

INSPECTION REPORT

RIVER PRIMARY SCHOOL

River, Dover

LEA area: East Kent

Unique reference number: 118393

Headteacher: Mr J Bloomfield

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sheila Browning
1510

Dates of inspection: 12 –16 June 2000

Inspection number: 193335

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lewisham Road River Dover Kent
Postcode:	CT17 0PP
Telephone number:	01304 822516
Fax number:	01304 829212
Appropriate authority:	The governingbody
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Parsons
Date of previous inspection:	10 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sheila Browning	Registered inspector	Art	Standards of attainment and achievement
		Music	Curriculum, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
			Leadership and management
Ann Bennett	Lay inspector		School improvement and effectiveness
			Resources for learning, staffing, accommodation
			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Ian Stainton James	Team inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils
			Partnership with parents
Lionel Farraway	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Geography	
		History	
Lionel Farraway	Team inspector	English	English as an additional language
Jeremy Collins	Team inspector	Children under five	
		Information technology	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	
Cyndi Millband	Team inspector	Science	
		Design and technology	
		Equality of opportunity	

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections
6 East Point
High Street, Seal
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN15 0EG

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

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 11
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12 - 15
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15 - 17
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17 - 19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19 - 20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20 - 21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21 - 24
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25 - 28
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29 - 47

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

River Primary school is bigger than many other primary schools, with 395 boys and girls aged 4 to 11 years. The majority of pupils come from the local village of River, although increasing numbers come from the town and surrounding villages. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. The range of socio-economic backgrounds of families is wide, with pupils drawn from a wider area than the relatively socially advantaged ward in which the school is situated. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, at 7.4 per cent, is below the national average. There are few pupils of ethnic minority origin and few with English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special needs is 18.5 per cent; this is about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school that provides a good education. By the time children reach the age of five they are making very good progress. By the age of seven and also by the time they leave school at eleven, pupils achieve above average standards in most subjects and high standards in mathematics. Teaching is good and leadership and management are strong. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high in mathematics and good in most other subjects.
- Teaching of children under five is very good and teaching of all older pupils is good. Literacy, numeracy and information technology skills are taught well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and they make excellent progress.
- Leadership and management are strong. The governors are well informed and are very supportive.
- Pupils enjoy school. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good. They are well supported and cared for, and their personal development is promoted and encouraged.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and extra-curricular provision is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in science, which are not as high as those in English and mathematics.
- The involvement of pupils themselves in evaluating their own performance and setting realistic standards and targets for improvement.
- Opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected in February 1997, the school has made progress with good improvements in some areas and sound achievements in others. Effective and improved assessment practices are now in place. Much information is being gathered about class and individual progress, and teachers are being well trained in its use. The systems for monitoring and evaluating standards, the curriculum and work in the classroom are particularly good in numeracy, literacy, information technology and for the under five's. The roles of subject co-ordinators and senior managers are now clearly defined. Appropriate time is allocated for monitoring purposes. Pupils have more opportunities to develop their personal study skills and have some opportunities to discuss their work and to collaborate with each other.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	B	C
Mathematics	A	B	B	C
Science	B	A	C	C

Key

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

The 1999 national tests using average point scores by pupils show that, by the age of eleven, pupils attained above the national average in English, mathematics and reached average standards in science. When compared with similar schools, standards in English, mathematics and science are average. Trends over time show that results are keeping pace with national figures in English and mathematics, but not in science. The schools' targets have been exceeded and show improvement. Inspection shows that the good standards achieved in the 1999 tests are being maintained among this year's seven and eleven year olds. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well at all ages. Standards at the ages of seven and eleven are above average in all subjects except for design and technology, where they are average in both age groups, and religious, education where they are average at the age of eleven. Standards seen in mathematics are high. Physical education, games and swimming are strengths of the school. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. From the time they enter the school pupils are interested and willing learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The majority of pupils behave very well in and outside of lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The personal development of pupils is good and relationships are very good throughout the school.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average.

The majority of pupils work hard and are co-operative. When given the opportunity they readily take responsibility for their own learning and work well together. There are not enough opportunities for pupils in all classes to learn to study independently.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of lessons, of which 78 per cent were good, very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers emphasise literacy and numeracy skills well. Particular strengths are that teachers are confident in the subjects they teach and know their pupils well. Lesson planning is detailed and effective. Teachers manage their classes well and share learning objectives with pupils. Use of time, support staff and resources is good. In most lessons, pupils gain skills and advance their knowledge and understanding, and their learning is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A balanced and relevant curriculum. Extra-curricular activities are good. Personal, social and health education is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. These pupils are very well supported.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are few such pupils and their English is good enough for them to learn well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. For moral, social and cultural development it is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures for monitoring attendance and behaviour. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, although very good overall, are better for the younger pupils. Pupils are well supported personally but class teachers are not yet consistently helping pupils to identify their own areas of weakness in order to set targets for improvement.

The curriculum provision is broad, and meets statutory requirements but the programme of personal, social and health care is not yet well enough developed, and class teachers are not fully engaged in its delivery. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. The staff show dedicated care towards their pupils, whom they know well. They are committed to improving the quality of educational provision for all pupils. Links with parents are effective and appropriate.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Strong leadership ensures a clear educational direction with a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors, senior staff and other teachers share this vision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors fulfil their role well through structured committees and meet all their legal responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Test data and pupils' performance are evaluated. Senior staff and governors evaluate the effect of spending decisions on raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Planning is effectively focused on the priorities of the school. There are sufficient staff to meet curriculum needs. Learning resources are accessible and are used well. Accommodation is satisfactory and well used.

Budget management is effective; teaching and learning support staff are well deployed. There are strengths in the shared vision and effective teamwork of the senior management team and all staff. The headteacher, key stage co-ordinators and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), together with the governors, effectively monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour is good.• Children like school.• The children make good progress.• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.• The school is helping children to mature.• The teaching is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.• More information about their children's progress.• Working more closely with parents.• The amount of homework increased.

The inspection team agrees fully with parents' positive views. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Information for parents about school developments and about their children's progress could be improved. Homework is adequate but it is not structured or set systematically enough.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children enter the school their attainment is in line with expectations. There is, however, a small number whose attainment is slightly below average. By the time they are five, most children are above nationally expected levels of development, an improvement since the last inspection. This is largely due to very good teaching and the fact that the children learn very effectively.
2. The average points scores in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils attained above the national average in reading and writing and well above in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards in reading are broadly in line, with those in similar schools: they are below in writing but in mathematics they are well above average. The school's targets were exceeded and the trend over the last four years has been in line with the national improvement.
3. The average points scores in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that pupils attained above the national average in English and mathematics but were average in science. When compared to similar schools, standards in English and mathematics are average, but for science they are broadly average. The school's targets were exceeded and the trend in recent years has been in line with the national improvement. The school also exceeded the local education authority target for selective education, with 50 per cent of pupils in Year 6 having passed the 'eleven plus' selection procedures, indicating that value was added during their time at school.
4. Comparisons of assessment data at River using guidelines supplied by the local education authority indicate that the performance of pupils is above national and the local authority averages.
5. Results of boys and girls are not significantly different at either key stage, reflecting the national pattern. Boys achieve slightly better than girls at Key Stage 1, but not significantly. In English, boys' attainment is higher than boys' attainment nationally and girls' attainment has risen above the national average for girls.
6. According to the evidence of the inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science are above average. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above those expected for pupils of this age in English and mathematics; in science they are broadly in line with the national average. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above the national expectations. They gain in confidence and fluency as they progress through the school. Listening at both key stages is a particular strength. Reading skills are above the national expectation. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop effective strategies to facilitate their reading. In Key Stage 2 pupils read widely. Pupils' writing skills are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and are above them at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils write with a sense of style and good use of vocabulary at Key Stage 2, but their spelling and punctuation let them down. Basic skills are not sufficiently well consolidated in pupils' independent writing. Handwriting is good, and much of the work is neatly presented.
7. Standards in mathematics are very high; they are above those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 and are well above at the end of Key Stage 2. Mathematics is a strength of the school and has improved since the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure grasp of number, they order numbers correctly and

recognise patterns. They understand place value, divide and subtract and have good mental recall of multiplication tables. Most pupils apply their knowledge of numbers in simple everyday activities. Pupils can name simple shapes, measure accurately and tell the time. They use simple diagrams to illustrate their work, using shading and fractions of shape with increasing accuracy. By the end of Key Stage 2, such skills are consolidated and are secure. Pupils practise mental arithmetic widely and use their knowledge in problem-solving activities. They sort shapes mathematically and justify groupings. They are familiar with aspects of symmetry. All pupils are developing a wide range of mathematical skills and carry out their own mathematical investigations well. Pupils understand mathematical concepts well and use them successfully. Evidence seen during the inspection confirms that knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics are high in both key stages.

8. In science, current standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. Standards in knowing and understanding about living things and life processes are above average. Pupils' knowledge and understanding become more sophisticated as they progress through to Year 2, when they begin to understand the needs of creatures through first hand experience. Pupils in Year 1 when testing a moving toy understand that pulling or pushing will alter motion. They make electrical circuits and can identify different materials, and they know that certain materials change in different temperatures. They investigate ideas well and this is an improvement since the last inspection. In comparison with other aspects of science there is less evidence of work about materials and their properties. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is in line with the national average. Standards are raised when teachers' have high expectations of pupils' capabilities and when they are confident in their knowledge about science. Pupils classify material on the basis of properties relating to everyday use and they understand and test circuits. In science, progress in learning more about investigative procedures slows down in Key Stage 2 because independent investigative and practical work is often too limited and the curriculum is unbalanced in its coverage.
9. In other areas of the curriculum, standards are above those expected by the ends of both key stages except for design and technology, where they are average at both seven and eleven, and in religious education where they are average at the age of eleven. Physical education, including games and swimming, is a strength of the school.

Literacy

10. Levels of literacy are good throughout the school and are sufficient to support learning in all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are well supported by the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils' skills in speaking, listening and reading are well above the national average at both key stages. Writing is in line with the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 1 and is above by the end of Key Stage 2. Some teachers use positive strategies to develop subject-specific vocabulary, with word lists displayed, but this is not always the case. In some subjects, for example in history, Year 6 pupils are writing substantial projects which provide them with an opportunity for extended and independent writing.

Numeracy

11. Numeracy standards are high across both key stages, and show improvement as pupils progress through the school. Numeracy skills are well used in other subjects. Pupils are well supported by the National Numeracy Strategy. They use grid references and co-ordinates in geography map work, compass bearings in physical

education (orienteering) and they record results of science experiments using tables and graphs, which they then interpret. Younger pupils regularly practise using numbers in a range of activities including, for example, joining in counting rhymes and songs.

