

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Rushton Primary School**

Kettering

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121863

Headteacher: Mrs Meryal Orr

Reporting inspector: Mr G Bassett  
21500

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> January – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 193800

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Station Road Rushton KETTERING
Postcode:	NN14 1RL
Telephone number:	01536 710124
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tim How
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21500	Mr G Bassett	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Information and communication technology, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Foundation stage curriculum	How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school managed?
14083	Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, How well does the school cares for the pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
23566	Mr J Iles	Team inspector	English, Science, History, Geography, Religious education, Physical education, Special educational needs, Equal opportunities.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Rushton Primary School is a small school with 73 pupils on roll. There are 44 boys and 29 girls. The school is in a small village situated to the north of Kettering town. It admits pupils from the village of Rushton as well as areas surrounding the school, including the larger communities of Kettering, Desborough, Rothwell and Corby. The children are based in three classrooms and are all in mixed age groups. Two classes have the Key Stage 2 pupils whilst the third class has the Reception children and Key Stage 1 pupils. There is no school hall, but the children have opportunities to use the village hall next door for physical education, some music lessons and for concerts twice a year. The school has an entirely white population. The school does not provide school dinners and consequently the number of pupils eligible for free school meals cannot be assessed. Thirteen pupils are on the register of special educational needs, and three have statements. The children enter school in the September of the year in which they become five years old. Their attainment on entry reflects the full ability range, but is clustered around average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Rushton Primary is a good school. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher provides a good clear direction to the educational and personal development of all pupils and to the work of the school. The governors, staff and parents form a conscientious team and this creates a purposeful atmosphere within the school. The good management of the curriculum has been effective in raising the standards and quality of the pupils' work, especially at the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching is good overall and there are many occasions when it is very good and sometimes excellent. There is high quality teaching and this has had a significant impact upon the pupils' achievements at the end of both key stages. Over the past four years the pupils' overall performance at the end of both key stages has exceeded the national average in English, mathematics and science. The rate of their progress has been good. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are good.
- The pupils' standards of work are above the national average in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of the teaching is good overall with a large proportion of lessons being either very good or excellent.
- The quality of the teachers' planning of the curriculum is good.
- The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is very good.
- The pupils' attitudes towards their work are very positive and their behaviour is very good.
- The school's links with the parents are good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The recording of each pupil's assessment needs to be simplified and put in a common format throughout the school.
- The presentation of the pupils' work needs to be improved with better handwriting and with work being dated.
- The school needs to improve upon the system of using loose-leaf folders that contain the pupils' work. These are unsatisfactory, they do not value the work sufficiently and cannot readily be used to look back at what each pupil has achieved over a period of time.
- There are some omissions in the Governors' annual report to parents that need correcting.

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

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection in January 1997. The range of opportunities it provides for the pupils' skills and knowledge of information and communication technology has been extended significantly. Consequently, the quality of their work at the end of both key stages is now above the expected levels for their ages. The pupils' standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved and are now above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The quality of their work in art and design, design and technology, history, and geography has also improved and is now above the expected standards for their age. In Key Stage 2 there have been improvements in the quality of the work in art and design, design and technology and history. The teachers are making more constructive comments when they mark the pupils' work. The school has invested in large play equipment and this promotes effectively the reception children's physical development. The teachers plan different tasks in lessons so pupils of all abilities, especially the more able pupils in Key Stage 1, are challenged sufficiently. The quality of the leadership provided by the headteacher, senior staff and the governing body is good. The quality of teaching has improved; it is now good overall and on many occasions it is either very good or excellent. This has raised the standards in general and in particular in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. The school is well placed to continue these good improvements in the future.

## **STANDARDS**

There were fewer than 10 pupils in the cohort at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 and consequently comparisons with all schools and with similar school would be unreliable.

However, it is evident from the inspection evidence that all pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress. The quality of learning and the standards achieved by the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The trend seen in the results of the national tests for the school over the past four years shows that the pupils' performance is above the national average. The targets set by the school for 2000 were reached. It is also evident from the pupils' work seen at the end of Key Stage 1, that their standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science have improved significantly to be above the average. The quality of their work in art and design, design and technology, history, and geography is above the expected standards for their age. At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science and have improved from broadly average in art and design, design and technology, and history to be above the expected standards for this age range.

The quality of the work in religious education is broadly in line with the expected levels identified in the locally agreed syllabus. The standards of work in information technology are better than at the time of the last inspection and above the expected levels for pupils at the end of both key stages. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' work in the other subjects remains satisfactory and broadly in line with the expected standards.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to their work and to the school are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils' behaviour is very good in and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils respond well to the opportunities they are given and their personal development is good.

Attendance	The levels of attendance are good and well above the national average.
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The high standards maintained in the pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development also have a positive effect upon their academic attainment throughout the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of the teaching during the inspection was rarely less than good with nearly 85 per cent of the lessons being of a good, very good or excellent standard. It is clear that the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Of the 26 lessons observed, 15 per cent were of a satisfactory quality, 54 per cent were good, 23 per cent were very good and 8 per cent were excellent. This is extremely high quality teaching and has a significant influence upon the standards reached by the pupils by the time they are eleven-years-olds.

The teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum they teach. The good teaching also has an extremely positive effect upon the pupils' attitudes to their work and the quality of their learning. It has been influential in raising the standards of the pupils' work since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 1, in literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school, the quality of the teaching of English and mathematics is either good or very good and has significantly raised the pupils' rate of progress in these subjects. It is now better than the performance seen nationally. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection. It has also had a beneficial impact upon the quality of the pupils' work in other subjects. The teachers plan their curriculum well and the tasks are matched effectively to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs where the individual education programmes form a focus for their learning. However, the pupils' presentation of their work needs to be improved and the loose-leaf folders do not encourage them to take sufficient pride in their finished work. The recording of what each pupil can do is too complex and the school should devise a simple common format that has meaning to all teachers.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum and for religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school gives careful consideration to the pupils with special educational needs and the provision for their learning is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and for their moral and social development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school effectively supports the pupils and all members of staff strive to promote their welfare. A high priority is placed upon pastoral care.



The school works effectively with the parents. Nearly all expressed very positive views about the school in the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting before the inspection. All areas of the curriculum meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and for religious education. The literacy and numeracy strategies are now firmly established and have been influential in raising the pupils' standards. The school promotes a safe and very caring environment for each pupil.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are good. She gives a good clear direction to the work of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is actively involved in the monitoring and management of the school's development and in shaping its future direction. The governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school regularly monitors its progress towards the targets set out in the development plan. It has reached the targets set for pupils in the national tests.
The strategic use of resources	The resources are used effectively. The grants for equipment have been used wisely and have greatly benefited all the pupils.

