaviour management strategy. This ensured all pupils participated fully in the whole lesson with no interruption in their learning. The very good behaviour aided the pupils' ability to concentrate, which meant they worked quickly as well as accurately.
84. Teachers are increasingly alert to opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects. This positively affects pupils' progress in numeracy. In Years 1/2 textile technology, pupils measure accurately when they make paper patterns. They use equally accurate measures during the cutting out of the fabric to make purses and pencil cases. In a Years 3/4 science lesson, they represent their findings of a test to determine the best design for a paper aeroplane by showing the information in a graph. Years 1/2 pupils, in their science work about seashells, used their mathematical skills to measure and weigh them accurately. Links with literacy are also established. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to use correctly a wide range of mathematical language. For example, the Years 3/4 teacher demonstrated high expectations of use of correct terminology when pupils spoke of a 'table of statistics'. There are classroom displays of the meanings of mathematical terms and staff refer to them to support pupils' learning. Teachers encourage pupils to give explanations for their answers and this extends their speaking skills and use of vocabulary. Pupils are regularly required to read worksheets during problem solving activities. The uses of information and communication technology skills are referred to later in the report.

SCIENCE

85. The results for the teacher National Curriculum assessments in 2000 show that for pupils aged seven, attainment was in line with the national average and in comparison with similar schools. Current inspection evidence indicates attainment is above the national average. By the age of nine, pupils' attainment is well above average. Throughout the school standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils aged from five to seven make good progress, and pupils aged from seven to nine make very good progress. The progress pupils with special educational needs make is in line with their classmates. The reasons for the higher standards since the last inspection are the very good quality of teaching, the pupils' very good attitudes to science and very good leadership of the subject provided by the subject co-ordinator.
86. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to investigate and experiment. This positively affects their attainment and the rate at which they progress. By the age of seven, pupils develop a good understanding about fair testing and say when a test might be unfair. Pupils are skilled in their investigation work. They record their work accurately to include a prediction, what they did and what they found out. Pupils have a good understanding of electricity. They know how to construct a simple circuit and that a switch can be used to break a circuit. They investigate and classify correctly objects made from different materials and sort them accurately into different groups. There is an

effective link with geography during their study of houses in the village. Pupils investigated the different materials used to build the houses. Teachers combine very effectively elements of scientific study. For example, in their work on materials and sound pupils investigated which fabric was best at stopping sound travelling. They made a prediction and then tested their prediction.

87. By the age of nine, pupils attain high standards. The strong emphasis given by teachers to investigative work is continued. This ensures pupils have a very good understanding of the scientific facts they learn. Pupils have a good knowledge of forces through their study of gravity and magnetism. They know how to measure accurately in Newtons. They extend their knowledge of electricity to construct more complex circuits. Pupils perform very competently experiments to test wind resistance and friction. They relate their scientific knowledge and understanding to art and design when they correctly show what reversible and irreversible changes occur when they handle clay to make ornaments.
88. The attitudes of pupils to science lessons are very good. They clearly enjoy very positive relationships with their teachers and show them high levels of respect. They are highly motivated, listen attentively and show pleasure in achieving success. When pupils perform investigations and experiments they demonstrate much enjoyment and clearly achieve great satisfaction from the opportunity to learn through discovery. This was very evident during a Years 1/2 lesson, when pupils constructed an electrical circuit. The pupils worked collaboratively. The use the teacher makes of partner work enhances pupils' personal development.
89. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Thus, their explanations enable pupils to develop a good understanding of scientific ideas and concepts. Teachers' questions challenge and extend pupils' thinking. Teachers manage very well pupils' behaviour. The lessons are not disrupted and a lot of learning occurs. The use made of additional adults to support the learning of pupils identified as having special educational needs is very good. This ensures all pupils are integrated fully into lessons. Teachers use very effectively resources and time. This was especially so in a Years 3/4 lesson when pupils were investigating friction as a force that slows down moving objects. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace, in and out of doors. Appropriate resources were available for the pupils to conduct their tests fairly. Very good links with design and technology were made because pupils used for their test the carts they had made previously.
90. Pupils develop effectively their literacy skills in science. They write accounts of experiments, make lists and label diagrams. Teachers encourage pupils to use a range of vocabulary to describe materials they use in experiments. For example, some of the words pupils in Years 1 and 2 used were 'spongy', 'flexible', 'rigid' and 'dull'. Pupils use numeracy skills to record the results of their experiments. Years 3/4 pupils drew very accurately line and bar graphs to show the force needed to move a kilogram weight.