Special educational needs

12. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. They achieve well and progress very much better than is normally the case. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A large proportion have significantly improved their reading skills over the past two years. There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language, and language is not a special difficulty for them.
13. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils of higher attainment are not always sufficiently challenged in English and science across the key stages. In other subject areas higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in English through Key Stage 1. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to extend their writing skills particularly in Years 3 to 5, although this is addressed well in Year 6 when they make good progress. In English, higher attaining pupils are secure in finding information in reference books and research skills. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in national tests was well above the national average at the ends of both key stages and inspection evidence confirms this. In science, standards seen during the inspection are above average for higher attaining pupils when the work assigned is targeted correctly, but their progress is hampered when work is insufficiently challenging.
14. Overall, standards have improved and are in line with the national trend of improvement. Since the last inspection, design and technology skills have improved at Key Stage 1, but skills and quality of designs vary between unsatisfactory and sound in Key Stage 2. In this subject, pupils make limited progress in refining their skills and in evaluating their work. In most subjects, pupils take good advantage of the opportunities to discuss their work and collaborate with each other. However, there are too few opportunities for children to carry out investigations in science. Opportunities for independent study in English and problem solving in design and technology are inconsistent.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils enjoy school. They are confident about its routines and arrive with an enthusiasm for what they are going to learn that day; for example, many pupils showed their interest and curiosity by checking on the progress of the birds being hand-reared in the Key Stage 1 activity area. Much of their enthusiasm is a result of teachers' imaginative planning and use of visual stimuli. A small group of the youngest pupils were excitedly sitting around a table observing the action of yeast in a bottle, as it inflated a balloon tied over the neck. They were able to talk about the yeast and about the bread-making, which they had enjoyed. In many lessons, pupils catch the teacher's enthusiasm for their subject, particularly in practical sessions such as line dancing in Years 4/5 and investigative work in Year 5 information technology, when they exclaimed with delight as a brief but symmetrical pattern was achieved. Pupils with special educational needs are readily accepted by their peers who are very caring and supportive. Many pupils with special educational needs take pride in their work.

16. The pupils' very good attitudes towards their work have a positive impact on the standards they are able to achieve. They work well during the long literacy and numeracy sessions, but show impatience and begin to lose concentration when they are over-long.
17. In lessons, pupils have no difficulty in behaving very well. This is a direct result of good management by their teachers, who skilfully control and focus the pupils' enthusiasm. Around the school, in assembly and at play times, their behaviour is also very good. Pupils know the school's expectations in this area. They are very willing to run errands, or escort a visitor.
18. At lunchtime, small groups enjoy working on their projects in the bridge-link library and confidently discuss their work with passing adults. Relationships with all the teachers are very good, and pupils show respect for the midday supervisors and other staff. The playgrounds are busy places, with small groups playing happily, but there is no evidence of anti-social behaviour. Pupils are confident in their teachers' ability to resolve disputes.
19. Pupils are kind towards one another; they share resources well. They like to choose the partner they work with, but have few opportunities to evaluate their own or each others work. They respect each other's feelings, values and beliefs, and are sensitive and supportive of each other.
20. Pupils are motivated by the class rewards scheme, and take pride in being awarded 'class of the week'. There are a number of routine responsibilities, such as lunchtime door monitors and providing support in the information technology suite, which pupils undertake willingly and well. Representatives from each class making up the school council meet each week. The school council is newly formed and currently operates in an informal fashion. Its potential as a forum for encouraging pupils to exercise their initiative and to have practical encounters with a democratic process is not developed. The school has plans to encourage pupils to take more of an initiative.
21. Attendance has continued to improve since the last inspection. Attendance figures for the year leading up to the inspection were well above national averages, punctuality is good and there were no exclusions.
22. Attitudes and behaviour, already strong at the time of the last inspection, are now very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is good overall. In nearly a third of lessons teaching is good, in nearly a third it is very good, and in nearly one in six it is excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Very good lessons occur more frequently with the under fives and in Key Stage 1. Teaching of children under five is exceptionally skilled and perceptive, carefully structured and well organised.
24. The best lessons are characterised by confidently delivered subject knowledge, effective planning, very good class management, and very good use of time, learning support staff and resources. The teaching of basic skills with focused teaching objectives is good. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils and these are usually reinforced through lessons. During the inspection there was an emphasis on teacher-directed lessons; in many lessons there were few opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or in small groups. The accommodation to some extent hampers such opportunities, because many classrooms are cramped.

25. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, including in those areas of the curriculum where standards were not then as they are now. There are strengths in the teaching of literacy, numeracy, information technology and physical education across the school. In Key Stage 2, there are strengths in art, history, geography and music.
26. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall. The use of subject - specific terms is a strong generic feature. Teachers successfully manage the national literacy and numeracy strategies. They use questions well to advance learning and are aware of the need for continuity and progression in each subject. In mathematics, most teachers are very skilled in questioning in a way that tests and develops understanding. In information technology the syllabus is well covered.
27. Daily planning is systematic and enables pupils to build on previous experience, as in English. Longer term planning, when supported by subject schemes of work, is detailed and comprehensive, an improvement since the last inspection. In design and technology, weaknesses are related to the lack of coherent planning through which pupils' knowledge and skills can consistently develop.
28. Teachers are developing more accurate expectations of what pupils can achieve, based on assessment information. A strength of English is the careful assessment and recording of pupils' progress. In the best lessons teachers set tasks which challenge pupils thinking, as for example, in mathematics and music. There are, however, some inconsistencies in this respect, as for example in English and science, when teachers focus on the middle range of ability or fail to establish clear learning objectives for lessons. In information technology questions are usually well focused to ensure that all pupils are engaged in the lesson. Generally, in other subjects work is matched to the abilities of the pupils, including those with special educational needs. Good examples are found in art, geography, music and physical education. Opportunities to extend research skills, independent study, investigative work and problem solving are too few across years and within key stages.
29. Teachers use a variety of effective teaching methods. Lessons generally start with clear explanations and statements of realistic learning objectives and conclude with reinforcement of the set objectives. Differentiation in planning is generally good, and targets are usually challenging yet attainable; very good practice is found in mathematics. There is some variation in quality in science and English, particularly in mixed-year classes, where there is a wide range of attainment.
30. Teachers use very good strategies to control and manage classes and to capture and hold the attention of pupils. Teaching in physical education promotes safety effectively. The range and variety of interesting and practical activities and the use of visits and visitors to the school encourage pupils' learning and help their motivation.
31. Teachers use time efficiently. However, in science, pace is not as brisk in the majority of lessons, and lesson planning is focused upon the organisation of activities rather than upon what pupils need to learn by the end of a lesson. A good range of appropriate resources is used to support pupils' learning, for example in art, music and physical education. Very good use is made of information technology, which is starting to support other subjects. The recently installed computer suite enables teachers to use information technology more effectively as an integral part of pupils' learning.

32. On-going assessment of pupils' learning and developmental needs is good; teachers know their pupils well. They use questioning skilfully to ascertain how well pupils understand the content of the lesson. All teachers give constant feedback, support and encouragement and older pupils particularly appreciate this advice. Assessment data and end of key stage results are effectively analysed but are not as yet consistently used to inform future teaching and learning or setting of targets for improvement.
33. Homework is set, but not systematically. It includes reading, spelling, mathematics and research work. When set, it is appropriate and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. At the time of inspection, the recently reviewed homework policy was due to be circulated to parents.
34. In most lessons, pupils gain skills and advance their knowledge, and understanding; their learning is good. They explore ideas at appropriate levels. In science, they make good progress in learning how to be 'young scientists' whilst investigating ideas and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils use an increasing range of correct vocabulary with understanding. Most are learning how to use the potential of information technology in cross-curricular work. The quality of such work is good, for example in projects on various countries. In history and geography pupils make good use of CD-ROMs, the library and the Internet. Progress since the last inspection has been slow in relation to the development of design skills and in the use of opportunities for pupils to assemble and disassemble in design and technology. Pupils' are learning successfully to apply intellectual, physical and creative efforts. In art and music they develop creative skills successfully and, in physical education, the standard of school teams in games is a strength.
35. The good pace of many lessons helps keep the pupils on task, and they settle well to the activities set by the teacher. Most work with concentration, are interested and are encouraged by the very good relationships and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are generally clear about how well they are achieving and benefit from their teachers' explanations of what it was they have to do to improve their work. When given the opportunity, pupils work well together in small groups, in pairs or as individuals.
36. Pupils with special educational needs make excellent progress in their learning. The specific literacy targets on the individual educational plans (IEPs) are helping pupils to improve at a significant pace. Most are keen to learn and join in all activities possible. Very good use is made of the expertise of learning support assistants, particularly in Key Stage 1, in supporting pupils working to targets set in the IEPs. The IEPs are very detailed and the progress is meticulously recorded. At Key Stage1, pupils with special needs are quickly identified by the teachers and referred to the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).

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

37. The curriculum for under fives is planned with great care and is very well structured. Children who have particular needs are identified quickly and work is planned for them. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is sound. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Statutory requirements are met. The content of the curriculum for religious education follows closely the scheme of work set out in the Kent Agreed Syllabus. Most subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are well supported by clear, concise policies and schemes of work. Where this is not the case it is either because newly appointed coordinators are reviewing the documents or because changes are awaited as part of Curriculum 2000,

which is about to be introduced. The school is basing its schemes on the guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Documentation in place enables teachers to plan lessons to ensure that pupils make continuous progress. As at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum takes account of previous learning and the school builds on this through its planning for improvement.

38. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. These pupils have very good access to the National Curriculum, as it is school policy to educate all the children within the classroom under the direction of the class teacher. Provision is made according to the needs of the child. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has added very good value to the learning experiences of these pupils. Information technology contributes positively to the standards achieved and the progress made across subjects. In lessons they are well supported by learning support assistants. The school succeeds in getting a significant number to the level of attainment sufficient for them to be removed from the special educational needs register
39. The school has successfully adopted the initiatives laid down in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy documents for the teaching of English and mathematics. This has been well supported by in-service training and the provision of appropriate resources. Both strategies are now firmly in place and there is evidence in the improvement in results over time that standards are rising. The school recognises that following the directives for literacy and numeracy may have reduced some of the focus on science in the curriculum. Although the time allocated to science falls within the recommended minimum, the science curriculum is not sufficiently balanced and does not address all attainment targets equally.
40. A good range of activities take place outside school time in, for example, sport and music. Parents are concerned that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons; inspectors disagree, the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. They provide good opportunities for pupils to enhance their skills in these areas and learn to co-operate in team games and group activities.
41. All pupils have access to the whole curriculum. Opportunities for the majority to benefit positively from suitably challenging work are mainly good. However, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently well challenged in English and science. In most other subjects, extension work for these pupils is suitably demanding and allows them good opportunities to make continuous good progress.
42. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education and attention to the dangers of the misuse of drugs, is satisfactory. The implementation of the programme is at an early stage. Some aspects are dealt with effectively by teachers and visiting health professionals during classroom discussions and planned science lessons. However, class discussion times are not taken by the class teacher, who knows the pupils best, and this results in missed opportunities.
43. The school ensures that the wider community makes a good contribution to enhancing pupils' learning and broadening their experience. Regular opportunities are provided for visits to and from local churches, for example when pupils buried a time-capsule in the floor of a new extension to a local church. Visits include museums, nature trails, field study centres, a Life Education Unit funded by the rotary club and the River gardeners' association, which shares skills with pupils. Pupils frequently write articles for the parish magazine and several local businesses help with sponsorship. The school develops and maintains good links with pupils' families, particularly in the cases

of pupils with special educational needs. Links are satisfactory with feeder playgroups and nurseries and with the secondary schools to which most pupils transfer.

44. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and is made mainly during assemblies, acts of worship, and class discussions. In one assembly, for example, pupils were encouraged to reflect on teamwork and the importance of co-operation and caring for each other. Another assembly dealt with a story of a large lion and a small mouse and how they helped each other in partnership. The quality of acts of worship is satisfactory. They are mainly Christian in character and provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect on the lives of others through prayer and in the singing of songs of worship.
45. Provision for moral development is good. Good moral attitudes are promoted firmly from the start in the under-fives classes. Well chosen stories and group discussions are used very effectively to enable pupils clearly to recognize the difference between right and wrong. All adults provide very good role models and are consistent in applying rewards and sanctions. Throughout the school, the system of rewards and encouragement has a positive effect on the children. The school's rules are displayed as being 'cool' and are understood by pupils. Assemblies are used very effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements and good behaviour.
46. Generally good opportunities are provided for the development of pupils' social skills, although they are not yet fully developed in the pupils' personal, social and health education programme. When given opportunities, pupils work well in pairs and small groups, for example in mathematics and information technology. Visits to places of educational interest and visitors help pupils to learn to get on together and develop their social confidence. Examples include visits to Dover docks and castle, the beach, museums, and the visits of police, a railway safety officer and annual residential visits. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative in fund raising for charities.
47. The school's approach to pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils' own culture and history have a secure place in the curriculum through studies in history, literature, art and music. Visits to places of cultural interest are arranged, as appropriate, to support learning. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures of other lands and races is developed well in religious education through studies of Judaism and Sikhism and in geography through their study of St Lucia and Chembakoli. Pupils are helped to gain a clear understanding of the variety of cultures represented in British society today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. This area of the school's life continues to be strong. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and take great care to show them safe working practices. The headteacher appropriately delegates responsibility for health and safety and for child protection to nominated teachers. Health and safety are high priorities and routine whole-school checks take place with governors appropriately involved. Attendance registers are currently held in classrooms during the week, and this is a health and safety concern, when the class leaves its base.
49. Arrangements for child protection conform to the local authority's agreed practice, and good guidance is provided for staff alongside a straightforward policy. Teachers new to the school are fully briefed and knowledgeable. There are enough qualified first aiders amongst classroom assistants, and they provide a good level of care for pupils who are injured or unwell.

50. Class teachers have the first responsibility for monitoring attendance and punctuality, supported by a member of the clerical staff. The system works very well, and helps to sustain the high level of attendance. The school has a detailed behaviour policy, with rewards and sanctions; it is clear to all involved and works very well. There have been very few incidents of poor behaviour in the last year. Parents expressed some concern about the school's actions in relation to bullying, and the school has already responded with a draft document which is about to be sent out.
51. The effectiveness of assessment was a key issue at the last inspection. The school has moved on significantly. A range of assessment tests are used to generate data on pupils' academic performance. On-going records track an individual pupil's achievements and these are well used as a part of daily lesson planning, and for transferring information between teachers. At the moment, pupils are not very involved in evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses and setting themselves goals for improvement. The headteacher, as part of the current school improvement plan, is using the range of assessment data to generate more sophisticated information on individual pupils. When teachers are trained to use it, they will be able to make useful predictions and set appropriate targets with their pupils throughout the school year.
52. At the time of the last inspection, parents were asking for more focused information on their children. They are again asking for better information, which now exists. The present consultation arrangements give parents an opportunity to discuss the teacher's oral report in the spring term, and to receive and discuss a written report in the summer term, with written targets for improvement. These procedures do not do full justice to the wealth of information available.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents are very supportive of the school. They think the standard of behaviour is particularly high, they value the good teaching, and report that their children are happy in school. They like the school's ethos of hard work and feel that their children are enabled to become mature and responsible. A good number of parents help in classrooms, and very many support their children with work out of school. There is very good liaison between the school and parents of pupils with special educational needs, for example in supporting their work and reviewing their progress. Parents of pupils across the year groups have concerns about homework. Inspectors found that although homework is adequate it is not structured or set systematically enough. At the time of inspection, the reviewed homework policy was about to be sent to parents. Many are concerned that there is insufficient homework, and they are not clear about the detail of what it is and how often it occurs.
54. Over a quarter of those parents who responded to the survey did not feel well enough informed about how their children were getting on at school. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Most reports give good detail of what a pupil knows, understands and can do but they are too bland. Teachers do not make clear whether achievements are better or worse than should be expected, bearing in mind the pupil's ability and age. The reports contain the teacher's suggested targets for improvement, but these are not used as a basis for work in the following year.
55. Autumn term 'meet the teacher' sessions provide a valuable starting point for good relationships with parents. In recent years, teachers have provided valuable information about what is being taught and how they can be involved, in booklets for parents to take home. Parents find these very useful, and they are worth developing into a more standard style.

56. The school plays an important part in the lives of local families, and local families feel personally involved in what is going on. The local parish magazine regularly contains a double page of pupils' writing.
57. The school is successfully educating its pupils. However, there are issues relating to the way it communicates with parents: almost a quarter of those parents who responded to the parental survey do not feel the school is working closely with them. Parents' perceptions can be wrong. For example, less than half of the parents thought the school was providing an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors investigated, and disagree. Parents feel very comfortable approaching the school, but would like more detailed and frequent information, for example relating to matters of policy and changes of staff. Governors were right when they acknowledged in their self-review the need to improve communication with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. Leadership and management are strong and effective. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future educational direction. He is a very good manager and uses his leadership qualities to motivate teachers professionally. Due to ill health, the school has been without a deputy headteacher for a considerable period. Numerous delays to the new building programme have also caused considerable disruption to parts of the school, and this still continues. These factors have meant that the headteacher and others in key roles have had to undertake greater responsibilities. A consequence of this is has led to some redefining of school priorities and in a few instances there has been slippage in completing targeted work. However, the strong liaison between all staff and the senior management team ensures the effective management of the school. Throughout this period, delegation of the key stage co-ordinators has been good.
59. The headteacher is well supported by an innovative senior management team. This team comprises a co-ordinator for each key stage and the special needs co-ordinator, who joins the senior management team for some meetings. They meet regularly to plan and discuss school issues before sharing these with the whole staff. This management structure is effective in establishing clear lines of communication and any new initiatives are discussed fully, planned carefully and monitored to ensure that they are effective and successful. The management systems and structures in place are good. There are three staff teams, each with a team leader who is responsible for arranging regular meetings. There is a useful planned programme of staff, curriculum, business and management team meetings. Subject co-ordinators are encouraged to develop professionally. The subject development and management plans are generally of good quality and subject managers exercise their responsibilities effectively.
60. Monitoring of the curriculum and support for their colleagues are more advanced in the core subjects than in the others. This is appropriate as the developments within the National Curriculum have meant that efforts had to be concentrated particularly on English and mathematics. Detailed and coherent plans for most of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are in place. Co-ordinators have attended relevant professional development courses. The English, mathematics and information technology co-ordinators, for example, provide good advice and support for staff and have carried out extensive monitoring. Both the literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented well

61. The governors work effectively through a secure committee structure. Governors are enthusiastic and take an active part in whole-school development planning and monitor curriculum development. Their work is guided by their own self-supported review procedures, drawn up to further enhance the effectiveness of the work of the governing body. Many of the governors visit the school on an informal basis. The governors for special educational needs, literacy and numeracy have attended training and meet regularly with the appropriate managers and take a deep interest in their areas of responsibility. They are very effective in their role in shaping the direction of the school and very clearly understand its strengths and weaknesses. This helps them to keep focused on planned priorities. The governing body acts well as a critical friend to the school. The chair of governors maintains regular personal contact with the headteacher and other governors. All statutory requirements are met.
62. The support, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and curriculum development are good. Regular monitoring activities are effectively carried out by the headteacher, members of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. Monitoring is focused on the key targets of the school improvement plan, and on literacy and numeracy. The implementation of the school's aims, values and policies is good. The very good ethos is characterised by the high quality of relationships at River School and it has created a strongly supportive, caring and happy learning atmosphere.
63. The excellent management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they have equal access to the opportunities which the school provides. The policy for special educational needs is excellent. It has very clear aims and very structured procedures based on the Code of Practice. The co-ordinator is very experienced and is a specialist in this field. Her management and organisation are of excellent quality, which is reflected in the progress of the pupils. The SENCO liaises very closely with the teaching staff and learning support assistants.
64. The school improvement plan gives detailed planning of what the school hopes to achieve in the next three years and includes reviews of items from previous plans. Priorities are put into a time frame and all relevant headings appear with the exception of planned costs for each. Development planning, monitoring and evaluation are all good. The key targets in the school improvement plan centre on improving standards and further developing target setting and the tracking of pupils' progress. The plan also reflects appropriate new priorities and initiatives and, with whole-school policies and curriculum plans, provides a very well structured and organised framework. The school improvement plan also shows forward planning for selected subject areas. The headteacher takes a strong lead and all members of staff and governors are actively involved in its development. There is a shared commitment amongst staff to improve and succeed.

Staffing

65. Teachers are well qualified to meet the demands of the National Curriculum for the under-fives. The staffing profile at the school includes both experienced and newly qualified teachers and some with only a few years experience. Learning support assistants receive training and are committed. They are highly valued by the school, and the quality of their work has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils, particularly those with special educational needs in the under-fives and Key Stage 1.
66. Induction arrangements for newly qualified and newly recruited staff are very effective. Every new member of staff has a mentor and this arrangement is working well. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good and are on-going. They are linked to identified priorities. The arrangements for in-service training are

focused and coherent. Where courses have been undertaken and work continued in the school, as in literacy and numeracy and on-going training in information technology, the training of staff has had a very beneficial effect on teaching and learning.

67. Administrative, supervisory, and catering staff provide a very efficient service of support for the teachers and pupils. The caretaker makes a real contribution to the school, the site is well maintained and benefits from many unique features, which the caretaker has personally added as improvements.