The headteacher, senior members of staff and the governors provide a clear and good direction to the developments and priorities of the school. There is a strong team spirit in the school and this helps to create a purposeful and secure environment for the pupils. The financial management of the school is good and the expenditure is monitored prudently, with good systems to ensure that the school uses the principles of 'best buy'. The staffing is adequate to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. The learning resources are sufficient in quality and quantity, but the accommodation is rather cramped especially for upper Key Stage 2.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children make good progress and the school expects them to work hard and to achieve their best.</li> <li>• The quality of the teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping the children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The children's behaviour is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• More information about how their child is getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees that the school expects the children to work hard to make good progress and that the quality of teaching is good. However, the team judges that the quality of teaching is often either very good or excellent and that the pupils' behaviour is very good. It does not agree with the very small number of parents that they do not have sufficient information about how well their child is getting on in the school. There are many

opportunities to examine their child's work with the teacher and to see what their child has done. The range of activities provided during the week of the inspection was good for a very small school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Since the last inspection, the pupils' standards have improved in many subjects.
2. It is evident from the pupils' work seen at the end of Key Stage 1, that their standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science have improved significantly to be above the average. The quality of their work in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and information and communications technology has also improved and is now above the expected standards for their age. In the other subjects, the quality of the work remains satisfactory and broadly in line with the expected standards for this key stage. At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science and have improved from broadly average in art and design, design and technology, history and information and communications technology. They are now above the expected standards for this age range.
3. However, the results of the national tests show a slightly different picture but it must be remembered that the analysis of results from small year groups within the school are not totally reliable when comparisons are made with the national average and with schools of a similar type. The effect of one pupil on the school's percentage score can be considerable and may place the school either above or below the national average.
4. Consequently, the results from the national tests for 2000 can only give a rough picture of the school's performance. The results of the national tests in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the pupils' standards in reading and mathematics were above the national average, but that they were below average in the writing test and in the teachers' assessment for science. The results of the national tests 2000 at the end of Key Stage 2 show that in English and mathematics the standards reached were above the national average but fell slightly below this level in science. Although the national tests show that the girls performed better than the boys in the tests, the inspection evidence revealed no significant difference between their achievements.
5. Over the past three years, the performance of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has exceeded the national average. Similarly, the performance of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 has been above the national average in English, mathematics and science. This is a significant achievement and reflects the good quality of teaching throughout the school.
6. The progress made by all the pupils including those with special educational needs is good. The school has reached the targets set for each year, even though some of the targets for individual pupils were very challenging.
7. Throughout the school, and particularly at the end of both key stages, most pupils make good progress in the development of their skills and understanding of literacy and numeracy. Most pupils exceed the expected standards in literacy and numeracy by the end of each key stage. The good quality of the pupils' spoken language is above average. They listen well and consider their responses carefully. The pupils at the end of both key stages read competently, fluently and have an enthusiasm for books. By the time they are eleven, they explore the different forms of writing effectively. In mathematics the pupils make good progress. By the time they are eleven years old a high proportion of them exceed the levels expected for their age. During the inspection, the evidence from the lesson observations and the pupils' work showed that most pupils perform mental calculations with numbers up and beyond 1000 accurately. They have a good grasp of tables up to 10 times and can draw angles using degrees

correctly and precisely. In all aspects of mathematics, the majority of the pupils achieves standards that are above average.

8. There are, however, many pupils who need to improve the presentation of their written work and their handwriting. They need to use dates so that their progress can be easily tracked from one piece of work to the next. The loose-leaf folders are untidy and the pupils' work soon becomes tattered and torn. This does not value the work sufficiently. Consequently, the teachers need to agree a whole school policy for the presentation and collation of the pupils' work. **(This is a key issue for action).**

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. The pupils' attitudes to the school, their behaviour and the relationships within the school are very good. The pupils' personal development is good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The vast majority of parents believe the school maintains high standards of behaviour and that it is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
10. The pupils' enthusiasm and their attitudes towards learning are very good. Nearly all the pupils consistently demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work. They are confident, motivated, and eager to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and suggestions. The pupils quickly settle down diligently in class, are capable of maintaining sustained periods of concentration and staying on task.
11. Overall, standards of behaviour are very good. The pupils behave very well and generally act in a mature and responsible manner. Their behaviour in the classrooms and in assemblies is consistently very good and there is no disruption to learning. The children work in an environment that is completely free from oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism and racism. The combination of high standards in the pupils' personal discipline, and consistently good class management by the teachers, has a positive impact on the standards of attainment. The pupils move around the school in a very quiet and orderly manner, and their behaviour at breaks and at lunchtimes is very good. There were no exclusions in the academic year prior to the inspection.
12. Relationships in the school are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults whom they come into contact with, and also to one another. The children play extremely well together in mixed age and gender groups. Pupils of all ages are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. All pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, they conduct themselves reverently, willingly joining in hymn singing and bowing their heads during periods of reflection and prayer. There is no deliberate damage to school property and a remarkable absence of litter around the school site.
13. The pupils' personal development is good. They are learning a wide range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. They support local and national charities and are learning to be aware of those less fortunate than they are. They take part in an appropriate range of out of school visits, including residential experiences for older pupils. The children respond well to the opportunities provided for taking responsibility for their own work in the classrooms. In some lessons, when not subject to direct teaching, they were observed working independently and staying on task. The Year 2 pupils help reception children with paired reading, which has a positive impact on the younger children's progress in reading. Where opportunities for taking on formal responsibilities around the school are offered, for example, helping teachers during assemblies, the pupils respond in a mature and sensible manner.

14. The levels of attendance are good and well above the national average. The rates of unauthorised absence are broadly in line with the national average. The pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a low level of recorded lateness. Most pupils come to school on time and the lessons, assemblies, breaks and other activities start and finish promptly.
15. The high standards maintained in behaviour, attendance and punctuality are strong features of the school and have a positive effect on standards achieved.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

16. The quality of teaching during the inspection was rarely less than good. In a very high proportion of the lessons seen, the teaching was very good and in some instances it was excellent. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of the teaching was judged to be never less than satisfactory, and in 50 per cent of lessons seen it was either good or very good. The evidence from the present inspection shows that the quality of teaching has improved significantly with nearly 85 per cent of the lessons seen being of either a good or better quality.
17. Of the 26 lessons observed, 15 per cent were of a satisfactory quality, 54 per cent were good, 23 per cent were very good and 8 per cent were excellent. This is extremely high quality teaching and has a most significant influence upon the standards reached by the pupils by the time they are eleven-years-olds.
18. The teaching also has an extremely positive effect upon the pupils' attitudes to their work and the quality of their learning. Since the last inspection it has been influential in raising the standards of the pupils' work in literacy and numeracy, particularly in Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, good teaching has also raised the standard of the pupils' work in other subjects, such as information and communication technology, music, design and technology and art and design. The rate of the pupils' progress in mathematics and English has significantly accelerated and it is now better than the performance seen nationally. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection.
19. The major strengths in teaching are evident in all classes and especially in the teaching of reading, writing, mathematics and science where all lessons observed were of good, very good or excellent quality.
20. The good teaching in the Foundation Stage has been maintained since the last inspection. The teacher and the learning support assistant work very closely together and provide a secure and caring environment for the children. They plan interesting and challenging tasks for the children and value the contribution made by stimulating displays of their work. This has a beneficial impact upon the children. The children enter the school with standards that are clustered around average for their age and they quickly settle into the classroom routines. In this purposeful atmosphere, they make good progress towards the completion of the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage by the time they reach Year 1.
21. The teachers throughout the school have good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum they teach. In the best lessons, the teachers demonstrate very good understanding of the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and use many opportunities to reinforce this learning through the other subjects they teach. They all make very good use of the information and communications technology links with other subjects. In nearly every lesson observed during the inspection, the teachers used an interesting and supportive program on the computers that enhanced the pupils' learning very effectively. They constantly plan information and communications technology tasks that link very well to the subjects being taught. They have high expectations in regard to the pace of the work to be covered

during a lesson and this has a marked impact upon raising the standards in literacy and numeracy in particular.

