

INSPECTION REPORT

HELMDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Helmdon, Brackley

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121827

Headteacher: Mrs S Blackburn

Reporting inspector: Mrs H Bonser
22870

Dates of inspection: June 4th – 7th 2001

Inspection number: 193856

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Station Road
Helmdon
Nr Brackley
Northamptonshire

Postcode: NN13 5QT

Telephone number: 01295 768126

Fax number: 01295 768126

Appropriate authority: The Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs E Phillips

Date of previous inspection: April 28th - May 1st 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22870	Hilary Bonser	Registered inspector	English; religious education; art and design; geography; music; Foundation stage.	The school's results and achievements; Teaching and learning; Leadership and management.
9561	Husain Akhtar	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development; Care and welfare of pupils; Partnership with parents.
12367	Anthony Green	Team inspector	Mathematics; science; information and communication technology; design and technology; history; physical education. equal opportunities; special educational needs; English as an additional language	Curriculum learning opportunities; personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA Ltd
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Helmdon Primary School is a community school that draws the majority of its pupils from the rural village in which it is situated and from neighbouring hamlets. Some pupils travel from the nearby town of Brackley. The school is smaller than average in size, with 124 boys and girls from 4 to 11 years of age. Pupils' attainments on entry to the school are above average overall, but with the full range of attainment represented. About 29 per cent of pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is above the national average. Four per cent have statements of special educational need, which is well above average. The majority of pupils come from comparatively advantaged backgrounds and the percentage of those eligible for free school meals is below average. Very few pupils speak English as their second language or come from ethnic minorities. A new headteacher took up her post in September, following a year with two acting headteachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Helmdon Primary School is an effective school with many strengths. Pupils reach high standards and achieve well by the time they leave the school, especially in English, science and mathematics, because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils behave well and they are interested in their work. The headteacher, governors and staff work together well to improve standards for all pupils and are fully committed to continuing this. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and pupils of all abilities achieve well by the time they leave the school because they are taught well.
- The headteacher, governors and all of the staff work together very effectively to bring about improvements in teaching and the standards of work.
- The school cares well for its pupils; it monitors their progress well and provides good support and guidance for them; this contributes well to their positive attitudes towards school and the very good relationships they have with the adults in the school.
- The school promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development well, successfully encouraging them to behave well, take responsibility and to get on very well together.
- The school provides a good range of learning opportunities that are relevant to all pupils and help to interest and motivate them well.

What could be improved

- Standards of work and the progress made by children in the foundation stage, which are not as good this year as they are in the rest of the school.
- The unfavourable views that parents have of some aspects of the school, which were expressed through the inspection questionnaire.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. It has responded well to the issues then noted. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good overall. The improvements in the monitoring of teaching and learning have contributed well to this. There are now schemes of work in place for all subjects, which help to ensure that pupils build effectively on previous learning. Substantial improvements have been made to the accommodation, and are ongoing, so that deficiencies no longer have an adverse effect on pupils' learning. The school development plan, which is now supported well by cost effective financial planning, is used well to bring about focused improvements. In addition, the national literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented well and very consistently. The impact of these changes can already be seen in the good achievements of pupils of all abilities and in the improvements in the already good standards noted in the last inspection. However, there is no sense of complacency; rather a strong, shared commitment in the school to continue to raise standards and the quality of teaching and learning. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000*	2000*
English	A*	A*	–	–
mathematics	A*	A	–	–
science	A*	A*	–	–

Key

Very high, in the top 5% nationally A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Note: The requirement to report the school's results in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools in this table is lifted for the Year 2000, as there were less than eleven pupils in the year group. Given the relatively small number of pupils in each year group, comparisons of the school's performance from year to year with other schools can give an unreliable picture of improvements in standards and should be treated with care.

Results in the national tests for eleven year olds in 2000 were above average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. Although they were not as high as the previous year, when comparing individual results with those obtained at the end of Year 2, it is clear that pupils achieved at least as well as expected and several achieved well. Results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average in reading and mathematics and very high in writing when compared to all schools nationally. They were above those of similar schools in reading and well above in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science indicate that standards were very high compared to all schools. Variations between the performance of boys and girls overall are not significantly different from the national picture by the age of eleven. The school's performance has continually exceeded the national average over the last three years, although the gap has narrowed as national trends have risen more rapidly.

Standards on entry to the school are above average overall, with the full range of attainment represented. Inspection evidence shows that by the age of 11, standards in English, mathematics and science are now well above the expected levels. Standards in design and technology are above those expected. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve well and some achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. This is the result of good and often very good or outstanding teaching, with more pupils reaching the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science this year. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection, when standards were described as above average and pupils' progress as satisfactory. The school is likely to meet the challenging targets it has set.

Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with expected levels in mathematics, above them in English and well above them in science. They are not as high overall as last year because almost half of the pupils in this year group are on the register of special educational needs. Nevertheless, these pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment because they are also well taught. This year, by end of the foundation stage, the majority of children are unlikely to meet all of the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy and for personal and social development. This is because they made unsatisfactory progress in these areas over their first two terms in school and have not achieved as well as might be expected. Following staff changes, their rate of learning is clearly improving this term as a result of teaching that is satisfactory and at times good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils enjoy coming to school, they are interested in their work and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall both in lessons and at play. No exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils use their initiative and act responsibly. They get on very well together and with all the adults in the school.
Attendance	Good; above the national average.

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils were very good in over a third of the lessons seen and good in over three-quarters of them. In the foundation stage, the immature attitudes and inappropriate behaviour of many children are improving this term as a result of clear expectations of work and behaviour.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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 overall quality of teaching is good. It was good or better in 76 per cent of the lessons seen. Of these, 19 per cent were very good and eight per cent excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is a good improvement from the time of the last report, when 10 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The amount of good and very good teaching has also increased. As a result, pupils now learn well in many lessons. In Key Stage 2, where there is a particularly high proportion of good or better teaching, they often learn very well. This, in turn, has led to improvements in the already good standards noted in the last report and in the achievements of pupils of all abilities. Teaching is now good in English, mathematics and science, where it was satisfactory before. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Teaching was also good overall in religious education and music. In other subjects, not enough teaching was seen to make an overall judgement.

The school now meets the needs of girls and boys of all abilities well including the more able and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Teachers have high expectations of the amount and quality of pupils' work. In well taught lessons across the school, pupils of all abilities concentrate well, work hard and make good progress because teachers give them interesting and demanding work. What often made the difference between these lessons and those that were satisfactory, was how well teachers kept pupils focused on exactly what they should be learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; a wide range of relevant learning opportunities for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; pupils have clear achievable targets, are taught well and receive effective support from skilled classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure their needs are met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social	Good overall; satisfactory for cultural development, good for spiritual and moral development and very good for social development.

and cultural development	
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; staff know pupils well and use this sensitively to provide caring support and guidance.