Accommodation

68. The accommodation is adequate and varied, with original 1870 and recent buildings. The new building programme has caused considerable disruption. The school has been affected by a number of delays in its completion and work still continues. Despite this, the school buildings are scrupulously clean and well maintained. Classrooms are bright but many are cramped and generally storage is at a premium. The cramped classrooms are well organised; this, the compliance of the pupils and good management of the teachers ensure that there are few curriculum constraints. Practical activities are difficult in limited working space. In many classrooms there is barely sufficient room for the teacher to get around the classroom. Activity areas and a linking bridge between buildings are used well for group and practical work and for interactive displays and focal points. These are many and are stimulating and enjoyed by the pupils. A significant improvement is the newly completed information technology suite, and a new classroom and activity area. Provision for the hall and library is adequate. Plans are currently in hand to provide shade and seating on the playground used by the youngest children.

Learning resources

69. Learning resources overall are satisfactory. The outside area for children under five provides limited scope for developing play, such as large-scale climbing frames. The library stock is supplemented by class-based libraries. The whole-school computer network and computer suite allow pupils access to the Internet and the new computers installed in most classrooms are starting to be well used. Resources overall are well used and do much to assist pupils to learn effectively. Pupils have opportunities for residential school journeys, which make a significant contribution to their academic and personal development. The school makes frequent and very good use of outside resources, for example the local education authority loan schemes, artefacts from local churches, visiting artists, performers and parents.

The efficiency of the school

70. The quality of the school's financial planning is good. River School has an expanding pupil roll. The headteacher, administrative officer and governors manage the budget effectively. The governors' finance committee is actively involved in discussions concerning the budget. They have considerable expertise and make secure decisions about expenditure. The finance committee meets regularly and makes appropriate reports and recommendations to the full governing body. All spending decisions are linked well to financial priorities within the school development plan. Strategic financial planning is a good and important feature of this school. The effectiveness of spending decisions is carefully evaluated, assessed and ratified appropriately. Best value principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition are well applied to the school's management and use of resources. The school is very active applying for available grants and has been awarded some additional funding. For example, with

additional funding it has created and equipped the information technology suite, provided booster classes for Year 6 pupils, and allocated funding for the completed building programme. It seeks additional support and help from parents and the local community such as for shelving and assistance with playground developments.

71. Funds for staff development and those designated for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively; they are well managed and are appropriately targeted. All staff are encouraged to attend a variety of courses for their professional development. Funding is appropriate for this purpose.
72. Unit costs are average in comparison to similar schools. The income is spent wisely and effectively resulting in the good quality educational provision. Taking into account the good standards achieved, the good quality teaching, the broadly based curriculum, above-average attendance, very good behaviour of pupils, very good leadership and management, coupled with effective financial systems, the school gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. In order to raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and senior managers should:
 - (1) Raise standards in science to the level of those in English and mathematics and particularly in investigative science at Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that the National Curriculum for science is taught and providing training for teachers to raise their confidence and improve their knowledge and skills. (Paragraphs 3, 6, 8, 28, 39, 109, 110, 113, 115, 116)
 - (2) Encourage pupils to set themselves realistic standards and targets for improvement by:
 - involving pupils actively in their individual progress and achievement so that they can identify realistic goals for further improvement. (Paragraphs 32, 35, 51, 97)
 - (3) Provide planned opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning by:
 - providing a systematic programme for homework, and more planned opportunities for investigative work in science and problem solving in design and technology. (Paragraphs 13, 14, 28, 33, 34, 51, 91, 94, 113, 116)

The school already has plans in hand to address key issues one and two.

In addition the governors should address the following minor weaknesses:

- ensure that the review of personal social and health education includes the development of pupils' social and personal skills. (Paragraph 42)
- provide more planned opportunities in all subjects for discussion, sharing views and opinions. (Paragraphs 20, 24, 46)
- keep parents better informed about recent developments in school such as homework and the progress their children are making. (Paragraphs 52, 53, 54, 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
16	31	31	22	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– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll	395
Number of pupils full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	24

Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	73

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	28 (23)	27 (38)	55 (61)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27 (21)	27 (21)	28 (23)
	Girls	26 (37)	25 (37)	27 (38)
	Total	53 (58)	52 (58)	55 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (95)	95 (95)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (89)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28 (21)	28 (23)	28 (23)
	Girls	27 (37)	27 (38)	27 (37)
	Total	55 (58)	55 (61)	55 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	100 (100)	100 (99)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (85)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	21 (24)	30 (28)	51 (52)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17 (16)	18 (14)	19 (19)
	Girls	26 (25)	23 (15)	25 (23)
	Total	43 (41)	41 (29)	44 (42)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (79)	80 (56)	86 (81)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13 (16)	16 (17)	18 (17)
	Girls	23 (22)	20 (21)	26 (18)
	Total	36 (38)	36 (38)	44 (35)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (73)	71 (73)	86 (66)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	332
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	30.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	190

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	611428
Total expenditure	599122
Expenditure per pupil	1513
Balance brought forward from previous year	22624
Balance carried forward to next year	34930

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	395
Number of questionnaires returned	149

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	44	5	2	8
My child is making good progress in school.	39	52	7	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	54	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	51	17	3	1
The teaching is good.	43	48	6	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	52	21	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	43	6	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	40	7	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	52	15	8	2
The school is well led and managed.	39	51	3	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	50	4	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	32	24	13	19

Other issues raised by parents

Some 23 written returns were received. The great majority of these were most supportive of the school, its standards, quality of leadership and teaching and curriculum offered. A few parents expressed concerns about reading not being monitored and noted that they wanted to be kept more informed generally about their children's progress.

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

74. Provision for children under five is very good, and gives a very secure foundation for learning within the National Curriculum.
75. Children enter the reception classes part-time at the age of four in the September of the school year in which they become five. At present, as it is near the end of the school year, there are only eight children under five, who form about 35 per cent of one of the two reception classes. There are two teachers with one support teacher and two full-time learning support assistants. They play an effective and sympathetic role in settling the children into school. The attainment on entry of most children is in line with expectations. There is, however, a number whose attainment is slightly below average. Children who have particular needs are identified quickly and planned for.
76. Baseline assessment is used to measure the attainment of all the younger children when they join the school. There is careful preparation with parents and the children, and previous discussions with pre-school teachers. This partnership with parents continues with a very secure team effort between home and school, especially in reading. A few parents make an important contribution by helping in class. The youngest children start on a part-time basis, staying for the whole day only when they are ready to do so. In the reception classes, children make very good progress and most are above nationally expected levels of development by the time they are five. This results from the exceptionally skilled and perceptive teaching, which is very carefully structured and well organised. The teaching for the greater part is very good and often excellent and enables the children to learn very effectively across all the areas of learning, and to practise and learn social and working behaviour. There is an atmosphere of loving commitment in these classes. The curriculum is planned with great care. The balance between work as a class, a group and as an individual is excellent. An example of this skilful management is found in the children's play, which has purpose and meaning. Strong partnership between teachers and assistants is at the centre of the very good provision. Very effective use is made of the adequate accommodation and resources, both in the classroom and outside. This, together with excellent displays, gives a rich and varied environment full of challenge.

Personal development and relationships

77. Personal development and relationships are very good, as are children's attitudes to learning. They concentrate well and are very persistent when, for example, making games and number books for pre-school children. They settle quickly to their tasks and become absorbed, endeavouring to produce work of high quality. They work and play happily together, as for example when a group were making sand cakes, sharing toys and equipment joyfully and discussing their favourite cake and pie fillings. Individually the children show that they are very capable of working constructively and purposefully. One child with specific needs in learning was able to use the plus and equals signs successfully whilst adding the number of legs of different animals. This was not a requirement of the set task but an independent extension to it. As a class, they are very enthusiastic in discussions and listen very well to each other. They are generous with their applause at another child's success. They are very quick to help the teacher and one another in clearing up after lessons. One child was particularly quick to help others in retrieving wayward dice escaping from their game. The children play happily together in the home corner or on their own in water play. In physical

education they dance happily together. The religious education programme plays a significant part in their understanding of relationships. In the story of Joseph they could sympathise with the brothers who were left out of their father's love; they were very thoughtful, and identified sorrow, rejection, jealousy and anger felt by the brothers, considering how they might feel in a similar situation. They showed particular maturity in this discussion. They approach visitors very confidently, and are keen to show and discuss their work. Teaching in this area is exemplary; the children imitate the excellent role models provided by the adults in their caring and listening.

Language and literacy

78. Provision in language and literacy is very good and progress is very good. Speaking and listening are particular strengths in both reception classes. The children listen attentively to each other in class discussion and keep track of the subject very well. When considering a family issue of 'favourites' they suggested many of the sad outcomes that cause unhappiness such as jealousy and pride. In a discussion with the younger children they expressed their ideas very clearly and backed up their choices with likes and dislikes. Progress in reading is very good and is well backed up with excellent and on-going recording of attainment. Home-school diaries are assiduously kept up to date. Children enjoy books and handle them with care. They know that print carries meaning and talk enthusiastically about the pictures. They successfully repeat stories read to them, re-telling them in sequence. Some children are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to read simple words whilst others read simple text. Progress in writing is particularly good. One child in the group where special help is needed was able to write 'Mummy and dad' under her drawing quite independently. Some children can write their names recognisably and others make letter shapes very well. Another child was able to write and adapt the story of 'Humpty Dumpty' very accurately and totally independently.
79. The teaching in this area is excellent and is supported by very good planning that is informed by careful individual assessment. The children are given every opportunity to express themselves clearly. The teacher's skills in extending language were particularly evident in a whole-class reading session. The children were given a choice of words to replace one that was covered up. They invariably chose the correct one, showing a very good understanding of the context and the meaning of the different words. Skills in language and literacy are greatly enhanced by the wide array of different activities that present an ever-increasing challenge to the children.

Mathematics and numeracy

80. Provision is also very good in mathematics. The effective teaching also applies to number work. The teachers have a wide range of strategies that help children to understand the importance of number, as for example the handing out of number cards for lining up for lunch so that departure is very orderly. They very clearly understand the ordering of numbers as when they relate this to the size of Babushka dolls. All the children can count up to 20 with ease, and many can count backwards successfully. They use this knowledge to help them in their other work. A typical example is when they are making their 'snake' number games. The children are given many opportunities to extend and apply their growing understanding of number and mathematics by playing with water and sand, counting objects and grouping animals together.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. Provision in this area is not only very good but also very exciting. By the age of five, the children have a very wide understanding of the world. They have very good opportunities to learn to learn about food, its origins and how changes occur to different substances when they are put together. Enjoyment and experimentation are the keynote of the excellent planning. In learning about the origins of milk, the children were introduced to 'a special visitor', where two children were dressed in a cow costume. Later they used rubber gloves as udders and were able to experience milking for themselves. This very good learning also involved their understanding of the need for milk in our diet, the many foods produced from milk and its effect on teeth and bones. In the milking session, the need for hygiene was strongly impressed upon the children. In yet another exciting activity the children learned about making bread and made it for themselves. There were excellent hands-on displays where the children could grind their own wheat and begin to make cottage cheese. Through mixing yeast, sugar and water together the children could clearly see the chemical changes which take place when making bread. They also had the wonderful opportunity of experiencing the effect by trapping the carbon dioxide in a balloon. The children were very proficient on the computer, locating 'M' and opening a file on milk. The computers are in constant use and pupils are adept at accessing programs and using the mouse. They work very well together, following simple illustrated instructions. Their learning in this area is of high quality and they achieved above the expected outcomes for children at the age of five.