22. The teachers have established very good classroom routines and have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Consequently, they are very successful in the management of their classes.
23. The quality and the use of ongoing assessments are good. However, the record systems that are used to note down what each pupil achieves following a topic or particular element of the learning, vary from class to class. This is an area where the teachers need to agree a simple common format for their records so that the achievements of each pupil can be more easily interpreted and their strengths and weaknesses identified. **(This is a key issue for action)**. The targets that are set for each pupil are a strong feature of the classroom procedures. They are agreed with the pupils and cover all aspects of their development. They are evident in each classroom and act as a reminder to the pupil and the staff. They provide some reliable information about the development of each pupil's academic and personal skills.
24. In most lessons, the teachers use very good questions to raise the pupils' interest and to deepen their understanding. In most instances, they give the pupils time to think and time to answer. They value each pupil's attempts and often give them opportunities to explain how they arrived at their answer.
25. The detailed planning and the very good work of the learning support assistants have a great influence upon the quality of the work the pupils produce. The teachers plan interesting and imaginative tasks, and the pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all activities. Their individual educational programmes generate many of the precise learning objectives. The progress that each pupil makes is recorded very well on each one's individual educational programme so that new targets can be set and their parents can be informed of the progress made.
26. The setting of homework is good and the pupils respond very well.

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

27. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the age range and the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The various experiences offered to the pupils are interesting and worthwhile. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) was criticised. The school has up-dated its policies and schemes of work based on national guidance and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy in all areas of the curriculum. This includes a scheme of work for information and communication technology that is of good quality which is guiding the teaching and learning. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is of good quality and linked to other subjects for example, religious education.
28. The school has successfully introduced the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The teachers plan lessons effectively, ensuring progression in the learning of the pupils in mixed age classes. As a result, the pupils' confidence and competence in these fundamental skills is rising steadily throughout the school. The teaching of other subjects is organised through a two-year rolling programme of topics for five to seven-year-olds. The emphasis changes to a subject based curriculum for older pupils in Years 3 to 6. Good cross curricular links ensure that the pupils have ample opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a range of ways, for example, the use of ICT in English and the use of mathematics to solve problems in science and design and technology.

29. The curriculum for the pupils under the age of five is good. The youngest reception aged pupils are taught in a class of Year 1 and 2 pupils and are very well supported by a classroom assistant. The teacher plans the curriculum effectively for all age groups to ensure the pupils are challenged appropriately.
30. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The school identifies these pupils early in their school lives and the support available ensures the pupils' inclusion is appropriate. All aspects of special needs provision are managed efficiently by the special needs co-ordinator. The school succeeds in ensuring that all the pupils on the special needs register are fully involved in the life of the school and that they make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. The school is using all its available resources to support the pupils' needs. Local authority support includes the involvement of educational psychologists, a speech therapist and a link teacher who assists with the target setting for the pupils' individual educational plans. The preparation of the pupils for the next stage of education is good. The vast majority of the pupils transfer to the local secondary school.
31. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by a detailed policy which indicates precisely how these important elements of learning are to be taught across the curriculum to fulfil the school's aims.
32. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. The whole-school assemblies meet the requirements for collective worship and provide good opportunities for the pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. The themes, prayers and songs provide a good focus for the pupils' spiritual development. Opportunities for the pupils to experience and reflect on the world around them are built into lessons and assemblies. For example, in Years 3 and 4, there was a focus on discussing feelings when joining new groups and in Years 5 and 6 the pupils expressed delight in their success in writing different forms of poetry such as 'Haiku'. The local vicar provides a valuable link to the church and regularly contributes to assemblies and classroom activities. His support is valued highly.
33. The provision for the pupils' moral development and social development is very good. Both these aspects are promoted through the very good role models and high expectations of the staff. The pupils are frequently encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on the lives of others and are expected to take responsibility for aspects of school life. The pupils are kind to each other. At lunch times older and younger pupils play well together, they look after each other well and provide support if playground accidents occur. They work well together and collaborate in joint projects, for example in science when investigating the rate of deterioration of different types of bread. The pupils are developing very good skills that enable them to work well together in small groups, for example when accessing information from the Internet and from CD-ROMS, which they then share with the rest of the class.
34. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. The school's very strong links with the local village enhance the curriculum and provide a rich learning resource especially in religious education, history and geography. The pupils have a secure grasp of their own local history and Christian culture, through the services held in the local church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter and through visits to the Manor House Museum. The pupils also benefit from their studies of other countries and the lives of people in the past, including the work of artists and composers. There is a good range of educational visits. For example, the pupils visit the Black Country Museum as part of their work on the Victorians and the Chiltern Study Centre to support their studies in geography. The school offers a good range of clubs. These include sports, music, art, French and mathematics. In addition, the local secondary school supports the introduction of French to the pupils in Year 6.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

35. The school effectively supports its pupils and the staff strive hard to promote their welfare. The headteacher places a high priority on pastoral care and provides very good leadership in this aspect. The teachers are very approachable and totally supportive. The non-teaching staff are dedicated, committed and provide good support for both teachers and pupils. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a very good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and implement them conscientiously and consistently. Good provision is made for medical and first aid requirements, and the arrangements for dealing with routine matters such as minor accidents are very good. Conscientious teachers, who are alert and vigilant, supervise the pupils well at breaks. Teachers and support assistants undertake lunchtime supervision, and the standard of care is high.
36. The school makes good use of its non-teaching assistants to support the pupils. Their work with the pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. Child protection procedures are securely in place and there is a very good awareness of their relevance throughout the school. There are also very good procedures for health and safety. These are well known and understood by all staff who consistently demonstrate safe working practice in lessons. The school takes its health and safety responsibilities seriously and all the required safety inspections and checks, including risk assessment, are regularly carried out and properly recorded. A number of potential safety hazards, mainly concerning the school site, were brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection.
37. The school has very effective procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. All staff have high expectations of behaviour, and discipline is administered consistently and well. This has a positive impact on the high standards of behaviour maintained in the school. Attendance is also monitored rigorously; absence is meticulously recorded, and immediately followed up with appropriate action.
38. The headteacher, class teachers and the support staff know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual and personal needs. The procedures for monitoring and recording the pupils' academic progress and personal development are good. The class teachers monitor their pupils' work well and keep comprehensive and detailed records on each one. For example, the teachers maintain class assessment books, which are regularly updated, and each child has an individual information and communication record. Targets are set and assessment information is used as part of the curriculum planning process. However, the assessment procedures are not of a common format throughout the school and would benefit from being simplified.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

39. The school has effective links with parents. The parents have high expectations and very positive views of the school. The majority consistently expressed a high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school. The school enjoys the active support of the majority of parents. A few committed parents regularly help in the classrooms and around the school. There is a strong and active parents' and community association, which organises social and fund raising activities for the school. For example, the parents and community association made a significant contribution to the traffic-calming project on the road outside the school. The school is very welcoming, the staff are very approachable, and parents were regularly observed talking to class teachers at the start and close of the school day.
40. The day to day communication between the school and home is good. The school sends out regular newsletters and communications to parents about specific events and activities. It publishes an attractive and informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and present an annual report. However, the current report fails to include all the statutorily required information, for example, details of the teachers' professional development and the sections concerning the pupils with disabilities. The parents are given an informative annual progress report and offered appropriate opportunities to



attend meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. The reports consistently indicate what the pupils can and cannot do, progress being made, where the pupils are finding difficulties, and sets targets for their improvement. A large number of parents were observed taking up the invitation to visit, before school starts on a Thursday morning, to look at their children's work. A small number of parents did not agree that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. The inspection evidence did not support these parents' views.