ART AND DESIGN

91. The standard of pupils' work by the age of seven is similar to that found in other schools and their achievement is good. Standards by the age of nine are above average and pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning because of the effective support they receive from teachers and support assistants. The school has not identified any gifted and talented pupils in art. The organisation of the school's timetable meant that it was not possible to see lessons

for pupils aged from five to seven. Evidence comes from discussions with teachers and pupils and from pupils' work on display.

92. Throughout the school pupils use a variety of materials, such as clay and textiles. The curriculum is made considerably better because teachers use art successfully to extend pupils' learning in other subjects, such as English, geography, history, music and religious education. Years 1/2 pupils paint colourful pictures of houses, related to their work in geography. They make detailed charcoal sketches of things used in Victorian times, such as a kettle and a candlestick. They make their own candleholders with clay. Pupils design and make attractive repeat patterns for *Joseph's coat of many colours* in religious education. They use fabric and special crayons to do this. Pupils design and sew competently felt purses and bookmarks. Years 3/4 pupils paint a background for the front cover of a book containing a story they have created for younger pupils. They ensure that the background accurately portrays the story. They make attractive foil pictures of trees linked to their work on *The Firebird* in music and English. Discussions with these pupils show that they have a sound knowledge of famous artists and their work, such as Van Gogh.
93. Teaching was very good in the Years 3/4 lesson seen. Year 4 pupils produced good, detailed charcoal sketches of a bicycle. The teacher increased the challenge of the task by re-arranging pupils' desks so that they viewed the bicycle from different positions. This made drawing the bicycle a more difficult task for some pupils. They rose to the challenge and there was a very quiet, purposeful atmosphere in the classroom. The teacher stressed to the pupils the need to draw what they actually see and not what they think they see. She demonstrated this point clearly, checked pupils' work frequently and gave additional help and support to individuals who needed it. This ensured that pupils understood what they were to do and started work promptly. The teacher maintained the good pace of the lesson by reminding pupils of the time constraints. They worked very well and completed the sketches within the given time. Pupils' behaviour was very good because of the teacher's excellent management of their behaviour. This was based upon the very good relationships between them and clearly established classroom rules and routines. Teachers could use information and communication technology more effectively to support pupils' learning.
94. The subject is effectively led and managed. However, the co-ordinator is not sufficiently involved in strategic financial planning for the subject. Teachers check and record carefully pupils' progress in lessons. The school has plans to provide additional systems for assessing regularly pupils' work and comparing it against the level they are expected to achieve in the National Curriculum. The subject is now considerably better than it was in the previous inspection. Teachers have improved the standards from unsatisfactory to satisfactory for five to seven-year-olds and from satisfactory to good for seven to nine-year-olds. They have broadened the curriculum and it now includes textiles and three-dimensional work, such as clay.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. The standard of pupils' work is similar to that found in other schools by the ages of seven and nine. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the additional well-targeted support they receive from staff. During the inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson for seven to nine-year-olds. Further evidence comes from discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, and analysis of pupils' work in books and on display.
96. Throughout the school, teachers link design and technology very effectively to other subjects, such as English, geography, religious education and science. Years 3/4 pupils

make successful models of watermills and windmills linked to their work in science on forces. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to plan their designs, evaluate and adapt them to make successful products. As a result, by the age of nine the standard of design work is good. Pupils produce detailed, carefully labelled designs.