Physical development

82. Provision is good and standards are good by the time children reach five. Children join the school with a wide range of levels of physical development. Knowing this, the teachers provide many opportunities for children to learn how to hold objects carefully, use them accurately, for example a pencil or a brush, and use simple tools safely. They work well kneading dough and making it into shapes. In a physical education lesson seen the children were given a very good opportunity to use toys to develop controlled movement and the lesson finished up with a country dance. The children have larger toys outside but there is a lack of pedalling equipment. There are also some restrictions as there is no separate play area for under-fives to use large-scale equipment. The ground surface is bumpy and children frequently fall.

Creative development

83. Provision is very good. Children have opportunities to play imaginatively by taking roles in stories and dressing up for the different parts. They play constructively in the home corner, making up their own stories and games. They display good observational skills and explore colour, texture and shape well in their art work. They work very confidently in paint, collage and playdough and construct objects from junk materials. They can name primary colours and can predict the outcome of colour mixing. Their pictures show recognisable forms and their patterns have structure and shape. They enjoy listening to music and singing rhymes and number songs. The teaching is very good as the children learn good skills and effective techniques but are able to develop their own ideas and imaginations. This was particularly evident where a group of pupils were making owl masks. Though the teacher was aware of them they worked completely independently, drawing round their templates, cutting out the eyeholes, decorating them and putting on substantial handles so that they did not flop about. When asked what they were actually doing, one child casually pointed out that the printed instructions were pinned to the cupboard. The outcomes were of a very high standard. The activity very clearly shows the level of confidence and expertise

which the children have attained in this area, the fruits of dedicated and highly skilled teaching. The children achieve above the nationally expected outcomes.

ENGLISH

84. In the 1999 end of key stage tests, the proportion of seven-year-old pupils achieving Level 2, the national expectation, was well above average in reading and close to this in writing. Whilst the proportion of boys was well above average in both these subject areas, girls were in line with the national average overall in reading and were below in writing. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 was below the national average in reading and writing. The consequence is that the overall results were lower than those of similar schools. The rise in pupils' attainment over three years in reading and writing reflects the national trend. Inspection evidence shows that both boys and girls make good progress through Key Stage 1, with speaking and listening skills well above and reading above the national expectation by the end of the key stage. Progress in writing is less marked, however attainment is in line with the national expectation by the end of the key stage.
85. In the 1999 end of key stage tests, the proportion of eleven-year-old boys and girls achieving Level 4, the national expectation, was well above, whilst the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. The rise in pupils' attainment over three years reflects the national trend. Boys' attainment is higher than boys' attainment nationally and girls' attainment has risen above the national average for girls. Attainment is in line with attainment in similar schools. Inspection evidence reflects these results. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is well above the national expectation in speaking and listening skills and is above in reading and writing.
86. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Most pupils achieve standards that are in line with their capabilities. There are very few pupils for whom English is a special difficulty. The language competence of these pupils is sufficient, so that English as an additional language does not impede learning. Their progress and attainment are in line with the majority of pupils in the school. The school is aware of the need to improve provision for higher attaining pupils and last year introduced 'booster' classes before the Key Stage 2 tests. The impact of this has yet to be seen, but currently there is insufficient extension work although plans are in hand for this.
87. Speaking and listening skills are well above the national expectation. As pupils progress through the key stages, they gain in confidence and most become fluent and articulate. Listening is a particular strength at both key stages; pupils listen attentively and respond thoughtfully. Pupils have opportunities to develop formal speaking skills through assemblies and school productions. A criticism in the last report was that insufficient class time was devoted to speaking and listening but this is no longer the case.
88. Reading skills are above average. The school has developed an effective reading strategy that ensures pupils read at an appropriate level and make appropriate progress. In Key Stage 1, most pupils enjoy reading and develop effective strategies. In Key Stage 2, pupils read widely and are able to discuss favourite books and authors. Higher attaining pupils are secure in finding information in reference books and research skills.
89. Pupils make good progress in the development of writing skills; these are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and above by the end of Key Stage 2. Particular strengths are the well-organised writing with a sense of style and appropriate use of vocabulary. As at the time of the previous report, basic skills are

well taught throughout the school using worksheet exercises, though this emphasis can limit learning and provision when not sufficiently consolidated in pupils independent writing. There are insufficient opportunities for higher attaining pupils to extend their writing skills, particularly in Years 3 to 5. Pupils make good progress in the development of handwriting and attainment is above the national expectation. Most pupils take a pride in their neatly presented work.

90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better. In Key Stage 1, teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory, with at least half good and a third very good. In Key Stage 2, three-quarters of teaching is very good and a quarter is excellent. The high quality of teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to work are major factors in enhancing their learning.
91. Teachers' command of subject, high expectations of pupils and very effective class management provide pupils with a secure environment for learning and the confidence to try out ideas. A characteristic of teaching is very thorough planning that enables pupils to build on previous experience. An example is the analysis of the qualities displayed by characters from literature, where pupils were able to make connections and discuss in depth a range of characters from several books. Further strengths are the careful assessment and recording of progress, especially in Key Stage 1, where pupils are learning the basic skills of reading and language development. In many of these lessons, class management is very effective, with pupils moving smoothly to and from individual, group or class work whilst teachers and learning support assistants use detailed records of progress to tailor teaching to individual needs. There are, however, some inconsistencies in teaching; for example, learning is less effective when teachers aim lessons at the middle range of ability or fail to establish clear learning objectives for lessons. The school has recognised that areas for improvement are to provide pupils with opportunities to take some responsibility for their own learning, for example through group and paired work and through research, and to use marking to extend and enhance learning. The recent provision of a computer suite enables teachers to use information technology more effectively as an integral part of pupils' learning.
92. Pupils' behaviour ranges from good to excellent. Pupils are well motivated, rise to challenges set by teachers and are keen to respond. They work hard, concentrate well and maintain good relationships. Their positive attitudes contribute significantly to their learning.
93. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and teachers are delivering the National Literacy Strategy well. Pupils are well supported by the National Literacy Strategy. Some teachers develop subject specific vocabulary; in history; for example, Year 6 pupils write substantial projects. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. There are effective strategies in place for the regular practice of reading, spelling and handwriting. The development of writing as a part of the study of other subjects is good. Examples are 'dreamtime' writing, linked with the study of aboriginal art, and the substantial history projects undertaken by Year 6 pupils. The English curriculum is broad and balanced overall, however insufficient time is allocated for drama and role-play activities.
94. The organisation of English is very good, with clear policies and appropriate priorities for development. There are regular systems for monitoring teachers' practice and moderating pupils' work. The use of assessment to plan teaching is very good and teachers are developing a good assessment system. Plans are in place to set clearer targets for individuals and groups and report to parents in more specific detail.

Resources are good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2, where new reading books and new stock are waiting to be unpacked and reorganised, to improve accessibility. There have been improvements since the last inspection, for example in assessment, support for pupils with special educational needs, provision for speaking and listening and the development of writing all of which are on-going.

MATHEMATICS

95. In national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 in mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was well above the national average whilst the proportion achieving Level 3 was close to the national average. Compared with similar schools the proportion reaching Level 2 or above was very high (100 per cent) and the proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 or above was also well above average. In mathematics, over the last four years, pupils' performance has been well above the national average and inspection evidence indicates that this is likely to continue.
96. In national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 in mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 or above was above the national average whilst the proportion achieving Level 5 or above was well above the national average. Compared with similar schools, the proportion achieving Level 4 or above was broadly in line with the average whilst the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above was above the average. Pupils' performance in mathematics over the last four years has been well above the national average, and inspection evidence indicates that this, too, will continue. In both key stages, there is no particular difference in attainment in the performance of girls and boys. Mathematics is a strength of the school and has improved since the previous inspection.
97. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure grasp of number and they can add and subtract numbers up to 100. They correctly put numbers in order and complete patterns by filling in missing numbers. They have a good grasp of place value, for example by illustrating numbers such as 34 and 76 on an abacus in a Year 1 class. Pupils are beginning to use standard written notation for addition, including the use of carrying. Several pupils work confidently with numbers up to 1000 when ordering numbers and completing patterns. Pupils have good mental recall of multiplication tables for two, five and ten. They use their knowledge of tables in doubling and halving activities.
98. Most pupils apply their knowledge of numbers in simple shopping activities, including working out the correct change. In work on shape and space, pupils name common two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles and rectangles and describe them by counting edges and corners. Pupils measure with accuracy, using centimetres and metres. They use clock faces to tell the time and they understand how to put events in order. Work in using and applying mathematics is embedded in all that pupils do. They talk confidently about their work in everyday language, they practise mental approaches in whole-class sessions, and they use simple diagrams to illustrate their work, such as shading in fractions of shapes with increasing accuracy.
99. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils, have secure skills in arithmetic, using whole numbers up to 1000. They practise mental arithmetic based on multiplication tables and apply a wide range successfully. Pupils understand place value and use their knowledge to multiply and divide by 10 and 100. Many pupils successfully include decimals in their work. Most relate fractions, percentages and decimals and use their knowledge in calculating, for example, 40 per cent of £4.60.