41. Overall the school's work is considerably enriched by its links with parents and these links have a positive impact on the pupils' academic achievement and personal development.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

42. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides a good clear direction to the educational and social development of each pupil and to the work of the school as a whole. The staff and the governing body work conscientiously together to ensure that the school provides a friendly purposeful environment. The staff, governors and parents are fully involved in the creation of a dedicated team
43. The headteacher and staff have good expectations and these are reflected in the very good attitudes that every one has towards the school. These positive attitudes have recently been rekindled following a prolonged period of uncertainty caused by the lengthy absence of a teacher. This consequently affected the budget for the year, but the headteacher and the governors prudently managed this difficult situation. All has been resolved now with the appointment of a full time permanent teacher. With assistance and commitment from the local education authority, the budgetary problems have been overcome.
44. Since the last inspection in 1997, the school has worked conscientiously and effectively and has successfully tackled all the key issues raised in the report. The subject co-ordinators are taking an important role in the development and monitoring of the subjects. The schemes of work are now effectively based upon the Curriculum 2000 and the national guidelines for each subject. These improvements to the management and the planning of the curriculum have helped to ensure that as the pupils move from one class to the next, they are presented with tasks that match the expected levels for their ages. The teachers' long term planning is very good and the learning objectives become increasingly more demanding and securely build upon each pupil's prior learning. The co-ordinators are also monitoring the quality of the teaching and give feedback to each other, discussing and evaluating the teaching practices in each classroom. Consequently, the quality of the teaching has improved.
45. The school has established assessment procedures, but the recording of what each pupil can do varies from class to class. There is a need to simplify these procedures and to devise a common format throughout the school so that each pupil's progress can be easily interpreted. **(This is a key issue for action).**
46. The governing body is actively involved in the monitoring and management of the school's development. The governors have a secure understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and are helping effectively to shape its future direction. The chair of governors meets the headteacher once a week and also helps the pupils with the development of their information and communication technology skills. The governing body has employed a bursar who has worked closely with the headteacher and governors to prudently plan and manage the annual budget and monitor the monthly expenditure. The governors are aware of the information technology training that the teachers have undertaken to improve their skills in using computers in the teaching and development of all subjects. They have been involved in the decisions taken about the installation of the computer equipment and Internet access which has been financed through the grant for the National Grid for Learning. These developments are identified in

the school development plan. The governing body approves this and all other policy documents. The governors' annual report conveys much about the school but there are some omissions that need to be corrected before the next issue. **(This is a key issue for action).**

47. The staffing is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum throughout the school. In most instances, the classroom assistants give their whole-hearted support to the teachers and the pupils. They are highly valued and effectively deployed to enhance the quality of education. This is particularly so in respect of the help they give to the pupils with special educational needs. The resources are generally good and the school has established good procedures to ensure that it achieves the best buy when purchasing equipment and services.
48. The accommodation is cramped, especially in upper Key Stage 2, and this restricts some of the activities, especially art and design and technology. There is no direct access to the outside from any classroom. This restricts the use of the very stimulating grounds that contain conservation areas, such as a small woodland, a meadow and a pond being well established. There is also a very interesting willow dome that is an obvious central point for play during the summer time. The school's caretaker keeps the governors well informed of the maintenance needs of the building, and they are aware of the current poor state of repairs of all windows.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

49. The governing body, the head teacher and staff of the school should: -
- (1) Establish throughout the school a common method of recording what each pupil achieves so that progress of each one is;
    - (i) easy to maintain,
    - (ii) easy to understand and to interpret when monitored
    - (iii) meaningful so that precise information can aid the setting of future targets for each pupil**(paragraphs 23 and 45)**
  - (2) Improve the pupils' presentation of their work by
    - (i) dating all pieces of work
    - (ii) developing neater handwriting and
    - (iii) devising a better method for keeping the work so that teachers and pupils can look back to previous work to gauge the progress made.**(paragraph 8)**
  - (3) Ensure that the school brochure and the annual report to parents contain all the statutory requirements.  
**(paragraph 46)**

The governing body needs to consider these further issues: -

- (4) Attend to the health and safety issues referred to the headteacher and the governing body.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	23	54	15	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	73
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	13

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.2

School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete 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	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Teachers and classes**

**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	24.3

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	87

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a

Total number of education support staff	N/a
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**Financial information**

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	160363
Total expenditure	165224
Expenditure per pupil	2197
Balance brought forward from previous year	19260
Balance carried forward to next year	14399

Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a
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Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	73
Number of questionnaires returned	42

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	31	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	48	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	40	7	0	7
The teaching is good.	74	17	2	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	40	10	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	17	5	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	26	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	43	5	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	36	5	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	31	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	36	5	10	5

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

50. When the children start school in September of the year they become 5 years old, they go into a class with Key Stage 1 pupils. The quality of the teaching is good overall and is beneficial to the children's learning.
51. The school's initial assessment shows that on entry the children attain standards that reflect the full ability range but are generally clustered around the average for their age. By the time they commence Year 1, the majority makes good progress and attains the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage. During the inspection it was evident that many had already reached these goals in literacy and numeracy and were well on course to exceed the expected standards by the end of the year.
52. The teacher plans the children's activities so that the learning objectives build carefully upon their learning prior to school. The learning support assistant works very closely with the teacher, taking the children in small groups. The classroom is well organised to provide good space for the children to explore the different areas of learning. For instance, during the inspection there were construction kits in general use and a very imaginative and stimulating role-play corner based on a bear's cave. On occasions, the children have opportunities to work with the older pupils in years 1 and 2. This is beneficial and helps them to develop their social skills effectively. They work alongside the Key Stage 1 pupils to share the 'Big Book' at the beginning of the literacy sessions. They also take part in the mental calculation session at the beginning and end of the numeracy hour, when they are given simpler number problems to solve. This is good practice and encourages them to feel part of the whole class.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

53. Most of the children enter the school with good social skills and quickly settle to the routines of the class. With the sensitive help of the teacher and the support assistant, they form good relationships with each other and with the older pupils. Many have already developed sustained concentration and extended their interests over prolonged periods. They work co-operatively and understand what is expected of them during lessons and playtimes. They develop patterns of good behaviour through their work and play. They are enthusiastic about their learning and readily talk about what they are doing. For example, they were able to explain clearly what they did when they made honey oatcakes.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

54. The children's language skills are above average for their ages and developing well. They all love listening to stories and attend well when the class story is read to them. They willingly offer answers to questions and make good contributions to the literacy lessons. For example, they spotted the ants that featured in the story 'Rumble in the jungle' and drew the attention of the older pupils to the places they found the ants hiding on each page. Most have a good understanding that print in the 'Big Books' tells a story. The teacher also uses the CD ROM's of animated stories with spoken and visual words to help them build upon this understanding. In their role-play in the "Bear's Cave", they negotiate well about who should wear the bear costume. In the cooking session, they describe the consistency of the ingredients clearly and try to explain what changes happen when these ingredients are mixed and heated. The literacy strategy is being developed effectively by the teacher and the children have a good knowledge of the sounds of the individual letters and many of the blends of the letters at the beginning of words, such as '*sh, tr and pl*'. The books in the classroom have a prominent position, which

encourages the children to share books with their parents on Thursday mornings as they select a particular book to take home.