The curriculum is enriched especially through the very good contributions of members of the local community and a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The provision for social development has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall. Although it has many strengths, such as the strong support given by parents in improving the buildings and environment of the school, a significant number of parents expressed dissatisfaction in the inspection questionnaire with several aspects of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the new headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; they take an increasingly active and effective part in the management of the school
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; strengths and weaknesses are analysed increasingly well and result in effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Good; available money is used well to support the school's priorities.

Principles of best value are applied well to all spending decisions. Staffing levels are satisfactory and there are sufficient learning resources to support the curriculum. The accommodation now meets the needs of the curriculum satisfactorily and further improvements are in hand for this summer.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • Their children are well taught. They are expected to work hard and to do their best • Most children are well behaved and the school helps them to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way that the school works with parents and responds to their views and concerns • The way the school is led and managed. • The range of activities outside lessons. • The information about their child's progress. • The amount of homework set.

The inspection team supports the positive views of parents. With regard to their concerns, they found that there is a very good range of activities outside lessons for the size of the school. The school is led and managed well overall. The information parents receive about their child's progress is satisfactory. An appropriate amount of homework is set, which is used well to support work in class. The team does, however, support the views expressed about the need for the school to work and communicate more effectively with parents over matters of general concern.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The small number of pupils in each year group means that fluctuations can occur from year to year in the school's performance in the national tests. This can give an unreliable picture of improvements from year to year in standards. Consequently, comparisons made of pupils' attainment with all schools nationally and with similar schools should be treated with care.
2. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, based on average points, were well above average in reading and mathematics and very high in writing when compared to all schools nationally. They were above those of similar schools in reading and well above in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science indicate that standards were very high compared to all schools. At the end of Key Stage 2, in comparison to all schools, results were above average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. They were in line with those of similar schools in English and mathematics and well below them in science. These results were not as high as the previous year. One reason for this was that not as many pupils reached the higher level 5, especially in mathematics and science. However, in comparing their individual results with those they obtained at the end of Key Stage 1, it is clear that all achieved at least as well as expected and several achieved well. Variations between the performance of boys and girls overall are not significantly different from the national picture by the age of eleven. The school's performance has continually exceeded the national average over the last three years, although the gap has narrowed as national trends have risen more rapidly. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science has remained above 90 per cent. This shows how well the school meets the needs of the above average number of pupils with special educational needs.
3. Children's attainments on entry to the school, from analyses of the baseline assessments and discussions with teachers, are above average overall, with the full range of attainment represented. Evidence from these assessments, their work over the year and lesson observations, show that, this year, in some areas of their learning, children have not achieved as well as might be expected. They are likely to meet the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world and for mathematical, creative and physical development. Most, however, are unlikely to meet all of the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy and for personal and social development. This is because the majority of children made unsatisfactory progress in their learning in these areas over their first two terms in school. Their rate of learning is clearly improving this term as a result of teaching that is satisfactory and at times good. The work of the current Year 1 pupils, at the beginning this school year, indicates, by contrast, that almost all of them met and many exceeded the expectations for their age at the end of the foundation stage a year ago. They achieved at least as well as they should in relation to their attainment on entry.
4. Past work and lesson observations show that standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with expected levels in mathematics, above them in English and well above them in science. They are not as high overall as last year because almost half of the pupils in this year group are on the register of special educational needs. Nevertheless, the detailed records kept of individual progress show that pupils of all abilities are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. This is because they are well taught. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are now well above the expected levels. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve well and some achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. This is again the result of good and often very good or outstanding teaching. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection, when standards were described as above average and pupils' progress as satisfactory in both key stages.
5. These standards and achievement have been brought about by the good leadership and management of the school and by a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now good overall in English, mathematics and science. Other factors include the increasing impact of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and the consistency with which these are

implemented, as well as the good use the school makes of initiatives, such as booster classes and the additional literacy strategy for pupils in need of additional support. Another reason is that above average number of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive effective support and teaching, helping them to make good progress. This year, there has been a successful focus on increasing the number of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in mathematics and science, reflecting a good level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. The good behaviour, concentration and positive attitudes that boys and girls of all abilities have towards their work also contributes to their achievements. As a result, the school is likely to meet the challenging targets set, as part of their wholehearted commitment to continuing to raise standards.

6. In English, standards overall are above the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above them by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils achieve well overall as they move through the school. One reason for this is that pupils are taught a good range of reading strategies and teachers successfully promote a real enjoyment and enthusiasm for books. By the age of 11, pupils of all abilities listen attentively, respond thoughtfully to each other's views, building on each other's ideas. They speak confidently and fluently in large and small groups, giving reasons for their opinions. Not as many pupils yet reach the higher levels in writing as they do in reading. By the time they leave the school, boys and girls write in a good variety of forms and usually spell accurately. Their work is neatly presented. However, some still do not use more complex sentences confidently or fully extend their ideas. They do not always use the good range of vocabulary they do in oral work. They do not yet have enough opportunities to apply the knowledge they gain in well-taught lessons in more sustained, independent writing or to practise their redrafting skills. Teachers make good use of opportunities across the curriculum to extend the range of pupils' reading and writing.
7. Standards in mathematics meet the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1, as there is an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Standards are well above those expected in all aspects of the subject when pupils leave the school. Pupils achieve well overall in relation to their previous attainment, and often very well in Key Stage 2. Numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school, partly as a result of the successful implementation of the national numeracy strategy and also because the quality of teaching is now good. Pupils use a good range of mental strategies. Teachers make good use of opportunities in other subjects to extend pupils' mathematical skills.
8. Standards in science are well above the expected levels at the end of both key stages and pupils achieve well. Pupils develop very good investigative skills and very good scientific knowledge and understanding in relevant practical contexts. Improvements in the quality of teaching and alterations in the way pupils are grouped for teaching have both contributed to a rise in standards this year.
9. Standards in information and communication technology meet the expected levels at the end of both key stages and pupils achieve satisfactorily. New developments this year are having a positive impact on improving standards. More opportunities are being provided for pupils to use information technology across the curriculum. The new computer suite means that whole class lessons can now be taught, which ensure pupils have the skills needed to use computers and appropriate programs.
10. In religious education, most pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages and achieve satisfactorily. They develop a good knowledge of Christianity, but their understanding of some of the other religions they study is superficial. They show positive attitudes to the subject and a marked respect for the beliefs and values of others.
11. By the end of both key stages, the majority of pupils broadly meet the expected levels for their age and make sound progress overall, in art and design, geography, history, music and physical education. Standards in design and technology meet the expected levels at the end Key Stage 1, but exceed them at the end of Key Stage 2. One reason for this is the good opportunities pupils have to evaluate commercial products thoroughly before designing and making their own.
12. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good gains in their learning,