100. Pupils use correct vocabulary such as 'factor' 'multiple' and 'square numbers', in mental mathematics and problem-solving activities. They know the names for different types of angles, such as 'acute' and 'obtuse', and use vocabulary such as 'parallel' in working on classification of two and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils successfully construct triangles to given criteria based on the lengths of sides and sizes of angles. They are familiar with the differences between rotation and translation and other aspects of symmetry. Work in using mathematics is done as part of normal classroom activities. All pupils are developing a wide range of mental mathematics skills, which they apply well to problem solving. They also have opportunities to carry out their own mathematical investigations when they set each other problems.
101. Pupils make good use of their knowledge of numeracy in other areas of the curriculum. They use grid references and co-ordinates in geography map work, compass bearings in physical education (orienteeing) and record results of science experiments using tables and graphs, which they then interpret. Younger pupils regularly practise using numbers in a range of activities including, for example, joining in counting rhymes and songs.
102. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in mathematics. They are very well supported by the very clear structure set out in the National Numeracy Strategy and by the quality of the teaching of mathematics throughout the whole school. The National Numeracy Strategy ensures that pupils build systematically on earlier knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of mathematics as they get older. With the emphasis on mental approaches and whole class teaching, pupils make good progress in mental mathematics. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop a good understanding of number through working with numbers first up to 10, and then extending to numbers up to 100. They use and apply their knowledge in simple shopping and measuring activities, and in investigating simple patterns such as odd and even numbers up to 100. Pupils first use words such as 'bigger' and 'smaller' in comparing common classroom objects, and use centimetres to measure more accurately as they get older. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress as a result of good support from teachers and classroom assistants. In Key Stage 2, pupils gain confidence in using increasingly large numbers and develop systematically the standard processes for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. As they get older, their work on fractions, decimals and percentages further contributes to their developing understanding of numbers.
103. Pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics and work well. They pay good attention in whole class teaching sessions, and want to participate by answering questions and demonstrating on the board. Pupils are very well behaved and have very good relationships with other pupils and with all adults. They work well individually and with partners; they share equipment well and discuss work quietly. The National Numeracy Strategy places great emphasis on the development of independent work. Pupils respond positively to this, and older pupils become increasingly able to sustain concentration for considerable amounts of time. Pupils' positive attitudes and good relationships are a significant factor in the purposeful, productive lessons commonly seen throughout the school and in the progress pupils make in the subject.
104. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. All the teaching observed was good, very good or excellent. Teachers have a very secure understanding of the subject and the needs of the pupils. They use technical vocabulary well, such as 'difference', 'minus' and 'subtract', in early work on number and they pick examples to illustrate work. Most teachers are very skilled in questioning in a way that tests and

develops understanding as well as assessing what pupils know and understand. They carefully choose questions appropriate to pupils' abilities. All work is set at a level, which provides a suitably high degree of challenge. Lessons are very well planned according to the pattern set out in the national numeracy project. Learning objectives are clear, realistic and shared with pupils before, during and after the lesson. Teaching methods include a good combination of whole-class teaching and individual and group work. Lessons normally flow according to plan, usually at a brisk pace as teachers move through the intended activities. As a result, pupils' progress is good. All teachers manage their classes very well and ensure good behaviour. Warm, supportive relationships contribute very effectively to good responses and positive attitudes. Learning resources are very well prepared and used well. Learning support assistants are used well, especially in Key Stage 1. They are well briefed and take a full part in group and individual work, giving good support to pupils with special educational needs, and enabling them to make good progress. Day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is good and teachers use a great deal of individual discussion and questioning to discover how well pupils understand the lesson. Homework is used to complete those tasks which may be unfinished but more often it is used to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.

105. At present there is no mathematics co-ordinator but the subject is being well managed and led by the headteacher and the mathematics link co-ordinator in Key Stage 1. There has been suitable training for all staff and the National Numeracy Strategy has been very well integrated into the school's curriculum. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment are part of the newly introduced school system, and are beginning to provide staff with good information from which to determine pupils' levels of attainment and learning. Staff are well qualified to teach mathematics; most teachers make use of information technology to support the subject, particularly when working with pupils with special educational needs.

SCIENCE

106. At the end of Key Stage 1, in the 1999 National Curriculum assessments, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or higher was very high in comparison with the national average. At the higher Level 3, results were above the national average. Standards in relation to knowing about physical and life processes and living things, and in the investigation of these ideas, were very high. Standards in knowing about materials and their properties were broadly in line with the national average. In the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or higher was above the national average and of those achieving Level 5, close to it. However, when the achievements of all pupils are considered together, and not the proportions reaching particular levels, their performance was close to the national average. Compared to similar schools at the end of Key Stage 2 results are broadly average. Boys and girls reach similar standards in science.
107. Current attainment by the majority of pupils by the age of seven is above average. Good standards in knowing and understanding about living things and life processes are exceptionally encouraged by the first-hand observations pupils are able to make. For instance, fledgling birds lined up on their perch thrive amazingly well because pupils regularly, carefully feed them whilst watching changes in their growth. Their observations become more purposefully linked to their understanding about life cycles because they watch hawk moths pupating, froglets growing from tadpoles and a range of minibeasts. Observations became even more sophisticated in a Year 2 class when pupils were drawn to notice differences between frogs' and newts' spawn, because of the good knowledge their teacher had about the topic. Very good progress is also made in the development of sensitivity towards the needs of creatures. Pupils in Year

1 were effectively tantalised into making decisions about whether or not a toy moves by a pushing or pulling force, because of their teacher's perceptive planning. They quickly and accurately tallied the number of times they used these different forces in another lesson, because of good opportunities to do so. In Year 2, they make an electrical circuit so that a bulb lights up and successfully use this knowledge when illuminating monsters in design and technology work. They identify materials such as plastic, fabrics and metals and begin to realise that certain materials change if heated or frozen and that sometimes changes are irreversible. In comparison with other aspects of science, however, less time is spent upon learning about materials and their properties.

108. By the time pupils are seven years old, they have made good progress in learning how to be 'young scientists' while investigating ideas and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. In Year 1, they described what they were going to do and talked about what they thought would happen, during an experiment to find out if plants drink water and, while investigating which paper makes a strong bag, they knew how to make it a fair test. In Year 2, pupils continue to plan, make simple predictions and record observations in a progressively clearer way. Higher attaining pupils write about simple patterns they discover in their results. Low attainers have the good support of their teacher to record apparatus and consider what happened. During all of their work they use an increasing range of scientific vocabulary, from 'blossom' to 'hibernate'.
109. Current attainment by the majority of pupils by the age of 11 is in line with the national average. Standards are raised when teachers have high expectations of pupils' capabilities and are confident in their knowledge about science. Pupils in Year 3 were enthusiastically and competently led into a lively discussion about why certain materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes, because of their teacher's high expectations of and reassurances about what they were capable of understanding. They enthusiastically responded to the task with much commitment. Consequently, progress in learning was very good both in understanding the 'fitness for purpose' of materials and in further developing speaking and listening skills. Standards are above average where work is pitched at the right level for high attaining pupils, for instance in Year 6 where learning about magnetic forces is extended into knowledge about electromagnetism. On the other hand, progress is hampered for higher attaining pupils when they do the same task and follow the same instruction sheet as the rest of the class for most of a long lesson, as for example when testing a variety of switches when circuitry breaks are clearly understood then spending too little time making their own switch. Pupils continue to learn more technical words, for example 'condensation' and 'evaporation' and increase the accuracy of their measurements as they become familiar with new measuring apparatus and equipment. In Year 6, they know that force is measured in newtons and correctly refer to cubic centimetres when measuring liquids. They learn how we see objects and how sounds can be changed in Year 3. By Year 4, they develop a deeper understanding of seed dispersal and the need for seeds to grow new plants and, in Year 6, learn how to identify several twigs from using a chart.
110. Records continue to be carefully made as mentioned in the last report, but progress in learning more about investigative procedures slows down in Key Stage 2. This is particularly noticeable in Year 6, where practical work is too limited. Analysis of pupils' work shows that, while they are able to make predictions, they do not always sufficiently base their 'guesses' on ideas they have learnt in science lessons. They do not sufficiently search for patterns in results and draw conclusions about their experiment. In addition, the skill of drawing two-dimensional science diagrams, suitably labelled to help their learning, is seldom practised. Much of the experimental

work, throughout the age-range, is carefully structured by teachers, but not balanced enough by independent investigative work. Opportunities are missed for pupils to plan experiments (too often a method describes what has already been done), choose their own equipment and decide on ways in which to record their work.

111. Teachers have good knowledge of pupils with special educational needs and these pupils make very good progress in relation to their previous attainment, in Key Stage 1, because of the wise use and skills of learning support assistants. They make good progress in Key Stage 2. Sometimes what they have to learn is not planned sufficiently differently from work of the rest of a mixed-year class where there is a wide range of attainment. For a similar reason, the highest attainers are not sufficiently, and rigorously challenged often enough.
112. The quality of teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to very good. At Key Stage 1, it was never less than good in the three lessons observed. Progress in learning was seen to be at a faster pace in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. Often within confined spaces, teachers prepare interesting resources that effectively help pupils to understand ideas. Answers from pupils are praised and this encourages their confidence and progress in learning. The work planned for higher attaining pupils is not demanding enough but teachers have high expectations of effort and behaviour. Most pupils are eager to learn about science in the happy working atmosphere created by their teachers. For instance, pupils in Year 6 busily shared equipment safely as they happily and diligently recorded results about the insulating properties of different materials. In this way, they continued to sharpen the accuracy of measurements and results, later needed for judgements about the experiment. During the inspection there were, however, sometimes too few occasions when, particularly older, pupils asked questions themselves to enquire more deeply into a topic, because they had too few opportunities to do so. Teachers make good use of homework to extend imaginatively what has been learned in lesson time. Marking is consistent although not all teachers' comments contain sufficient advice about how pupils may improve.
113. Very good teaching is characterised by lively lessons, well planned and briskly paced; superficial answers are not accepted if more is possible. Good opportunities are planned for pupils in Year 3 to turn their own ideas into an investigation, for instance about what affects the strength of structures. Year 2 pupils include in their own descriptions, that 'gills' on the side of the tadpole are feathery gills and know what gills are and do, because of their teacher's high expectation of what they can achieve. In addition, where teachers are secure in their subject knowledge they teach with confidence and humour which helps speed up progress in learning. Lessons where teaching was satisfactory shared many of the features of good lessons; activities were skilfully and safely managed and pupils learnt to behave responsibly in using equipment. However, lesson planning focused too much upon the organisation of activities rather than upon all that pupils needed to learn by the end of a lesson, resulting in a slow pace that became slower as the lesson continued. Consequently, pupils did not acquire enough new information. Where other weaknesses occur they are characterised by too much direction by teachers coupled with too little independent investigative work done by pupils.
114. The co-ordinator is well able to give advice and support to colleagues and has plans to use opportunities to work alongside them and monitor teaching and learning. Some teachers lack confidence in setting up a full range of opportunities for pupils to learn about experimental procedures. The appropriate emphasis is not given to practical work particularly at Key Stage 2, and the nurturing of independent investigative skills throughout the age-range. Specific priorities do not guide reviews of teachers' plans

and pupils' work, and time actually given to teaching science is not always identified across the school.