### **Mathematical development**

55. The standards attained by most of the pupils are above average for their age at this time of the year. Most of the children can already recognise and count numbers up to 10 and many can count beyond this to 100. They know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes, such as square, rectangle, triangle and circle, and know the numbers of corners and sides of each one. They use and understand the mathematical words such as ‘shorter than, lighter than,’ know when a container is full or half full and can measure with beakers the ingredients for their cakes. Nearly all the children are well on course to exceed the expected learning goals for mathematics by the time they reach Year 1 because of the good quality teaching and support they all receive.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world.**

56. The children have a good understanding of the world around them. During the inspection, they were exploring the fact that some materials change when they are heated. In their cooking, they all realise that the ingredients change when mixed together and that they cannot be separated again when heated. They readily talk about the changes that have happened. They also eagerly use construction sets in the classroom and understand that although pieces are put together to make something new, the individual pieces do not change. They are also developing a good sense of place. They explore the “Bear’s Cave” and through the development of simple mapping techniques have created an illustrative route map to the cave.

### **Physical development**

57. The outdoor play facilities for the children have been significantly improved since the last inspection. Now all children in the Foundation Stage have several opportunities each week to use the large wheeled vehicles and equipment in the playground. This has greatly benefited their learning, and helped them to make good progress. The children’s social skills have also been enhanced by the regular use of this equipment. During an indoor lesson, the children responded well to the teacher’s leading demonstration. They used space creatively, imagining and imitating a balloon being blown up. In other lessons it was evident that the children are developing good manipulative skills as they cut and stick wool and paper to create a face. The teacher and the learning support assistant guide and support all the children well in the development of these finer movements.

### **Creative development**

58. The children make good progress in their creative development. They join in happily whilst working with the pupils in Key Stage 1 in the music lessons. They sing the known songs tunefully and with enjoyment. They join with the older pupils in playing percussion instruments to accompany the story of ‘Goldilocks’. They keep in time with the teacher’s instructions and with the other older pupils in their groups. From the art displays, it is evident that the children are developing good skills in their painting and drawing. The pictures are painted boldly but carefully with strong brush strokes and colours. Some children have developed good skills in mixing colours and are painting details of eyes and mouth in the portraits of themselves. They also create interesting collages. For example, the children used a range of materials, such as wool, card and paper, to create a ‘Happy Face’. The teaching also emphasised effectively the sound ‘h’ in the descriptions of the face to reinforce previous work with this letter sound. In the role-play corner they act out the story of ‘Goldilocks’ enthusiastically. They enjoy dressing up as the bear and are eager to perform ‘Going on a bear hunt’ for which they have created a route map showing the various obstacles they will encounter. This is good practice.



## ENGLISH

59. The inspection evidence indicates that the pupils' standards are presently above average at the end of both key stages.
60. In 2000, the national test results for the pupils aged seven show that standards were above average in reading but below average in writing. The proportion of the pupils who achieved the higher levels in reading was well above average, but in writing it was well below average. However, the standards in both reading and writing have been consistently above average in the past. The test results for the pupils aged eleven in 2000 show that the standards in English were above the national average, but below average in comparison with similar schools. Last year's results at the end of Key Stage 1 were also below average in reading and well below average in writing when compared with similar schools.
61. The size of the cohorts in these two age groups was very small and consequently the percentage scores are an unreliable comparison. Also the fact that the school does not provide school meals makes comparisons with similar types of school very unreliable. The school has no means of calculating the true percentage of pupils who should qualify for free school meals.
62. The proportion of the pupils who achieved the higher levels in English at the end of Key Stage 2 was close to the national average. Standards have been above average over time.
63. The inspection evidence shows that the pupils' standards in reading and writing are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. This represents an improvement since the previous report when standards were described as close to the national average in reading and well below average in writing. Good quality teaching, including well-focused support from classroom assistants, and the positive effects of the literacy hour have contributed to raising standards.
64. The standards for eleven-year-olds are currently above average and this represents deterioration since the last report when they were described as well above the national average. Since the last inspection, there have been several changes of staff and this has hampered the pace of learning. The current Year 6 includes two special needs pupils who have statements. In a small cohort, this represents a significant percentage of the pupils and consequently any conclusions drawn from the comparative use of this data should be treated cautiously. The very high quality teaching at the end of the key stage is rapidly improving standards across the curriculum. Standards in reading have been maintained since the previous report. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average, as is the quality of their writing, which is improving rapidly.
65. The quality of the pupils' spoken language is good throughout the school. They listen well and consider their responses carefully. For instance, in a technology lesson, a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6 researched aspects of bread-making by using Internet and CD-ROM facilities as sources of information, and then enthusiastically reported their findings back to the class. In a mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4, the pupils explained very clearly the most appropriate units of measurement to use for a range of tasks. They listened respectfully to the opinions of other members of the class before developing their own arguments with more persuasive discussion, giving reasons for their ideas. Seven-year-old pupils read fluently and demonstrate a good range of vocabulary. The higher achieving pupils use an index and know that it is a list organised in alphabetical order. The older pupils in Key Stage 2 clearly have an enthusiasm for books. They confidently discuss favourite books and why they have preferences for various characters. They refer to text in support of their arguments. The higher achieving pupils read a wide range of authors and are able to make comparisons of their different styles of writing. The teachers foster a love of books. For example, in Years 5 and 6, time is allocated for the pupils to share exciting modern literature with their teacher, for example the work of Michael Morpurgo. Her skilful questioning techniques demand that the pupils consider their ideas carefully before offering an opinion,

which is always treated with respect. This is an example of how good quality literature is also used to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills.