relative to their prior attainment. They make good progress towards their individual targets because the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers work closely together to provide them with well-matched work and the skilled learning support assistants give them good support. Bi-lingual pupils, for whom English is an additional language, also achieve well and make good progress in relation to their understanding and acquisition of English. Higher attaining pupils also achieve well as teachers give them appropriately challenging work. No significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls or of groups of pupils from different backgrounds were noted during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes are good. They enjoy coming to school and have a real interest in their work and their friends. They work with an air of purpose and become absorbed in their activities, as in a Year 2 science lesson where pupils were designing an experiment to show the best place for plants to grow. Another example is their joy of singing, either as a class or in assemblies, listening and learning quickly. Most pupils come to school keen to work and learn, and approach all their tasks conscientiously. They participate well in lessons and in additional activities, particularly in drama and sports. Pupils who have special educational needs are keen to learn and respond well to the support they receive. Pupils attend the school regularly and promptly and therefore benefit from the good learning opportunities.
14. The attitudes of children in the foundation stage are improving, as now there are firm expectations of good work and behaviour. They are beginning to respond to the clear routines now being established. Although they are starting to take turns and share equipment fairly, they do not yet achieve standards expected for their age in their personal and social development, including behaviour. Their response is unsatisfactory in lessons; many children show immaturity, behave inappropriately and have difficulty in concentrating.
15. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have good attitudes to class, group and individual activities. Their behaviour is good and often very good. They respond enthusiastically to appropriate questions. They are well integrated and work very well with other pupils.
16. Pupils' behaviour was described as good at the time of the last inspection and remains good overall. With the exception of some children in the foundation stage, most pupils behave very well in class and in the playgrounds. They respond quickly to staff and teachers, and are well mannered to visitors. Pupils treat school property with care. They are careful, for example, when handling computer equipment or musical instruments. Inspectors saw no incidents of any bullying or oppressive behaviour. Parents are generally satisfied with the standards of behaviour. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
17. Overall, pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. They show initiative, work independently well and are confident in choosing their activities. When introduced to a new task, pupils choose and share materials and equipment, and settle to group work quickly. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils worked productively and co-operatively in proposing amendments to the new school prospectus. They take their responsibilities seriously, including tidying their classrooms, organising the hall for assemblies and helping younger pupils. Pupils who take part in extra-curricular activities organise themselves well.
18. Good quality discussions are achieved as a result of very good relationships between pupils and teachers. Even the younger pupils are encouraged to express their views and to ask questions and their contributions are clearly valued. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 and 2 personal, social and health education lesson on 'safety'. All groups of pupils mix very well. They work and play together happily. Pupils listen with interest and respect others' views and feelings very well. In a Year 5 religious education lesson, pupils considered 'do to others as you would have them do to you' sensibly and sensitively.
19. Attendance levels are good. Unauthorised absence, which was well above the national average at the time of the last inspection, is now well below. Whilst illness accounts for most of the authorised absences, some absences are because parents take their children on holidays during

term time. Pupils arrive on time in the morning and the school day starts promptly.

20. The overall situation has improved since the last inspection. Well established discipline, very good relationships and good teaching have a positive impact on pupils' attitude to school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. The school has successfully addressed the weaknesses in teaching noted in the key issues at the time of the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching is now good overall and pupils learn well in many lessons. This, in turn, has led to improvements in the already good standards noted in the last report and achievements of pupils of all abilities as they move through the school. The quality of teaching was good or better in 76 per cent of the lessons seen. It was very good in 19 per cent of these and excellent in 8 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is a good improvement from the time of the last report, when about 50 per cent of teaching was judged as good or better, but with 10 per cent that was unsatisfactory. Teachers now provide challenging work, manage pupils' behaviour in a consistent and very effective way and usually keep up a brisk pace in lessons. These were areas for improvement in the last report. The quality of planning, with schemes of work now in place for all subjects, has continued to improve and the consistency of approach with which teachers implement this provides better continuity of learning for pupils. A good, ongoing programme of monitoring and support, together with a well planned programme of in-service training, has contributed well to the improvement.
22. Teaching is now good across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, compared to satisfactory teaching at the time of the last report. This makes a significant contribution to the good achievements of pupils of all abilities in these subjects. Teaching was also good overall in the lessons seen in religious education and music. It was good in information and communication technology, physical education and geography, where teaching was seen mainly in Key Stage 2. In design and technology, art and design and history not enough teaching was seen to make a judgement. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages, and this consistency is reflected in the good achievements of pupils as they move through the school. In Key Stage 2, there is a particularly high percentage of teaching - 91 per cent - that is good or better. In the foundation stage, where a temporary teacher is in place for this term, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good. This is helping children to make better progress now, than is evident from their past work in their first two terms in school.
23. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school helping pupils to achieve well and to make good progress in many lessons. One reason for this is that the relatively new team of teachers has worked hard to implement the national literacy and numeracy strategies consistently, effectively helping pupils to build on previous learning. Other reasons include the good opportunities provided for pupils in need of extra support, through the good use of initiatives such as booster classes in both English and mathematics and the additional literacy strategy. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given effective support. The expertise of teachers has been strengthened through recent and continuing training. This helps them, for example, to use questioning and intervention well to extend pupils' skills and understanding. In a very well taught English lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used her expertise very well in skilled questioning to help pupils increase their understanding of the different ways the 'ee' sound can be represented and to learn good strategies for applying this in their spelling. In a well taught mathematics lesson for Year 6 pupils, the teacher used her subject knowledge well, in a lesson introducing 'pi', to structure practical activities in a way took the pupils' learning forward in small, systematic steps. A particular strength is the way that teachers use opportunities across the curriculum to extend pupils' vocabulary, as well as the range of their reading and writing. They also make good use of planned opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects.
24. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is well matched to their specific needs. They are challenged appropriately to help them meet their targets. Consequently, they make good progress. Individual education plans are kept up to date and targets are reviewed regularly. Teachers share with the learning support assistants the pupils' individual targets and the objectives and tasks for a lesson. There are good formal and informal liaison procedures between the class teachers, special educational needs co-ordinator and

learning support assistants, which ensure that they provide good support for pupils. On many occasions, their support is very good. They make a positive impact to pupils' learning. They give good feedback to teachers about pupils' progress in the form of comprehensive formal and informal notes, which they discuss with the class teachers and which help to inform future planning. Pupils are well managed. At times, pupils are withdrawn from classes for individual and group work with the special needs co-ordinator. This teaching was not observed during the inspection week, so it is not possible to judge its quality.