ART

115. Standards overall are at least average and by the end of Key Stage 2 they are above expectations. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In Key Stage 1, pupils are developing good basic skills whilst representing what they observe, imagine, remember, and record. Work is carefully undertaken and shows good exploration of and experimentation with media and techniques. Developing ideas show increased control of media and equipment. The overall quality of work displayed is good. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on and consolidate these skills. They identify the different kinds of art from different periods and cultures with growing knowledge and understanding.
116. Pupils in both key stages develop good skills and techniques and they are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. Year 1 pupils design and make animal finger puppets using a selection of materials; they work practically and imaginatively together. Year 2 pupils make mini-beast environments, cut with increasing control using a template and make card spiders. Pupils produce collages, weaving and good quality painted landscapes in connection with their topics on different habitats and St Lucia. Studies of self-portraits and plants, show increasing accuracy and improved observational skills, as for example, when Year 2 pupils, through painting, collage and printing, produced their own interpretations of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night', greatly influenced by his work. Years 3 and 4 pupils explored methods of weaving whilst studying Anglo Saxons and whilst studying Romans made some good mosaic symbols. Displays also show good examples of three-dimensional models of Viking longships and of helmets, finished to a good standard. Year 4 pupils identify key features of the work of L S Lowry, and create interesting urban landscapes in contrasting styles. Studying building structures, pupils in Years 3 and 4 developed this work into a focus on different brick patterns which pupils had found and made using card. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show a secure understanding of the different characteristics of art from different cultures and times. Skills in observation improve: through a still-life study of fruit pupils successfully arranged their composition and blended colours using oil pastels. Work on display demonstrates that a number of pupils achieve above expectations. Of particular note are the aboriginal dream line drawings, three-dimensional Egyptian animal headed jars, hieroglyphic drawings and three-dimensional models of the Millennium dome. Information technology and sketchbooks are not yet used to further enrich work studied. Art makes a good contribution to the literacy strategy by providing good opportunities for language development.
117. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are consistently good. Most settle quickly to work, are keen to participate in lessons and really enjoy art. Concentration is good as pupils experiment and explore their artistic ideas. They handle materials and tools carefully. They listen well to instructions and share equipment and media. Relationships are very good.
118. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from very good to good in Key Stage 1 and very good to satisfactory in Key Stage 2, where half of the lessons seen were good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' knowledge and the teaching of basic skills are good. Planning is good and tasks are appropriately challenging and are well matched to the age and interest of pupils. Expectations of work and behaviour are very good and are reinforced constantly throughout lessons. Skills are developed well. The use of

specific terminology is good and is a key feature. Work is orally assessed well and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and each other's work. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

119. The subject is effectively managed by a temporary co-ordinator. Schemes of work are developing well and the curriculum is no longer narrow. Display celebrates pupils' achievement very well. Resources are well organised and accessible, and are of good quality. The accommodation, although generally satisfactory especially when activity areas are used, is at times restrictive. This is particularly so in smaller classrooms and with older pupils, the accommodation is extremely cramped, making movement and work difficult; working space, including surface space and storage, is restrictive. Although well managed and well organised by the teachers, the delivery of the National Curriculum is sometimes constrained.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements, only three lessons were seen, in a Reception class, in Year 4 and in Year 3, one taught by a student. However, it was possible to make judgements about pupils' standards and the quality of their learning from displays of models made by pupils, examples of sewing and weaving, scrutiny of teachers' plans and discussions with pupils, teachers and the co-ordinator.
121. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are broadly satisfactory. Pupils develop their design and technology skills well in Key Stage 1, an improvement since the previous inspection report, but the skills and quality of designs vary between unsatisfactory and predominately sound in Key Stage 2. Limited progress is made in refining these skills and in evaluating their work.
122. The youngest pupils learn to think about their work and make decisions as they cut and shape their sandwiches, discussing which ingredients will be used and recording what has been done in pictures. They were enthusiastic to show how to knead dough and as they made their Scofa loaf, learned that bread is made from wheat, explaining how it is milled. They learn to handle utensils safely and about the importance of cleanliness.
123. Pupils cook flap-jacks and learn to evaluate their finger puppets in Year 1 and, by the end of the key stage, they have developed a range of making skills. They work with various materials such as paper, card, fabrics and natural ingredients such as food, and use simple tools. They continue to apply knowledge previously learned in other subjects when making things. Year 2 pupils constructed space creatures that could light up because they understood how to make an electrical circuit and make birds with folding wings. They make particularly good progress in sewing skills because of the special knowledge that their learning support assistant has, and her high expectations of what they are capable of achieving. For example, they quickly learned to hold a needle and fabric properly as they made large running stitches in Mr Wiggywinkle's cape and hat. Later on, they capably copied a six-point pattern and persevered in the difficult task of sewing metallic threads on hessian, in order to make a very good snowflake. Progress was very good as they then learned to sew appliqué 'hot fruits' with small, regular stitching when working on their Caribbean topic. During all of this work, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the expertise and wise use of the learning support assistant.
124. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use skills they already have and develop new ones, albeit more strongly focused on making than design skills. They improve their

knowledge and understanding when making Victorian toys, for example by using hinges, cutting and joining techniques and more advanced tools and techniques such as bradawls and scoring correctly. They can create movement, using levers. Although opportunities for making things arise as other subjects and topics are studied, teachers' plans show that less time is given to the subject in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. In learning more about Vikings, pupils in Years 3 and 4 make helmeted masks, Viking faces and a longship. They learn that Egyptians kept internal organs of dead people in animal headed jars and placed them in the tombs. From careful modroc (material impregnated with plaster) work in art lessons, Years 4 and 5 make a good selection of highly finished animal-headed jars. Similarly, in Years 5 and 6, pupils clearly represent Aztec masks focused on the god Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent. There are too few opportunities, however, for pupils to generate their own designs and to gain a wider range of design and technology experiences, for instance, working with machines, making working models and assembling and disassembling products.

125. The quality of teaching of design and technology skills is satisfactory overall. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, they relate to the lack of a coherent plan through which pupils' knowledge and skills of design and technology can consistently develop throughout the age-range. Teachers are competent in teaching pupils to make a variety of objects and regularly interweave opportunities that encourage model and mask making into other lessons, for example art and history. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use a growing range of equipment safely, for example drill and hacksaw as they make Victorian toys, because of the teachers' good knowledge and competence in using these tools. With good guidance from their teacher, Year 4 pupils safely cut wood as they made a buggie although they concentrated on how the buggie would work rather than identifying ways in which it could be improved. Pupils in a Year 3 class, in learning about forces that act on bridges, made good progress in designing structures because their teacher emphasised the need to plan, through discussion, what they needed to do to cost the task and modify their designs if necessary. There was much enjoyment as pupils helped each other improve their work and, consequently, progress was made in learning.
126. Progress has been slow in addressing weaknesses pointed out in the last report in relation to the development of design skills and opportunities for pupils to assemble and disassemble. An effective policy has yet to be put in place, and clear plans for activities and a variety of experiences across the key stages have yet to be developed. Assessment procedures, which inform short-term and medium-term planning, are not specifically identified. The quality of resources has improved since the last inspection: wood is now readily available for constructing small models. The displays of models throughout the school illustrate pupils' keenness to make a good finished product that they can be justly proud of.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Due to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe any direct teaching of the subject but it was possible to evaluate standards through the quality of work seen and discussions with pupils. Pupils' attainment at the ends of the both key stages is, overall, above national expectations for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know their own addresses and can describe the various buildings and forms of transport found in the local area. They use appropriate language to describe a variety of environments, for example rain forests, deserts and polar regions. Pupils know and correctly use geographical terms to describe physical features such as 'river', 'mountains', 'forest' and 'sea'. They are developing appropriate map-making and map-reading skills and enjoy drawing plans and plotting routes. They are developing

appropriate knowledge of the weather and, through their studies on St Lucia and in the past Chembakoli, they compare and contrast life in somewhere other than their own village of River. The work on St Lucia also gave them the experience of Caribbean art and different foods as well as enabling them to make good use of a digital camera to produce their own passports.

128. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have built firmly upon their early foundations. Map work by Year 6 shows a good understanding of six figure references, signs, symbols and compass bearings; this is a strength. This work is linked to orienteering in physical education where pupils put their acquired knowledge to practical use. Pupils make good use of their initiative to gather information relating to population, geographical features, climate, agriculture and culture in other countries around the world and produce good quality projects. They have a sound knowledge of geographical terms such as 'continent', 'oceans', 'precipitation', 'ice cap' and 'time zones'. They demonstrate an understanding of the effects of pollution, global warming and the destruction of the rain forests. Pupils gather weather information and make good use of information and communications technology to collate their data.
129. Pupils enjoy the subject and are eager to talk about what they know. In the project work the Year 6 pupils showed good research skills, using CD-ROMs, the library and the Internet. Projects on various countries, for example France, Malaysia and the Netherlands, were then presented in word-processed form.
130. The subject is well resourced but apart from traffic surveys and local walks too little fieldwork is undertaken. The quality of work and the enthusiasm of the pupils demonstrates that the teaching is satisfactory.

HISTORY

131. Due to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe any direct teaching of the subject but it was possible to evaluate standards through the quality of work seen and discussions with pupils. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in history is broadly in line with what is expected for the age group and in Key Stage 2, it is above. This is an improvement on standards at the time of the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sequence events and distinguish between aspects of past lives and their own appropriately, as exemplified by their work on Florence Nightingale and their study of local buildings. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have good factual knowledge and understanding of history, and can describe characteristics of past periods, for example, such as in relation to Britain since 1930. A piece of work on the Jarrow marches showed considerable understanding of the living conditions of the time.
132. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing the skills to compare old and new artefacts such as toys. In Key Stage 2, pupils were observed making good progress in their use of historical sources to research information. Pupils show interest in their learning and discuss differences between the past and present, expressing opinions about events. Particularly valuable was the work done in comparing and contrasting Victorian children and themselves. The older pupils get opportunities to find out for themselves and much good work was seen on projects, which pupils were researching and writing during their lunch times. Topics varied from Henry VIII, the Anglo-Saxons, The Tower of London, and the Second World War to Jack the Ripper!
133. History also has good links with other subjects such as geography and information technology. Pupils make good use of CD-ROMs and the Internet to record results of the research and they word process other examples of their work. The subject makes a good contribution to the literacy strategy by presenting opportunities for extended

writing, and higher attaining pupils, in particular, make good use of this to produce some sophisticated pieces of work, as on VE day.