66. Phonic skills are taught systematically. The pupils in Year 1 understand the technical aspects of reading and writing. For instance, they are taught to blend letters and they understand that the word phoneme refers to a sound that is sometimes made up of more than one letter. Groups of seven-year-olds thoroughly enjoyed making and reading lists of words with specific sounds. The development of these skills underpins the pupils' progress in reading. Shared reading books provide opportunities for the pupils to understand the importance of punctuation in text. Many pupils in Year 2 use capital letters, full stops, speech and question marks confidently and accurately in their writing.
67. The pupils make good progress with their literacy skills, including those with special educational needs. Additional teaching time is provided for the pupils with specific language difficulties. For example, some pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked very hard applying their spelling skills in a written exercise. The teacher accurately matched the needs of this small group and encouraged them to remember spelling structures. The results were very encouraging and inspired these pupils to apply themselves to building up increasing awareness of language. Their teacher closely monitors the work. Every two weeks opportunities are given to parents to visit the school when it is in session to monitor the progress their children are making. This has a very good effect upon the pupils' attitudes and reinforces a strong partnership in learning between the school and home. The parents look carefully at exercise books and the pupils explain to their parents the nature of the tasks in which they were involved. A portfolio of written work by the pupils in Years 1 and 2 indicates to parents the standards achieved by the pupils up to seven years of age.
68. The quality of the teaching and learning in English is good and of a very high standard. For example, in one lesson the teacher's enthusiasm, high expectations and very good subject knowledge generated the pupils' enthusiasm during a discussion about different structures of poems to write sentences. The pupils worked very hard in small groups to write poems in the style of 'haiku', 'tanka' and 'cinquain'. Exciting exploration of language was evident in this work as the pupils sought to meet the criteria of different forms of writing and to produce exciting poems on given themes. The pupils with special needs were very well supported by the classroom assistants and produced work of which they were justly proud. Another feature of the lesson was the natural way in which the pupils used information technology to enhance their work. The chair of governors, a regular classroom supporter, assisted the pupils as they edited and refined their vocabulary, changed font size and introduced attractive clip art to enhance their work. Although his expertise was available, the pupils were confident in their use of information technology and needed little support. The pupils' information technology skills are very purposefully linked to their work in English, and the chair of governors provides very good support. The plenary session of the lesson was a celebration of the pupils' achievements. All pupils progressed in their language and information technology skills, and working together they achieved very good results. The activity also made a very good contribution to their social development.
69. A minor weakness is that the presentation of written work in some books is sometimes unsatisfactory. Untidy handwriting, crossings out and poor presentation of work including that completed in their draft books give readers the wrong impression of standards of work. Expectations of the pupils' presentation of work are not always high enough. A further weakness lies in the cramped learning conditions that make difficult the use of library books for research.
70. Overall, the pupils can look forward to transferring to the next phase in their education knowing that they have been very well prepared for further challenges in language work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. The pupils' standards are above the national average at the end of both key stages. This is confirmed by the results of the national assessment tests and also by the inspection evidence.
72. In the national assessment tests for 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of the pupils that reached the expected level 2 in mathematics was above the national average and a high proportion exceeded this standard to reach level 3. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be average.
73. By the age of seven, most pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of numbers up to 20. They can add and subtract mentally up to and beyond 20, and most are beginning to develop an understanding of place value of numbers up to 1000. They can add and subtract tens and units accurately and can sequence numbers to 100 correctly. They can use correct mathematical names for two and three-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties in terms of the number of sides, corners and edges. They also have a good understanding of simple fractions. The majority can add and subtract 10 or 100 from a given two- or three-digit number, for example 35 and 457. All pupils including those with special educational needs are making good progress and now reach higher standards than were observed at the time of the last inspection.
74. This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 where the pace of work and the very good levels of the pupils' concentration ensure that standards at the end of the key stage have remained above average since the last inspection. Although the number of pupils in the cohort for 2000 was extremely small and comparisons made with the national averages are unreliable, 9 out of the 10 pupils achieved level 4 in the national assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
75. Comparisons with similar types of schools at the end of both key stages are totally unreliable. This is firstly because of the small cohorts of children and secondly the figures for school meals are not known because the school does not provide this service.
76. By the time they leave the school at the age of eleven, the pupils make good progress and a high proportion are already exceeding the expected levels for their age. They use their knowledge effectively to calculate mentally the addition and subtraction of large numbers such as  $1673 + 727$ . They use decomposition methods of subtraction effectively and have a secure understanding of the tables up to 10 times. It is also evident from their work that they can use degrees accurately to draw angles and they know the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes such as a rhombus and an isosceles triangle. In handling data, they record with tally sheets and create block and line graphs to represent their results. The mental calculation sessions, introduced as part of the national numeracy strategy, significantly help the pupils with their understanding of number and enable them to explain their methods of solving a problem. This is another significant development since the last inspection.
77. The above average standards observed in the lessons and in the pupils' work throughout the school are a direct result of good teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the overall quality of the teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Consequently, this is having a beneficial effect on the pupils' standards of work and on their attitudes towards mathematics. All teachers now have a secure understanding and knowledge of the mathematics they teach, and they plan their lessons very effectively for the national numeracy strategy. They set different tasks for the wide range of the pupils' abilities in their classes. The mental calculation sessions are planned effectively and the pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to do. The teachers' questioning is good and used well to ensure that all pupils understand what they are taught. The group activities are productive and the teachers' high expectations ensure that there is a brisk pace to the work.
78. The progress made by the pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Their very positive attitudes are a direct result of the high expectations of the teachers and the learning support

assistants. The learning support assistants are used sensitively in all classrooms and in nearly all instances they are aware of the role they play in each pupils' education. They are particularly supportive of the pupils with special educational needs and this aids their progress. Throughout the school, aspects of numeracy are frequently included in the teaching of other subjects. For example, time lines are used in history, rotation and turns are used in art and design and measuring is used in science.

79. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and is fulfilling her role effectively. She monitors the teachers' plans, has watched individual lessons and given a feedback to the teachers to discuss strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and classroom management. This is good practice that has improved the quality of the teaching and raised the standards of the pupils' work. The national numeracy strategy is now firmly established. The resources for mathematics are good and all teachers use information and communication technology very well to support the pupils' learning in numeracy, shape space and measures as well as data handling

## SCIENCE

80. The inspection evidence indicates that standards are above average at the end of each key stage.
81. In the 2000 teacher assessments for seven-year-olds the proportion of the pupils that attained the expected level 2 or above was below the national average. However, those that did succeed in attaining level 2 or above did so very effectively and most reached level 3 giving an above average result for this level. In a small cohort, any conclusions drawn from the comparative use of this data should be treated cautiously. The inspection evidence indicates that standards have improved since the last inspection and are now above average for seven and eleven year old pupils with a significant rise in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. This is because the quality of the teaching is at least good, and sometimes very good with the oldest pupils, the subject is well led and there is effective support for the pupils with special educational needs.
82. No science lessons were observed with the pupils up to seven years of age. The evidence is, therefore, supplemented by a scrutiny of the teachers' planning and the pupils' previously completed work, and by discussions with the staff and the children. Seven year old pupils are taught science through well-planned topic work. The theme of the topic work during the period of inspection was "Changes". The pupils considered how they are changing, for example, in size. This work was developed with Year 2 pupils making discoveries about their senses. They recognise similarities and differences in the colour of eyes, size and shape of ears and noses, and understand that people have different preferences of smell and taste. The pupils also learn about the importance of healthy eating habits and lifestyles. They make visits to Rushton Hall to monitor the changes in the growth of snowdrops. This helps the pupils to learn about the different parts of plants and what they need to survive. The theme of changes is extended further when the pupils mix primary colours to make secondary colours in their artwork. Another group of pupils learned how materials change under certain conditions and that some changes are irreversible. For example, they observed the change in chocolate when heated in a microwave. An interesting part of the science work involved the pupils looking after a rejected lamb called 'Dusty' who was brought to school by a local farmer. The pupils had to ensure that Dusty received enough food and water and was given suitable warmth and shelter. The pupils were able to monitor the progress of the lamb, as it grew strong and healthy under their stewardship before being returned to the farmer.
83. Only one lesson was observed during the period of inspection, so no overall judgement can be made of the quality of the teaching. However, in the class of Year 5 and 6 pupils, the teaching was of a very good standard. The lesson centred on an investigation to discover how long bread will remain fresh. The focus of the learning was precise and the pupils used scientific language in discussions prior to and during their investigative activities. For instance, an interesting discussion, in which the teacher used well