97. Year 2 pupils make suitable plans, and products. They design a model of a room, furnish and decorate it with a variety of materials, such as fabrics and paper. Teachers plan this work carefully so that it is linked into pupils' geography work. For instance, pupils draw a bird's eye view of the room. Pupils design and make competently a wall plaque from balsa wood using a hammer, nails and sandpaper.
98. In the lessons seen, the teaching was good. Years 3/4 pupils show good skill in placing and cutting out a pattern in card to make a moving model of a digger for the front cover of a book. This is because of the teacher's very clear explanations, demonstrations and effective support. Through careful questioning she encourages pupils to remember and express the purpose of the work. As a result, pupils understand why they are doing the work and what they are to achieve in the lesson. This motivates and encourages them to cover a good amount of work and produce well-finished products. The teacher's management of pupils is excellent and is based securely on the very good relationship she has with them. It is also based upon clearly established classroom and discipline routines, such as listening politely when people speak. This leads to pupils' very good behaviour.
99. The work has very good links to literacy; Years 3/4 pupils created a story for younger pupils in the school. It is also linked well to art because the background for the digger on the cover of the book has been painted to reflect the setting for the story. As a result, pupils are very interested in the work and show pride in making a product for younger pupils. Pupils have a good awareness of the need to work safely with tools and use technical words well, such as 'Jinx corners'.
100. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject effectively. However, she is not sufficiently involved in strategic financial planning for the subject. Teachers check and record pupils' progress in lessons carefully. The school has plans to provide additional systems for assessing pupils' work regularly and comparing it against the level they are expected to achieve in the National Curriculum. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well to support pupils' learning. Teachers could make greater use of information and communication technology.
101. The school has made good progress in the subject since the previous inspection. The achievement of pupils from five to seven years has improved from satisfactory to good and the school's assessment systems have improved from unsatisfactory to good. Although the standards nine-year-old pupils achieve in design remain good, the standard of the products they produce are in line with national expectations.

GEOGRAPHY

102. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils attain standards in line with those expected for their age groups. Pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. There was no judgement made on standards in geography at the last inspection.
103. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of the local environment and good mapping skills. Pupils draw simple plans using side view drawings. They label accurately and clearly their plans. All pupils contribute to a large-scale map of 'Our village'. By the age of nine, pupils build on these skills well. They use atlases

competently to find information about various countries. For example, they found out about various raw materials unique to particular countries. In their work about rivers, they produce work of a high standard. Pupils identify on a map the high and low ground in the British Isles. They know where the rain goes after it falls. Pupils explain the meaning of 'permeable' and 'impermeable' as part of this work.

104. Geography was taught only to pupils aged five to seven during the inspection. The quality of teaching for these pupils is good. Throughout the school, teachers' planning shows that all elements of geography are taught. They provide a good range of work for pupils, mark work conscientiously with helpful comments and encourage pupils to try hard with their presentation of written work. Teachers make very good use of pupils' co-operative and collaborative work. Pupils aged seven to nine, working in pairs, produced work of a high standard about rivers. Teachers match work very accurately to pupils' varying needs. In the Years 1/2 lesson, work was set very carefully so that pupils with special educational needs made good progress. The work set involved the use of computers to learn about plans. The teacher intervened effectively in their learning to ensure they progressed at an appropriate rate through the work. This was good teaching of pupils with special educational needs, who did not have extra support in a lesson. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their learning because they are encouraged by their success.
105. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject effectively. However, she is not sufficiently involved in strategic financial planning for the subject or in the monitoring and evaluation of standards throughout the school. The school plans to address this in the near future.

HISTORY

106. No history lessons were observed during the inspection, but written evidence and scrutiny of teachers' planning indicate that standards attained by pupils are consistent with those normally found in most schools for pupils of this age. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
107. Pupils aged five to seven successfully learn about the passing of time. They make well thought out comparisons between hospitals at the time of Florence Nightingale and now. They look at kitchen equipment in the past and relate this with understanding to their current experience. They begin to use historical vocabulary accurately and relate their learning to shared experiences at home and school. They learn about famous people from the past. They produce work that contains a good selection of pupils' independent writing and illustration. For example, their written accounts of the life of Florence Nightingale are of good quality. This is a good example of how literacy skills are extended through work in history.
108. Older pupils study the Tudors in Years 3 and 4. During this work they develop their literacy skills through writing at length about the life of Henry VIII. They have a good knowledge of what homes and clothes were like at that time. They know about key events from the period, for example the Spanish Armada.
109. Pupils are interested in history and motivated by the effective use of resources and artefacts. They are keen to talk about the artefacts prominently displayed in classrooms, for example the lamp, kettle and iron displayed in the Years 1/2 classroom. Teachers make good use of visits to enrich pupils' learning in history. For example, they have visited the city of Chester as part of their Roman studies.

110. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject effectively. However, she is not sufficiently involved in strategic financial planning for the subject or in the monitoring and evaluation of standards throughout the school. The school plans to address this in the near future.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations by the age of seven and at nine years of age when pupils leave the school. Progress is good, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in information and communication technology are rising throughout the school and are much higher than at the time of the last inspection. The higher standards result from a number of factors. Teachers use information and communication technology more effectively in lessons. Although no whole-class teaching of information and communication technology was observed during the inspection, the quality of pupils' learning in lessons was good. Teachers' planning ensures that work becomes harder as pupils move through the school and that they develop skills in an appropriate order. Teachers plan and organise well the use of information and communication technology in other subjects. This ensures pupils have access to computers on a regular basis. A considerable investment in time and money has included significant staff training that has improved confidence and competence among staff.
112. By the age of seven, pupils use a database to find out about different types of houses. Pupils use the mouse confidently and with a high degree of control. For example, two pupils in a mathematics lesson created shapes on the computer screen. These two pupils worked very co-operatively to create an octagon and a square. Pupils write and alter text skilfully using the keyboard. They word-processed their work about Florence Nightingale. One pupil wrote, 'Florence was wonderful, excellent and great. She was patient, helpful and good'. This emphasises the importance teachers put on using information and communication technology skills in all subjects, in this case history and English.
113. Pupils aged seven to nine continue to gain confidence and competence working with computers. They skilfully combine text and pictures to create advertisements for the school's open day. They word-process title pages for their books. There is extensive use of databases for their science work. They use this data to produce accurate graphs to represent the results of their scientific investigations. Pupils e-mail other schools in the area to produce a story written by pupils from several schools. As part of this work pupils expertly combine text and images to produce attractive looking pieces of work. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are enhanced by lunchtime tuition from a learning support assistant.
114. Pupils' attitudes to information and communication technology are very good. They are interested in their work, listen carefully to instructions and answer questions eagerly. They handle equipment with care. Pupils work together effectively by supporting and teaching each other new skills. Teachers include information and communication technology in their planning when it is appropriate. Staff intervene in pupils' work to support and monitor pupils' learning. They are then in a position quickly to identify errors or offer help when pupils are hesitant. This extends pupils' computing skills and builds up their confidence in the subject.
115. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject effectively. However, she is not sufficiently involved in strategic financial planning for the subject or in the monitoring and evaluation of standards throughout the school. The school plans to address this in the near future.