25. The quality of teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. Work is also well matched to their needs. They are given good support in class and so are motivated and want to learn. They make good progress. The local education authority provides support staff to work with the pupils on a regular basis. They work closely with the class teachers. However, none were in school during the inspection week and so it is not possible to make a judgement about the teaching and support that they give.
26. In many lessons, there are strong features that contribute to the very positive attitudes pupils have to their learning. Teachers manage their pupils in a very consistent and positive way. This is based on the very good relationships between all staff and pupils throughout the school. Teachers help pupils to meet their high expectations of behaviour by creating a calm, secure and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. They have a thorough knowledge of individual pupils that they use sensitively to support them and promote their self-esteem. They listen to and value pupils' ideas, helping them to develop their confidence in expressing them. Many very good examples of this were seen in lessons across the school. It means that all pupils are keen to share their ideas, irrespective of their ability, and learn readily from their mistakes. Teachers work together very well as a team and share good practice well. They brief and deploy learning support assistants well, so that their skilled support has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Many examples were seen of teachers using good subject knowledge well in effective questioning to both consolidate and extend pupils' learning, ensuring, for example, that boys and girls were equally involved. They are careful to choose resources and contexts for learning that are relevant to the pupils and arouse their interest. In many lessons, they use a good range of strategies to keep up a brisk pace and sense of urgency, by using time targets effectively. As a result, pupils listen well and are keen to contribute to class discussions. They settle very quickly and sensibly to group activities, showing how very well they can concentrate and work independently. Good examples were seen in several lessons of teachers setting relevant homework that supported ongoing classwork well.
27. The impact of such features on pupils' rate of learning was exemplified in some outstanding teaching. For example, in an English lesson for Year 6 pupils, based on the poem 'October Dawn', the teacher immediately grabbed the full interest of pupils by recalling how she had used words to evoke opposite emotions in them, when cracking two eggs onto a plate. She linked this very effectively to the different types of imagery used by poets. She used her own considerable subject expertise in excellent explanations and questioning that continually challenged and extended pupils' understanding of the form and imagery of the text, while keeping their rapt attention. She used their enthusiasm and knowledge of Twelfth Night very effectively to help them to contrast the calming rhythmic effect of the blank verse with the jarring impact of the line arrangement in 'October Dawn', rapidly moving their learning on. She used pupils' ideas very well in modelling the writing of a poem in a similar style. She kept up a very brisk pace but continually pushed pupils to improve on their own and each other's suggestions with comments such as, 'Give me more - -Great - - Oh, too long - - can we have a simile here?' The effect of this in stimulating pupils' ideas was seen in the very high quality of the first drafts of the poems boys and girls of all abilities then wrote, such as 'Monstercoaster' and 'Operation Dread'. In a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, a very brisk, quick-fire mental arithmetic session kept pupils on their toes, especially as the teacher used her good knowledge of the pupils to adjust the level of questioning very well for individuals, ensuring all abilities were included. No time was lost as the teacher moved pupils on from one activity to the next. She made very good use of pupils' own strategies to extend their thinking and used their errors in a positive way as further teaching points. Pupils were very well motivated and interested by the teacher's clear and lively explanations.
28. In some less effective, although still satisfactory lessons, although teachers had clear objectives

in their planning, they did not share these effectively with pupils. By contrast, in some very well taught lessons, the teacher not only discussed the objectives with pupils so they knew exactly what they should be learning, but kept pupils tightly focused by returning to them during the lesson. At the end, they encouraged pupils to evaluate their work against them, so that they knew how well they were doing. Although teachers agree with pupils relevant targets for them to work on, they do not yet use these to full effect in lessons to help pupils focus on the areas for improvement. Plenary sessions are sometimes used well to help pupils not only review, but to extend what they have learnt and also to set the context for what they will learn next. A good example of this was seen in a religious education lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5. In some lessons, plenaries are too brief and such opportunities are lost.

29. A particular improvement since the time of the last inspection is good use that teachers make of the detailed ongoing assessments of pupils' work and responses. Several good examples were seen during the inspection week of teachers adjusting lesson plans to take account of pupils' responses and level of understanding in the previous lesson. The careful assessments and lesson evaluations also result in teachers matching most activities very well to the needs of pupils of differing ages and abilities and providing appropriately challenging work. Very good planning, assessment and teamwork between the two teachers that teach Year 6 results in very good continuity of learning for pupils. This is reflected in the high standards reached this year by pupils of all abilities.

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

30. The quality and range of the school's learning opportunities for promoting high standards are good. The curriculum provided is suitably broad, balanced and relevant. The curriculum meets fully the statutory requirements for National Curriculum subjects, religious education and collective worship. It is enriched, for example, by the good use made of the local area, visitors to the school and a residential visits in Years 3 and 6. The Year 3 residential visit is for two nights and is activity based and the Year 6 visit is for four nights and combines activities with work in information and communication technology. The school is evaluating a project to receive by satellite video, picture and written data, which can be used to enhance the curriculum areas.
31. The allocation of time overall, and for each subject, is broadly in line with national averages. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when there was an imbalance in the time allocated for science, history, geography and physical education. The curriculum in the foundation stage is now planned appropriately to take account of the early learning goals identified nationally for children of that age. As part of the school's target to raise standards in science and mathematics, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are grouped during the week by ability or age for the two subjects. This is having a positive impact on raising standards. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Both are having a good impact on raising standards.
32. Policies are in place for all subjects. Although some are now old, this is recognised by the school and they are being updated according to the priorities of the school. At the time of the previous inspection schemes of work were only in place for English and mathematics. A key issue was to provide schemes for all subjects. This has been addressed. In addition to the schemes for the literacy and numeracy strategies, schemes are now in place for all subjects based on a range of nationally produced guidance. However, not all have had sufficient time to be fully embedded. For example, in religious education the study of other faiths is mainly concentrated in the upper part of Key Stage 2, rather than throughout the school. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could in this aspect of the subject. The scheme for religious education is in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.
33. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and is taught in accordance with the requirements of the governing body. Provision has been well maintained since the previous inspection. Sex education is taught in Years 5 and 6 and, when appropriate, through the science curriculum. Attention to drugs misuse is taught throughout the school in accordance with the Northamptonshire scheme. The personal, social and health education

programme also includes 'circle time', when pupils have the opportunity to discuss issues. Visitors to the school include the nurse, local doctors and the police liaison officer. The school takes part in the county's 'PALS' initiative (Police And Links in School). The 'Life Skills' bus visits the school annually to teach pupils about various aspects of personal and social education. The school is also piloting a life skills project. St. John Ambulance visit annually, from which all pupils in Years 5 and 6 gain Stages 1 and 2 of the 'Life saver award' respectively.