focused questioning, techniques, revolved around the definition of the term “deterioration”. Careful consideration was given to the relationship between the elapsed time and the quantity of mould found on bread as indicators of deterioration. The pupils were aware of different types of bread and were encouraged to use a variety in their investigation. The teacher very skilfully introduced a range of criteria for the pupils to consider so that the test would be effective, for example, where bread was to be stored and the range of conditions. In this way, the pupils became aware of the importance of fair testing. They worked conscientiously, making certain that their hands were clean when wrapping the bread for storage. They excluded as much air as possible from the parcels, accurately labelled them and selected suitable places for storage. A strength of the teaching was the teacher’s ability to challenge the pupils and keep all members of the class very interested in their work. The teacher’s high expectations of the pupils were rewarded by their commitment to their tasks and the very good gains made in their learning.

84. The subject co-ordinator has very good knowledge of her subject. She monitors the teachers’ planning effectively and consequently the school’s curriculum planning is secure. She has worked alongside the headteacher to develop good strategies for monitoring the teaching of science and this has had a beneficial impact upon the lessons and has raised the pupils’ standards throughout the school. The resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum.

#### **ART AND DESIGN, and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

85. At the end of both key stages, the quality of the pupils’ work in both subjects is above the expected levels for their ages.
86. Due to timetabling it was not possible to see any lessons in art and design and only one lesson in Key Stage 2 for design and technology. Evidence is therefore drawn from discussions with the class teachers and the co-ordinator, scrutiny of the pupils’ previously completed work and an examination of the teachers’ planning. From this it is clear that the pupils make good progress in both subjects by the end of the key stages and the quality of their work is above the expected levels for their ages. This is better than at the time of the last inspection.
87. The pupils in Key Stage 1 make interesting models with construction kits. They were proud of their efforts and willingly showed their designs and how they had made the models to move using joints and hinges. The pupils were also observed following simple recipes successfully. They measured ingredients accurately and made evaluations of the consistency of their mixtures of oats, honey and butter for making oatcakes. This work appropriately supported their learning in science about materials changing when heated. They cut out shapes accurately and using a spray can create delicate snowflake patterns showing symmetrical designs.
88. There were also good examples of the pupils’ clay work and eye-catching pieces of weaving. This design and technology work followed the development of artwork inspired by the concentric circle painting of Kandinsky. They mixed colours effectively and then transferred successfully their knowledge and skills to weaving on sticks. The pupils in this key stage (KS1) paint boldly and the older ones are beginning to take note of details. Other art and design work on display in the classroom shows that the pupils use a range of media and materials that help to develop their skills and understanding. They have created drawings with good quality use of coloured pencils, wax crayons and felt tip pens to illustrate their stories about ‘Mike Inkpen’.
89. In the one design and technology lesson that was observed in upper Key Stage 2, the quality of the teaching was good. The teacher planned the lesson very well. The pace of the pupils’ work was brisk, and by the end of the lesson the teacher’s clear learning objectives were met. Through research on the Internet and by making different types of bread, the pupils discovered how bread is produced and

learned of its importance in a balance diet. The pupils respond well to this good teaching and to the teacher's high expectations. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Other work seen in this key stage, such as jointed puppets, shows that the pupils are developing good understanding and knowledge of how mechanisms such as levers and joints can be used to make things move.

90. It is clear from the art and design work on display around the school, particularly in the two Key Stage 2 classrooms, that the quality of the teaching contributes positively to the pupils' achievements. The Year 5 and 6 pupils have recently been working on textile designs and have developed above average standards in the use of fabrics. They have evaluated their work and realised that the quality of their cutting and stitching could be better. Nevertheless, their use of embroidery techniques in cross-stitching samplers and small collages is good. The teachers create stimulating displays around the school and value the pupils' work. The resources for both art and design and design and technology are adequate. However, the Year 5/6 classroom is too cramped for the pupils and this can restrict large-scale work. Good use is made of the pupils' information and communication technology skills, and graphics programs contribute successfully to the curriculum in these two subjects. They sequence patterns, draw shapes and use clipart effectively. They can amend their designs to ensure that the printed article is complete and successful in their own evaluations.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

91. Only one lesson in each subject was observed during the inspection. However, this evidence was supplemented by talking to the pupils and scrutinising the teachers' planning, the pupils' previous work and current displays.. In geography, standards are above average for seven-year-olds and average for pupils aged eleven. In history standards are above the expected level for both age groups. The pupils study a range of themes that are well supported by educational visits and strong local links with the village, including the church. The subjects are planned using a two-year cycle of topics that provides appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum.
92. In history, the scrutiny of the completed' work indicates that in Year 2 the pupils have been taught about the differences between homes and schools in Victorian and those of today. History is also linked to other subjects within the topic work. For example, following the textile work in design and technology they explored the work of William Morris and researched his designs for wallpaper and fabric very well. A range of instruments in music was investigated and these were used effectively to provide very good opportunities to extend learning about the different designs of musical instruments in history. The work of archaeologists was introduced in one Key Stage 2 class by showing how the Indus Valley civilisation was discovered. The teacher told the story very well, capturing the imagination of the pupils who listened very attentively. The pupils responded well to the teacher's questions and through discussion improved their understanding of how some parts of the world, through a variety of reasons, become 'lost'. The teacher made very good comparisons with an archaeological dig currently taking place in nearby Northampton. The pupils were fascinated to learn how the discoveries of archaeologists significantly contribute to our understanding of the world. The teacher planned interesting group activities to promote the pupils' awareness of the excitement of the work of archaeologists. The pupils were challenged to piece together a jigsaw puzzle, and to invent, with help from the classroom assistant, the Indus inch and yard. Another group discovered the importance of the standard measures and sizes of building materials by comparing various bricks. All of these initiatives provoked thought from the pupils who were anxious to express and share their ideas. They learned not only from the activities, but also from the group discussions that the experiences initiated.
93. In geography, seven-year-old pupils talk about their route to school and begin to recognise important aspects of their village. Opportunities to develop ideas in geography are also sought in topic work. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 study life in an Indian village. The lesson was well structured and included planned support for the pupils with special educational needs. The quality of teaching was good with the

teacher challenging the pupils. The purpose of the lesson was to compare sounds in India with those of Rushton and to give the pupils opportunities to work independently. However, the teacher discovered that essential resources, tape-recorded sounds of the Indian village, had not been adequately prepared and the quality of the recording was very poor. This made the identification of sounds very difficult and adversely affected the quality of learning.