134. Pupils' response to history throughout the school is positive and enthusiastic. They take a pride in what they know and have found out and are always eager to show and tell others what they have done.
135. It was not possible to observe any direct teaching of history, but through talking to pupils it is evident that the pupils enthusiasm for the subject is enhanced by their teacher's own enthusiasm.
136. The present policy and scheme of work are rightly being reviewed in line with the changes to be introduced by Curriculum 2000. The school is basing its scheme on the guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Resources are well-organised and easily accessible to staff.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

137. Standards in information technology are good both in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and progress is very good. This marks a very good improvement since the last inspection and is the result of the very good teaching and provision the pupils now receive. In Key Stage 1, pupils know how to log on and log off the new network and show and understand how to use the 'Countdown' mathematics programme. They learn new vocabulary such as 'dragging' and 'cursor'. The pupils are very confident in using the hardware and show great respect for it. They have successfully produced digital photographs for passports relating to a travel topic.
138. At Key Stage 2, pupils apply their skills in designing high quality newspaper reports which are displayed around the school. They select from templates the styles of their choice and prepare the text using a variety of fonts. They import graphics and overlay them onto their work to produce a series of sports reports and show skills in word processing extracts from Shakespeare and other poems. In researching topics for history and geography, some pupils access the multimedia programs and cut and paste the information to suit their purposes. They have learned and are learning a great deal and will shortly be using email. They are aware of the new terminology. They also show good skills in data handling relating to surveys which they have made and they practise the skill of invoicing. Pupils are very knowledgeable about the various forms of communications technology, such as mobile phones, which have direct access to the Internet and email. They clearly realise the importance of computers in the commercial world. Examples of good colourful work are evident throughout the school and virtually all labelling of work is by computers.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and in some cases excellent. The teaching enables all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make very good progress. Where teaching is at its best, pupils are constantly challenged to move on and discover new related applications, particularly those relating to modelling programmes with 'Logo'. The teachers are supported by a very experienced co-ordinator who ensures the smooth running of the information technology network in the suite. A strength in the teaching is careful planning supported by the co-ordinator and by the commitment of the teachers to learning new skills. Teachers make good use of the data network screen in the lessons in the suite. Pupils are given clear learning objectives at the beginning of a lesson, and the teachers have high expectations.

140. Pupils' attitudes to their work in information technology are very good. They are enthusiastic and are trained to listen carefully to instructions. Pupils work very well in pairs, helping each other and taking turns to operate the mouse. Good opportunities exist for discussion and problem solving during this paired work. Pupils gain confidence and achieve a real sense of pride in the finished work.
141. Leadership and management in the subject are excellent and it is spearheaded by the enthusiasm of the subject co-ordinator, who supports the regular use of information technology by all classes. Teachers are now being suitably trained. The policy is a team effort but with more input from the co-ordinator due to the nature of the subject. There is also a 'safe' access policy to safeguard pupils against inappropriate programmes on the Internet. The specific scheme of work is being reviewed in line with changes to be introduced by Curriculum 2000 and to serve many cross-curricular purposes. The accommodation and resources are excellent and, apart from the computer suite, most of the other machines in the school are linked to the network. Only in reception are there stand-alone computers but these have CD-ROM capability.

MUSIC

142. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are about those expected nationally, and at the end of Key Stage 2 they are often above. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans show a balanced coverage of the curriculum. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 it is very good or excellent. Pupils listen to and appraise each other's group performances. They understand the different sounds that instruments make and recognise music by different composers such as Vivaldi. Pupils across both key stages improve the quality of their singing and sing in unison with increasing control; singing is very popular. When involved in their own music making they understand the basic elements, such as pitch, duration and timbre. Several pupils receive instrumental tuition and some of them are quite advanced in their playing.
143. In Key Stage 1, pupils know that a tune has structure. They perform simple melodic and rhythmic patterns when singing familiar songs. They clap, follow direction, and copy simple musical patterns and mime with reasonable accuracy. Year 2 pupils planned music to accompany the story 'Where the wild things are', selecting and playing and handling instruments with care and interpreting an appropriate mood for a magical forest. Pupils recognise a wide variety of sounds; they know that different instruments make different sounds. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed the challenge of composing several short pieces. They maintained a steady beat and developed the dynamics whilst playing. In both key stages, pupils sing with increasing accuracy as when in assembly or in class. They use correct terms such as, for example, 'duration,' 'rhythm' and 'beat'. Their knowledge of notation is good and they use and describe terminology correctly. All these mark an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils have opportunities to develop critical skills and enjoy music from a range of traditions through lessons. Preparing for a school production, Years 5 and 6 pupils planned sets and seating that would be most suitable. They plotted moves and directions in correct order using the script. Literacy and numeracy skills are enhanced through music. Pupils describe instruments and the sounds they make, and they have also made their own instruments. They know the difference between tuned and untuned percussion.
144. Pupils have good opportunities to play a range of instruments. A number of pupils benefit from instrumental tuition. They study clarinet, flute, trumpet, cornet or saxophone and 14 pupils have keyboard lessons. Many are at early stages of learning, others are advanced, and all are making good progress both in musical

understanding and notation and improving their performance. Pupils in the recorders group show good timing and recall of familiar tunes when performing in assembly. There is a school choir and pupils have various opportunities to perform in public.

145. Pupils are interested, respond enthusiastically and co-operate well. They are keen to demonstrate their skills on instruments when practising. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. The subject makes an very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, through the wide experiences offered within lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
146. The quality of teaching is mostly very good or excellent; it is never less than satisfactory at both key stages. The quality of instrumental teaching is good. Teachers encourage pupils to explore their own musical ideas, as when in Years 3 and 4 pupils developed a short percussion piece. Teaching consolidates pupils' knowledge and understanding and provides excellent challenge. The teaching of basic musical skills is very good. Learning tasks are clear, are shared and are reinforced. Subject knowledge is very good. Subject vocabulary is especially well developed by teachers. Opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of different musical periods, traditions and cultures are developing appropriately. Expectation of the quality of work which pupils should produce is high. The use of time and resources is very good and activities are varied and well balanced. The management of pupils' behaviour is excellent. Oral assessment is continuous and oral evaluations and use of praise are good features of teaching.
147. The curriculum is more balanced than at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordinator, who is a specialist, is very enthusiastic. Some monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and the quality of the curriculum have taken place. Teachers teach to their strengths and the school benefits from specialist knowledge and expertise. Participation in the local community enriches the curriculum. Extra-curricular activities include singing, recorders and performances at school festivals and productions. The use of information technology is limited at present. Resources are appropriate and are improving, and the range of ethnic instruments is developing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. As it was possible to see only one lesson at Key Stage 1, no firm judgement can be made regarding standards in this key stage despite the fact that the lesson was of very good quality. At Key Stage 2, the standard is good and progress is good. This shows a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line with national expectations. Many of the pupils are accomplished swimmers. Pupils in Year 6 swim successfully. The advanced group swims with very good style and speed. They practice the crawl, breaststroke, butterfly and backstroke, showing great stamina and endurance. The intermediate groups are making sound progress towards taking school-based certificates of proficiency. The starters group, who can all swim a little, spend some time in the shallower pool and then move to the deep end of the larger pool where they jump in with great confidence and swim to the side. Years 4 and 5 pupils participate in line dancing where they practise very complex sequences of steps, showing flair and poise with good body control. They are beginning to link and repeat a series of movements and demanding skills in balancing whilst dancing. They show good spatial awareness and keep to their places very well. In Years 3 and 4, pupils practise the cricket skills of bowling and stopping the ball. They show appropriate competitiveness and make satisfactory progress.
149. The quality of teaching and learning in the lesson seen at Key Stage 1 was very good. A pupil with special educational needs was able to participate with some support.

Pupils danced to songs and finished up with a very enjoyable country dance. They were aware of the need for space. They were very enthusiastic and worked hard individually, in pairs and in groups in the very well planned lesson. They listened and followed instructions very carefully. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to satisfactory. There is a need to develop better strategies to get the children's attention more quickly. The more successful lessons have good pace and challenge, especially in swimming. In all lessons pupils are given appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities and work that ensures good skills development. Pupils co-operate well and work effectively as individuals. They display enthusiasm and maintain high levels of interest and motivation. Teachers promote safety in physical education effectively.

150. Co-ordination of the subject is good, with very good plans for the future. The present co-ordinator, who has only been recently appointed, is a specialist and is very experienced. Currently there is only a draft policy. A new one is being drawn up in collaboration with the headteacher and the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. This is being devised to encompass the new Curriculum 2000. Assessment is currently teacher-based but from September it will follow the school's assessment policy. The school has a good grassed area large enough to accommodate as many as three classes at the same time. The school hall is satisfactory but the markings are very worn. Outdoor resources are very good, especially small apparatus. Kent County Cricket Club has given the staff training for Kwick Cricket. Physical education, and games in particular, is a strength of the school. School teams are the holders of many district trophies at present and there are extra-curricular clubs for football (run by a parent), netball and Kwick Cricket. The subject contributes to personal development by encouraging sportsmanship and fair play.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. The standards of attainment at Key Stage 1 are above the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Attainment at Key Stage 2 is in line with expectations. Standards in this subject have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress in learning about a range of religions. They have a good knowledge of important people in the realm of religion, particularly of Jesus in Christianity, Abraham, Moses and David in Judaism, and Guru Nanak in Sikhism. They know about Christian and Jewish homes and places of worship and are currently learning about the meaning of friendship.
152. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a satisfactory knowledge of the Christian books in the Bible and their development. They have made satisfactory progress. They have a good knowledge of the early life of Jesus up to the time he was found as child in the temple conversing with the elders. They are currently considering the barriers which people put up to protect themselves and they show a good understanding of how to build bridges in relationships. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make more progress in their work. They have a wide range of knowledge of human feelings. They have considered aims for the new millennium, including how they would improve the planet. They compose thoughtful prayers and have considered the roles of their mothers in their lives.
153. The quality of teaching varies from good to excellent and in these lessons pupils are challenged to make serious contributions to the issues being discussed. In the early years of Key Stage 1, pupils were asked to consider the negative feelings which might follow where one child in a family is preferred by the parents as a 'favourite'. Their contributions, such as anger and jealousy, showed how well they understood the situation. Some pupils declared that they would take care of their friends if they were

unhappy. Others suggested that they would make their own presents. One decided that she would give presents to her parents even if she did not get one back. In Year 1, pupils devised searching questions to people who help them. In the first session the pupils put their questions to the headteacher: 'Why did you choose this job?' 'Do you like telling people off?'. At Key Stage 2, pupils were set the task of researching their own names and considering the importance of having a name. One very good response was 'Our name identifies us to ourselves'.

154. Good teaching is characterised by a full knowledge and understanding of the subject and high expectations, backed up by detailed planning. The depth of pupils' understanding is assessed in well-managed discussion sessions. Assemblies make a sound contribution to religious education and the current theme for the school is the important one of partnership and friendship. The quality of the assemblies is satisfactory but pupils have little involvement in the planning.
155. The subject contributes well to spiritual and moral development and teachers are aware of the close relationship between the spiritual and the moral. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator, who formally assumes the post in September, is a very enthusiastic specialist. The policy and scheme of work are being revised to bring them into line with the current changes advised by the QCA 2000. Collective worship is high on the co-ordinator's agenda. Though teaching is not yet monitored, the teachers themselves value the co-ordinator's expertise and ask advice in an informal way. Assessment is on-going and is related to the school's own assessment policy. Resources need improving with further additions of books on key religions and an increase in the number of artefacts.