34. The provision for equality of access and opportunity is satisfactory. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils regardless of their ability, gender, race, or background. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well integrated. They are supported effectively in the classroom and their quality of learning is good. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are given very good support. The requirements in the statements are well met. The majority of pupils have appropriate access to the full curriculum, including activities organised outside of the school day and residential visits. However, a significant number of pupils are regularly withdrawn, on a weekly basis, from part or all of lessons for music tuition and so miss aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are introduced to other cultural traditions through religious education and visitors to the school. However, few visitors represent the multiethnic and multicultural society in which pupils live, which limits the opportunities to extend pupils' awareness of this.
35. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and further enriches the curriculum. Staff give freely of their time to provide a wide range of clubs. Pupils enthusiastically attend and these are beneficial to the large number who take part. Sports activities include football, netball, rounders, cricket, and seasonal cross-country running. Other activities include country dancing, choir, recorders, mathematics and stamp collecting. A ballet school meets in the school hall and several pupils attend this after school each week.
36. The overall provision for personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be sound. Statutory requirements were not met for a daily act of worship but these are now in place. Development is effectively fostered in the daily life of the school, religious education and the daily assemblies. As pupils enter and leave assemblies music is played to set the tone. Although not always planned for, opportunities for pupils to feel awe and wonder often arise in lessons and when these occur the teachers use them effectively. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils were observed to watch with rapt attention as bubbles were produced from different soap solutions. In a Years 4 and 5 science lesson, pupils watched in awe as the teacher demonstrated different electrical circuits and cheered when a light bulb was successfully lit. In information technology, pupils in Years 3 and 4 expressed delight and wonderment as they used a program to draw colourful and symmetrical patterns. Regular visits to the school by local leaders of Christian faiths also contribute well to the provision for the pupils' spiritual development. However, there are no links with leaders of other faiths to increase pupils' knowledge of these. Good use is made of the village church for organised events such as harvest festival, carols and a festival of light, based on a Scandinavian tradition.
37. The good provision for pupils' moral development has been maintained since the previous inspection. The headteacher and staff are good role models for pupils and emphasise the differences between right and wrong and the importance of the values of fairness, respect and honesty. There is a clear code of behaviour, which is used throughout the school and which the pupils know well. From an early age pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. Assemblies celebrate good work, good behaviour and develop a sense of pride and self-esteem. Weekly themes are reinforced in assemblies, in lessons and in the playground. For example, during the inspection week, the themes were 'telling the truth' and 'respect to adults'. During personal, social and health education lessons pupils are given the opportunity to examine rights and responsibilities and citizenship. Classrooms are organised and managed in a way that encourages pupils to be independent and responsible. They are given frequent opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups, where they help and support each other. As a result pupils show good levels of maturity, tolerance and respect. The school supports charities; for example, 'Send a Cow' to Uganda, 'Send a Gift' to a Bulgarian orphanage and 'Comic Relief'.
38. The school's provision for social development is very good. It has improved since the previous

inspection, when it was judged to be good. Pupils are successfully encouraged to relate well to each other, to take turns and to share willingly. Pupils become good citizens as well as good learners. All classes contain pupils of mixed abilities and they are given planned opportunities to work collaboratively together in various combinations of groups as appropriate. Except for Year 6, all classes contain pupils from across two year groups. This supports social development across a range of ages. Each week, Years 3, 4 and 5 are also grouped for some science and mathematics lessons by ability and age and Years 5 and 6 are grouped together for physical education lessons. These groupings give the pupils opportunities to work with pupils from other classes and age groups. Year 6 pupils are given a good range of responsibilities. For example, they walk with the younger pupils to and from assemblies, they support and care for younger pupils at break and lunch times, they work the tape recorder and over-head projector in assemblies and they answer the office phone at lunch times. Social development is also promoted by the Year 3 and Year 6 residential visits and an annual day visit by the whole school, which is linked to an aspect of the curriculum.

39. The provision for cultural development is sound overall. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' own culture but the provision for preparing pupils to live in a multicultural society is underdeveloped. In history, pupils visit the Iron Bridge Museum and the Abington museum. In English, a Shakespeare Company has performed 'A Midsummer Nights Dream' and the author Jeremy Strong has talked to pupils. In Religious Education opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about their own Christian heritage and about the traditions and beliefs of others. However, there is an imbalance in the study of other beliefs and traditions, as it mainly occurs at the end of Key Stage 2. In assemblies pupils celebrate Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Music is used to set the tone of the assemblies but the title of the music and the composer are rarely referred to. The wide range of visits and visitors increases pupils' knowledge of their own culture but there are few links with ethnic groups. There are few multicultural images and resources displayed around the school to reflect the cultural backgrounds of the pupils in the school, especially those for whom English is an additional language, and the wider cultural diversity of the locality.
40. The local community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Parents and governors help regularly in lessons, a parent plays the electric piano in assemblies and for the choir, and parents help with extra-curricular activities. Members of the public services and other local interest groups regularly visit the school; for example, the police, local doctors and Morris dancers. Out of school visits include the local museums, the Science Museum, Iron Bridge museum and the residential visits to Grendon Activity Centre and an activity centre in Torquay. Next year the school plans to visit the Isle of Wight for its Year 6 residential visit.
41. The school has good links with the local nurseries and the partner secondary school. Induction and transfer procedures are used well to ease pupils into school and to move them on to the next stage of their education. In their final term, Year 6 pupils work in exercise books that are passed on to the secondary school and follow topics in English, mathematics and science, which are set by the secondary school. Good links have been established with the local teacher training institution.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school continues to care well for its pupils, as at the time of the last inspection. The school offers its pupils a positive and welcoming learning environment, which helps them to become confident and independent. Staff know the pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. There are good procedures for monitoring the pupils' personal development as they progress through the school; pupil's personal records are well maintained. The school promotes a calm and well-disciplined atmosphere and encourages a sense of pride in the pupils' efforts, which has a positive effect on their learning and achievements.
43. External agencies, including the school nurse and the educational psychologist, give good support to the school. Pupils are also well guided on matters relating to their welfare and development through the circle times and talks from visitors like a police officer, St John Ambulance and the 'life skills' caravan. Specific provisions, such as the good personal, social and health education, extra-curricular activities and opportunities for older pupils to help younger ones, effectively support pupils' personal development. At play and during lunch break, pupils are supervised well.
44. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The new behaviour policy, rewritten with the help of the school community, clearly outlines rewards and sanctions, and parents and pupils share in the high expectations by signing an agreement. There are many rewards and an opportunity to discuss concerns in personal, social and health education lessons and 'circle time'. The school has been very successful in eliminating any oppressive behaviour.
45. The procedures for promoting good attendance are effective. The headteacher monitors attendance and the secretary helps in scrutinising and maintaining the registers. Registration requirements are met and absences are appropriately identified and promptly followed.
46. The arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher, the designated officer, is knowledgeable in child protection procedures and keeps the staff informed about the issues. The staff are trained in matters such as physical restraint. The school is vigilant about health and safety matters. There are several trained first-aiders and clear accident procedures. Parents are notified of more serious incidents. Unwell pupils are looked after well. All equipment is regularly checked. There are regular fire drills and checks on fire and electrical equipment.
47. The arrangement for the assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs are good and are being implemented in accordance with the Code of Practice. The school cares for its pupils with special educational needs well and has maintained this since the previous inspection. Baseline assessments and screening tests are used well to identify pupils' needs and specific difficulties at an early stage, so that appropriate support can be given to pupils both in class and, where appropriate, individually or in small groups. This contributes to the good progress these pupils make. Records are up to date and comprehensive. Examples of pupils' work are kept, which helps to monitor progress. Individual educational plans contain specific targets. The monitoring and support for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good. There are very good quality, in depth, annual reviews which show good progress and outline future targets. The support given by the learning support assistants for the pupils with statements is very good. Liaison with outside agencies and external support staff is good.
48. The arrangement for the assessment and monitoring of bilingual learners is good. They are fully integrated into the life of the school and make good progress. Evaluation of progress is effectively used to set targets and areas where pupils need to improve. However, their home language and countries of origin are not celebrated around the school.
49. There is no register for the identification of able and talented pupils. However, with the guidance of the Chair of Governors, who has considerable expertise in this area, teachers have targeted able pupils and are giving them good support, which ensures that they make good progress.

50. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good and have improved since the last inspection. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress, especially in mathematics and in English, where they are very good. This is because teachers make detailed assessments of specific skills within each aspect of English. The optional national tests are now used, together with other regular tests in reading, spelling and mathematics and science. Teachers sample pupils' writing, comparing it to national standards. Although all teachers keep records of pupils' progress in other subjects, a useful common system is being introduced across these, linked closely to the planned learning objectives in each area. There are now more opportunities for older pupils to be involved in self-assessment as they agree individual targets with their teachers.
51. The school now makes good use of all of the information from these procedures to raise standards and improve pupils' progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection and good developments have taken place this year in particular. Baseline assessments are used well to group pupils appropriately. Information from these, from school assessments and national test results are used to track pupils' progress very carefully as they move through the school. Class teachers now use the information well to set challenging end of year targets for their pupils. The headteacher, special needs co-ordinator and class teachers carefully review this information to identify any pupils who are not making the expected progress. Appropriate support is then provided through, for example, use of the additional literacy strategy, booster classes or individual programmes of work. This early identification and intervention to support individual difficulties contributes significantly to the good achievements of pupils. Challenging school targets for English, mathematics and science are clearly based on these individual assessments. Although assessment information is also used well to agree individual targets with older pupils in literacy, numeracy and personal development, teachers do not yet make full use of these in lessons to help pupils to improve their work. Information from national tests is analysed very well to identify areas of relative weakness, such as boys' writing, and this leads to effective adjustments being made to the curriculum and in teaching and learning to raise standards further. A very good example of this is the successful focus this year in increasing the number of pupils in Year 6 reaching the higher levels in science and in writing in English in particular.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Links with parents are satisfactory overall with several strengths. The school encourages parents to support its work and environment and the home- school agreement clearly indicates its expectations of parental involvement and of pupils. Parents make good contribution to the life of the school. Most parents take good interest in their children's work. Evening meetings on the first Thursday of every month for parents to see their children's work, are well attended. A number of parents help regularly in classes, with reading, for example, as well as on projects, such as helping pupils to make musical instruments, with clubs and on school visits. School events are well supported. Many parents have worked very hard in improving the school environment and facilities. The computer suite is a very good example of this. There is an active school association, which raises considerable funds for the school's resources. All of this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and the school is very appreciative of parents' help.
53. Liaison with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are aware of the point of contact in the school and share in the targets of the individual educational plans. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational need are kept fully informed and are involved well in reviewing the targets set for their children, in accordance with the Code of Practice. Parents of bilingual pupils, who speak English as an additional language, are kept well informed of their child's progress. They are also invited to work in their child's class to help and support.
54. Parents support the work of the school well and the inspection questionnaire reveals parents' general satisfaction with teaching and overall standards of behaviour. They feel their children are expected to work hard and do their best. However, a significant number of parents have expressed dissatisfaction with several aspects of the school. They are critical about the way the school works with them and is led and managed, the information they receive about their child's progress and the range of activities outside lessons. Some are unhappy with the amount of homework set, although different views were expressed as to whether this was too much or too

little. Inspectors found that an appropriate amount of homework is set, which is used well to support work in class. Parents receive a satisfactory level of information about their child's progress and the range of extra-curricular activities is very good for the size of school. The school explains that the possible reasons for some of the criticisms may be its perceived inability to swiftly address low standards in the foundation stage this year or to deal with the consequences of integrating pupils with behavioural problems into the school. Inspectors found that the school is well led and managed. However, the school has not effectively communicated its appropriate actions to parents in a way that has alleviated concerns. The school could helpfully explain its work and actions to parents more effectively to improve parents' unfavourable perceptions.

55. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' reports are informative but the prospectus does not contain all of the required statutory information at present. There are frequent consultation and curriculum information meetings for parents and these are well attended. Some parents felt that they are not well informed about how their children are getting on. Inspectors found that pupils' annual written reports are satisfactory. Whilst the reports inform what pupils can do, they do not give information about what pupils should be doing or what exactly their parents can do to improve academic standards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The overall leadership and management of the school is good. Overall, there has been a good response to the weaknesses identified in the previous report. Much of the improvement is recent, as the school has experienced an unsettled period in the last two years. There have been several changes in the relatively small staff, and a year with two acting headteachers. However, the staffing situation is now stabilising. The present headteacher took up her post last September and the effect of her work is already evident in several of the improvements. For example, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and the consistency of approach, largely as a result of improved monitoring of teaching and learning, which is now effective and focused. Schemes of work have been put in place that promote better progression in pupils' learning. Substantial improvements have been made to the accommodation, and are ongoing, so that deficiencies no longer have an adverse effect on pupils' learning. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are now implemented well and very consistently. The impact of these changes can already be seen in the good achievements of pupils of all abilities and in the high and improving standards.
57. The headteacher provides good leadership. Her role in continuing to build a very well motivated staff team, fully committed to school improvement, has been an important factor in the improvements brought about since her appointment. The response of the new staff team to this, through mutual support, hard work and the wholehearted dedication of all to improving the quality of teaching and learning for pupils, contributes well to the strong sense of direction and determination to continue to raise the already high standards. This is clearly shared by governors, as is the determination to maintain a broad curriculum and the high level of care and support for pupils. Teachers' good knowledge of pupils, the way they promote self-esteem and recognise achievements are good examples of how these aims are seen in practice. This makes a good contribution to the positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils.
58. The headteacher and governing body have worked closely and effectively with the local education authority to put into place the structures to manage and resolve specific issues that arose this year in relation to the reception class and the integration of pupils with behavioural difficulties. However, the dissatisfaction of a significant number of parents expressed in the questionnaires over aspects of leadership and management arising from such issues and the way that the school works with them, shows a weakness in the way that the school communicates with parents and its partnership with them.
59. The efficient deputy headteacher and staff provide good support for the headteacher and work together very well to contribute to the smooth day-to-day running of the school and the pastoral care of pupils. Most co-ordinators have been in post only a short time. They are enthusiastic and committed to improving standards, teaching and provision in their subjects. For example, they regularly review the way they plan for mixed age classes and adjust arrangements, such as the