94. The pupils enjoy their work in history and geography and follow up classroom activities with further investigation at home. Many pupils have computers to research areas that interest them.
95. The co-ordinator for history and geography and the curriculum is well organised. The resources for both subjects are good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

96. The quality of the pupils' work has improved since the last inspection and is now above the expected standards at the end of both key stages.
97. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers are very secure in the use of computers and consequently the pupils work with eagerness and enthusiasm. The teachers draw upon the computers very effectively as a stimulating resource for the subjects being taught. This was seen to be working well in an art and design topic where the pupils in Year 4 prepared a repeated pattern using 'Colour magic' to draw borders and used a stamped clipart image to successfully design a sheet of wrapping paper. The teachers also use the computers well in literacy and numeracy. For instance, animated books are used in the Key Stage 1 class. These stories form part of the reading scheme used by the school and the pupils enjoy the stories being told. In almost all lessons observed during the inspection, the pupils worked on computer-based tasks that linked extremely well to the subject being taught.
98. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to load and select appropriate programs for their own use. One group demonstrated good skills in controlling a programmable vehicle. They all understood the routines and procedures that were necessary to steer the vehicle around a floor map. The older pupils in this age range, Year 2 pupils, work competently with text and can alter size, colour and fonts. They are able to select pictures from clipart collections and can create graphics using the various tools available. They can load and close programs effectively.
99. The pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 use word processing programs well. They can explore and experiment with fonts and use special effects to change the layout of text to create stunning headlines for posters and labels. They can enter simple data into spreadsheets and can convert these measurements into block and line graphs to show the results of surveys.
100. The co-ordinator is very secure in her knowledge of the subject and has good support from one of the learning support assistants, who spends considerable time working on the technical maintenance of the computers. The co-ordinator has given all staff good support especially in the follow-up to their most recent training in the uses of information and communication technology to aid the teaching of other subjects. She monitors the teachers' plans and occasionally has opportunities to teach information and communications technology in other classes which gives a good overview of the pupils' progress throughout the school.
101. The resources are good and the programs in use give the pupils significant support in their learning of other subjects, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

## **MUSIC**

102. Throughout the school, the pupils attain the standards in music that are broadly expected for their ages. This is similar to the quality of work observed at the last inspection. They all enjoy their music making. Those who take advantage of the after school music club and individual tuition on violin and brass instruments make good progress and are enthusiastic in their playing.
103. The quality of the teaching is very good. The teacher has very secure knowledge and is a skilful musician. She teaches all classes in the school and this has a beneficial effect upon the quality of the pupils' learning. The youngest pupils respond well to this very good teaching; they sing tunefully and play percussion instruments with a good sense of rhythm. They also have a satisfactory knowledge that music can accompany a story to give atmosphere to the tale. For instance, they follow the teacher's instructions well and create a good standard of accompaniment for the story of 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. The teacher manages the classes well and encourages the pupils to select instruments that represent either the sound or the movement they need to portray.
104. The pupils in years 5 and 6 do not sing quite so tunefully and on occasions can be a little raucous due to the large number of boys in the class. Nevertheless, in the lesson observed they sang a four part round well, taking note of each other's part and how it fitted against their own. They understand how part singing can blend, but they need to sing more quietly so that they can hear each part clearly and therefore adjust their own singing to create more harmony. The teacher selects appropriate songs and uses the cassette recorder well to help the pupils to evaluate their performances. They make sensitive and constructive comments about their own performances and give praise and encouragement when it is appropriate. The teacher maintains a good pace to the lessons; her high expectations are fully understood by all pupils and this raises the quality of their work.
105. The resources are good and are used carefully and with respect. The parents praise the standards that are evident in the school concerts at the end of the Christmas and summer terms.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

106. The standards in dance for seven-year-olds and in games for eleven-year-olds are average. The pupils' standards at the end of both key stages are similar to those found at the last inspection. In swimming, the pupils benefit from the facilities at a nearby school in the village to enable them to achieve good standards by the time they transfer to secondary school. The teaching of gymnastics was not observed and it is not possible to comment on achievement in that aspect of the physical education curriculum.
107. The school makes the best use of its available resources for physical education. There is no school hall and indoor activities take place in the adjacent village hall, which is a very small building. It is barely adequate for activities with the pupils up to seven years of age, but for eleven-year-old pupils the accommodation is too small to provide the necessary challenge to extend their physical skills and techniques. The school benefits from a good playing field that provides ample opportunities for games' activities when the weather is favourable. At other times, the hard play area is used for games, but the quality and range of activities that can be developed here are restricted by lack of space.
108. Seven-year-old pupils listened carefully to their teacher's instructions before they enthusiastically beginning warming up activities. They took great care not to interfere with the space of other pupils in the small village hall, and showed awareness of health and safety issues. The teacher made very good use of the space available and provided the pupils with interesting and challenging activities. The teacher placed emphasis on the quality and interpretation of movement in response to music. While much of the work was teacher-led, the pupils were given opportunities for self-expression when interpreting, for example, inflating and deflating balloons. Eleven-year-olds joined in enthusiastically in a series of games



designed to improve their ball passing and marking skills. These activities took place on the outside hard play area and it was essential that the pace of activities ensured the pupils were warm enough to withstand low temperatures. The teacher was very energetic in enthusing all the pupils to move effectively and supported the pupils whose rate of work was slow. The lesson made a good contribution to the development of the pupils' ball skills.

109. A weekly club provides additional opportunities for the pupils to develop further their interests in sport. The school makes the maximum use of limited resources, particularly during periods of less favourable weather conditions. The county cricket club offer cricket training during the summer and older pupils from the local secondary school also visit to provide help with sporting activities. The school is now taking part in netball matches with other local schools.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

110. The standards reached by the pupils at the end of both key stages satisfy the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for the pupils aged seven and eleven and are similar to those found at the previous inspection. The pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support, participate in all activities and make good progress. Religious education is linked well with the pupils' personal and social education.
111. Only one lesson was observed in the Year 3 and 4 class. This lesson was of good quality. No judgements about the quality of teaching for other year groups can be made. However the quality of the teachers' planning is good across the school and all elements of the subject are covered appropriately. This evidence was supplemented by talking to the pupils and scrutinising their previous work and current displays.
112. Seven-year-old pupils learn about special places. They visit the local church and are aware that not everyone worships in a church. They know that different religions have special places such as a mosque. They also learn about Christian festivals and enthusiastically talk about the importance of Christmas. They are aware of the major celebrations and stories from other world faiths, for example Hannukah, Holi and Divali and understand the importance of light. The pupils know that the Bible is a special book to Christians.
113. The quality of teaching in Year 3 and 4 was good and as a result the pupils made good progress in understanding how religious groups promote their faith. The pupils were encouraged to discuss the feelings of nervousness experienced when joining new groups of pupils who they do not know well. The teacher carefully constructed a range of tasks that enabled the pupils to discuss their feelings openly and to decide how best to make rules and identify a logo for their groups. They showed interest and enthusiasm, co-operated well, and shared ideas in order to reach a common agreement. The pupils learned to value and respect each other and to understand that a range of ideas and beliefs can lead to the same goal. The teacher gave each group appropriate support to encourage independence and collective decision making, skilfully intervening to maintain the pace of discussion.
114. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and her action plan accurately identifies the need to extend the use of information and communication technology and to improve the range of resources to support the teaching of world faiths. At present many of the resources used in the lessons are borrowed, and the school aims to develop its own collection.