MUSIC

116. By the age of seven, pupils' achievement is good and they attain similar standards to those found in most schools. The organisation of the school's timetable during the inspection meant that no lessons were seen for pupils aged seven to nine. However, extra-curricular keyboard and recorder clubs were seen for these age groups. The subject co-ordinator gives a considerable amount of time outside of lessons to these clubs and the pupils who attend them benefit greatly from her expertise. The Years 3/4 pupils who take part in additional lessons in violin also gain a great deal from the tuition they receive. Further evidence comes from assemblies, discussions with teachers and pupils, and pupils' work on display.
117. Teachers use a wide variety of music in assemblies to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. They have established the routine of pupils listening carefully to music on entry and exit to assemblies. The pupils know that the teacher will ask them questions about the music and they are eager to answer them. In one assembly, pupils identified the drum, saxophone and piano and that the music was jazz. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when pupils did not listen with a purpose to the music in assembly. Pupils throughout the school sing hymns tunefully with a good awareness of pitch, rhythm and diction.
118. Pupils' learning is enriched by the links that are made between music and other subjects. Years 3/4 pupils sketched the patterns that came to mind while they listened to *Die Moldau* by Smetana. They wrote about the music, 'Gently the twisted notes were tumbling into the swirling rippled pond' and 'Tangled notes dancing vigorously drop to your feet.' They wrote powerful descriptions and designed effective pictures of trees after listening to *The Firebird* by Stravinsky.
119. The teaching in the lesson for Years 1/2 pupils was very good. The co-ordinator is a specialist in the subject and she teaches music throughout the school. She has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. This is shown, firstly, in such questioning as 'How could I represent two groups playing using the symbols?' and secondly in the way pupils are taught how to play the instruments to achieve the best effect, and only to play them at the correct time. Pupils respond very well to the challenges set. As a result, their learning and behaviour are very good.
120. Five to seven-year-old pupils quickly grasp the idea of a graphic score in music. They do this by using a repeating pattern of symbols to represent the different groups of percussion players. The effective instruments were made in a previous lesson from containers holding a variety of materials, such as rice and pasta. Pupils follow the teachers' explanations and instructions carefully and are eager to take part. For instance, they act as the conductor and point to the symbols on the board. The other pupils carefully follow the conductor and, as a result, they create a tuneful and controlled performance. Pupils show a good awareness of dynamics and rhythm and formal music symbols, such as the repeat sign. The support assistant and the teacher support pupils with special educational needs successfully. This enables them to take part fully in the lesson; for instance they confidently act as the conductor. As a result, they also make good progress in their learning.
121. The subject is led and managed effectively by the co-ordinator. However, she is not sufficiently involved in strategic financial planning for the subject. Teachers check and record pupils' progress in lessons carefully. The school has made very good improvements in the subject since the previous inspection. Teaching, the curriculum guidelines and pupils' progress are now much better than they were.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. During the inspection, inspectors observed indoor games lessons. The teachers' planning for the subject ensures that there is adequate attention given to all areas of the subject throughout the year. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils attain standards in games that are in line with national expectations. This is very significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged as very low. Good quality of teaching and improved planning for the subject are the reasons for the improvement.
123. Pupils by the age of seven throw a ball accurately and catch it cleanly. They throw with increasing accuracy at a target. By the age of nine they show increasing accuracy and control. They co-operate as a member of a team. They begin to understand the need for tactics in order to perform efficiently. They learn the importance of rules in team games.
124. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons. They focus well and listen carefully to directions. Their behaviour is very good. Pupils of all abilities collaborate well. For example, Years 3/4 pupils worked co-operatively and collaboratively when playing a hockey 'relay' game. Pupils sustain effort and concentrate well. They are keen to do their best. Their good attitudes and behaviour ensures pupils work as hard as possible and no time is wasted. This makes a good contribution to their learning and progress.
125. The quality of teaching is good. This is significantly better than the last time the subject was inspected. Careful planning and timing keep pupils working throughout the lessons. Lively and briskly paced lessons promote pupils' enthusiasm and the quality of their learning. Teachers make good use of demonstration as a means for pupils to appraise one another's efforts. This provides pupils with relevant learning points and positively affects their achievement. Teachers and pupils dress appropriately for physical education lessons. There is due regard for safety. Teachers begin lessons with a suitable warm-up session and end them with a cooling-down activity. They use praise effectively, are quick to recognise good performers and use demonstration by these pupils to set high standards for others to follow. A particular strength of the teaching is teachers' skilful use of pupils' prior attainment to match activities to pupils' varying levels of skill.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is good, including those pupils with special educational needs. The school has made good progress in the subject since the previous inspection. It now has effective guidelines to support teachers in planning lessons. This is based upon local guidance for the subject. Teachers use the school's effective assessment systems to check pupils' learning in lessons and this has a positive effect on their learning.
127. The organisation of the school's timetable meant that it was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection, so no judgements can be made on teaching. Evidence comes from teachers' lesson planning, discussions with teachers and pupils, and from pupils' work in books and on display. These show that teachers place a strong emphasis on Christianity and ensure that sufficient time is given to the study of other faiths. As a result, pupils have a secure knowledge of Christianity and a developing knowledge of other faiths, such as Judaism and Islam. Teachers use a variety of interesting methods to motivate pupils and reinforce their learning, such as art and drama. These gain pupils' interest, motivate them and promote learning effectively. This is evident in discussions with pupils. They talk enthusiastically about their work and recall significant details, showing that they find the learning enjoyable.

128. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories from the Old and the New Testaments, for example Noah's Ark and the feeding of the five thousand. They develop soundly their knowledge of other faiths, such as the importance of prayer to Muslims in the Islamic religion. They know that hymns and prayers are used to praise God or to ask him for help. 'I can ask God to help me not to be angry with someone if they hurt me by accident.' Pupils from five to seven could improve standards further by using writing more to reinforce their learning and as well as through discussion and drama.
129. The Years 3/4 teacher successfully develops pupils' knowledge and understanding. She does this through a variety of methods that include the written recording of work. For example, pupils use the play script format to effectively tell the story of Joseph and his multi-coloured coat. As a result, by the age of nine, pupils have a wider and more detailed knowledge, for example, of the events leading up to Easter day. Their knowledge of other faiths is increasing well. They readily use technical words, such as Torah (the law) and tallith (prayer shawl) when they talk about Judaism.
130. The subject is effectively led and managed. Teachers check and record pupils' progress in lessons carefully. The school has plans to implement additional assessment procedures linked to the local guidance on the subject when these are produced. The school makes pupils' learning better through the very good assemblies that relate successfully Christianity and other faiths to pupils' own experiences. Teachers make effective use of the local church as a resource and of the expertise of the vicar to enrich pupils' learning.