way Year 4 pupils are grouped for mathematics, to benefit pupils' learning. Their involvement in identifying priorities for the school development plan and the monitoring of planning contributes to this. Through lesson observations, the co-ordinators for English and mathematics, in particular, have been instrumental in promoting a consistent approach to teaching in these subjects and the rising standards apparent.

60. The special educational needs co-ordinator has recently increased her time in school from one day to two-and-a-half days. She gives good leadership. She makes a positive impact on special needs provision by using her skills and understanding as an experienced teacher effectively to ensure that special needs pupils are well supported and make good progress. She has led a number of training sessions for teachers and learning support assistants, which have resulted in targets on pupils' individual education plans being more specific. In turn, this has resulted in work that is more closely matched to the needs of pupils. The special needs co-ordinator is well supported by, and works closely with, class teachers and the learning support assistants. The responsible governor for special educational needs also gives good support. She has a very good understanding of her role, of the needs of the pupils on the special needs register, and of the requirements of the Code of Practice. The special needs policy requires updating and is currently being rewritten.
61. The determination and capacity of the school to raise standards further, by improving the quality of teaching and learning, is seen in a well-planned programme of lesson observations. These have been led by the headteacher, English and mathematics co-ordinators, and supported well by the local education authority adviser. The subsequent discussions and action points agreed with teachers, together with good arrangements for professional development, have contributed well to improvements in teaching. They have also contributed to the remarkable consistency of approach, for example, in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, given the relatively short length of time the present teaching team has been in place.
62. Increasingly good use is now made of performance data to help raise and maintain high standards and to track pupils' progress. Baseline and national test results are carefully analysed to identify weaknesses in the curriculum so that appropriate remedial action is taken. For example, there has been a clear and successful focus this year on increasing the number of pupils in Year 6 reaching the higher levels in mathematics and science. Governors, especially through the curriculum committee, are now involved in using this information. For example, they look at the progress made by different groups of pupils and in comparing the performance of their own school with that of other schools, both nationally and locally, to ensure that their expectations and the targets set for the school are sufficiently challenging.
63. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of new appointments to the governing body. Governors are committed, supportive of the school and well-organised, especially as a result of improvements this year in the committee structures and patterns of meetings. They carry out their statutory responsibilities well, updating policies on a regular cycle and addressing areas that do not fully meet requirements, such as the school prospectus. They have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what is needed to take it forward. This is informed by detailed information from the headteacher, frequent visits to school as well as in the way that they are now closely involved with teachers in formulating the school development plan. Several governors work regularly in the school. There are links now set up with co-ordinators and governors visit classes to look at the implementation of initiatives, such as the national literacy and numeracy strategies or the revised sex education programme. All of these factors mean that governors are now well placed to monitor standards and progress towards identified targets and priorities on the school development plan. It also means that financial planning fully supports the school's priorities and that spending decisions are based on improving the educational standards of pupils and monitored to see their impact on these.

64. The quality of financial planning and management is good, and the funds received by the school are used effectively to promote high standards, good achievement and a good quality of education overall. The school development plan is now costed well, closely linked to the planned provision for in-service training and is a useful tool to support continuing improvements in standards, teaching and all other areas of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Budget expenditure is monitored regularly and the efficient school secretary, who is also a governor, ensures that information is readily available for the headteacher and finance committee so that finances are kept in good order and costs easily determined. Good use is also made of specific grants. The headteacher and finance committee are especially alert to using any available grants, for example, for premises repairs and improvements. As a result, more money from the school budget has been available to target on resources, such as staffing, to support pupils' learning. The governing body ensures through competitive tendering and consultation that they obtain best value for money when purchasing resources and services. The detailed information they now receive from the headteacher about the budget and their involvement this year in the analysis and use of performance data, enables them to ask focused and challenging questions to help evaluate the effectiveness of spending decisions.
65. There are an appropriate number of well-qualified and experienced teachers who are deployed effectively. There is a higher than average number of learning support staff who provide skilled, effective support for pupils' learning, especially for those with special educational needs. The school secretary provides helpful, efficient support. The school is well supported at lunchtimes by the mealtime assistants and the premises staff maintain the buildings well. Overall, the accommodation is now satisfactory for the teaching of the curriculum as a result of the improvements made. The school does not yet take full advantage of the attractive grounds and its own environmental area to support pupils' learning. The outdoor play provision for children in the foundation stage has been improved since the last inspection and further developments are in hand for this summer. There has been some improvement in the level of resources overall since the last report. It is now satisfactory overall and good in information and communication technology. Good use is made of loan services to supplement the school's resources and all are used well to support pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In the context of the school's many strengths, the governors, headteacher and staff should address the following matters in their action plan in order to raise standards and the quality of education further:

- a) Raise standards of work and the progress made by children in the foundation stage by*:-
 - Further improving the quality of teaching in the foundation stage towards the level of the best practice in the school.
 - Ensuring that children are helped to meet the same high expectations of behaviour and personal development as in the rest of the school through clearly established routines and classroom organisation from the time they start school.
(see paragraphs 3,14,22,26,66,67,69,70, 71,73)

- b) Address the unfavourable views that parents have of some aspects of the school, which were expressed through the inspection questionnaire, by:-
 - Further improving the quality and timing of communication with parents.
(see paragraphs 54,58)

In addition to the above, the following points for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:-

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures in their locality and to prepare for life in a multi cultural society. (see paragraphs 34,39,112, 138, 149)
- Ensure that pupils do not always miss the same lessons when attending instrumental music tuition. (see paragraphs 34,99,139)

**The school has already identified these areas for development.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	19	49	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	124
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	37
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Note: The numbers of boys and girls are omitted as there were fewer than eleven of each in the year group

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	n/a	n/a	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a
	Total	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(75)	100(80)
	National	83(82)	84 (83)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(75)	100 (80)	100(90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88(87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Note: This table is omitted as there were fewer than eleven pupils in the year group

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	124
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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	247780
Total expenditure	247780
Expenditure per pupil	1999
Balance brought forward from previous year	10200
Balance carried forward to next year	10200

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	124
Number of questionnaires returned	73

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.
My child is making good progress in school.
Behaviour in the school is good.
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.
The teaching is good.
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.
The school works closely with parents.
The school is well led and managed.
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
49	42	7	1	0
36	47	12	0	5
33	55	7	3	3
27	49	14	8	1
48	41	4	1	5
32	36	27	5	0
45	38	10	7	0
41	48	3	3	5
37	33	18	10	3
26	40	18	7	10
33	53	8	3	3
29	38	16	7	10

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

66. The school makes satisfactory provision for children in the foundation stage, offering them a suitably broad and relevant curriculum. Several improvements have been made since the time of the last inspection. For example, the curriculum is now carefully planned to take account of the six areas of learning identified for children of this age. The facilities and resources for outdoor play have already been improved and further developments are scheduled for this summer. This term the class is being taught by a temporary teacher, as the class teacher, who took up the post in September, resigned after two terms. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, and at times good, enabling the children to make steady progress in their learning.
67. Children's attainments on entry to the school, from analyses of the baseline assessments and discussions with teachers, are above average overall, with the full range of attainment represented. Evidence from these assessments, their work over the year and lesson observations, show that, in some areas of their learning, children have achieved unsatisfactorily. Most are unlikely to meet all of the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy and for personal and social development. This is because, in spite of appropriate intervention and support from the senior management team, the children made unsatisfactory progress in their learning over their first two terms in school. Their rate of learning is clearly improving this term. This is in contrast to last year, as the work of the current Year 1 pupils at the beginning of this school year indicates that almost all met and many exceeded the expectations for their age at the end of the foundation stage.
68. After satisfactory induction procedures, usually including home visits, children start school on a part-time basis in September, increasing to full time attendance by the end of October. Almost all have had some pre-school experience. They are taught in a class with some of the younger Year 1 pupils.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. A significant number of children show immature personal skills and behaviour and are not likely to reach all of the early learning goals in this area. Their present stage of development indicates that there has not been sufficient emphasis on establishing the high expectations of behaviour evident in the rest of the school or in supporting children in reaching these by establishing well ordered classroom routines. This has had an adverse effect on their developing sense of responsibility and independence and the way that they relate to each other. The majority show little awareness of the consequences of their actions on others or thought for the needs of others. They can concentrate for only very short periods and often display immature and silly behaviour, especially when part of a larger group. They show only a limited interest in their learning. They still need frequent reminders to tidy away resources and constant adult intervention to help them to complete tasks.
70. This term, the temporary teacher is placing an appropriately strong emphasis in all lessons on developing children's personal and social skills and the quality of teaching is good in this area. She makes her expectations of behaviour very clear and uses effective, positive strategies, such as, 'Give me five', to help pupils meet these. She insists firmly but pleasantly on their full attention when she speaks to them, stopping as often as necessary to regain this. The increasing success of her consistent approach could be seen even during the course of the inspection, with the children responding more quickly to her instructions and to the routines that are now being established. Good examples were seen of some children co-operating well together in small groups, for example, to complete floor puzzles or sensibly putting on their own aprons before concentrating well on painting a picture of a holiday activity. Another example was the calm, well-behaved way in which pupils sat together for their drink and biscuit during the recently introduced snack-time. The teacher chooses interesting and enjoyable activities so that children

are keen to take part. A good example of this was a role-play activity outside where they took turns well to be drivers, pedestrians or a lollipop lady, using equipment sensibly. All adults provide good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with quiet respect and courtesy and valuing children's efforts and contributions. This is helping children to form more positive relationships with them and with each other as well as learning what is appropriate behaviour.

Communication, language and literacy

71. Children have not achieved well enough in this area, in relation to their attainment when starting school, especially in their writing and listening skills and most children are not in line to meet all of the early learning goals in this area by the end of their foundation year. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. The teacher makes good use of elements of the Literacy Framework to help them improve their basic skills, especially in phonics, and takes due account of their limited concentration by varying and changing activities when their attention wanes. However, most children have difficulty in sitting still and listening for more than a few minutes, either to their teacher or to each other. Their speaking skills are better than their listening skills. When one boy described a visit he had made over half term, he spoke quite clearly and added some detail, but very few children listened attentively or showed any interest in what he was saying. When children have relevant contributions to make, they still frequently call out or talk to each other. The time rightly taken by the teacher to train the children to take turns and to listen carefully often slows the overall pace of learning.
72. Children enjoy books and know how to handle them. A few higher attaining children already read confidently and accurately. One, for example, read dialogue with good expression, had a good sight vocabulary but also used her knowledge of phonics to build up words such as 'brushes'. Most have some knowledge of sounds and are starting to use these to help them to read, by sounding out the initial letter of words. They use pictures well to tell a story.
73. Most children made little progress in their writing skills in their first two terms at school. Their letter formation is improving this term and a few are now beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to write recognisable words, such as, 'I luv miy cuzns'. The teacher is now appropriately providing frequent opportunities to encourage their interest and confidence in writing.

Mathematical development

74. Assessments at the beginning of this year showed that most pupils' skills in this area were broadly similar to those expected for their age. The majority are achieving satisfactorily and are likely to meet the early learning goals by the end of their foundation year. Sound teaching helps them to consolidate and improve their number skills. Most children count up to ten objects reliably and the teacher makes good use of games and songs to reinforce these skills. A few recognise numbers up to 20 as well as some larger ones. Good examples were seen in a numeracy lesson of the teacher developing children's understanding of mathematical vocabulary, such as 'more than' and 'less than' through the use of carefully targeted questioning to include pupils of all abilities. In a subsequent dice game to consolidate this, the learning support assistant provided effective support, using good questioning to ensure understanding and gradually increasing the level of challenge. Although sand and water activities enable children to explore mathematics ideas, the precise purpose of these is not always clear enough to fully extend the children's thinking.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Children are helped to learn more about the place where they live by observing what kind of buildings they pass on their way to school and make models of some of these. They know that they must look carefully when crossing the road outside the school because 'cars race up and down'. A few children can suggest reasons why some roads are busier than others such as, 'a lot of people need to go shopping.' They look at pictures and artefacts of old and new household items to see how they have changed. By taking part in a harvest festival in the local church they are taught to appreciate the world around them and how Christians praise God for this. The children were interested and curious when the teacher showed them how the sunflower seeds

they had planted earlier in the term had grown and especially to see where a snail had eaten part of the leaves. Most of them used words such as 'petal', and 'stem' correctly and knew that the plants had needed light and water to grow. However, the immature behaviour and attitudes of a number of children meant that the pace of the lesson dropped and opportunities to extend their learning further were lost. No use of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection but planning indicates that children begin to develop their skills by using suitable programs, for example, to support their work in literacy and numeracy. The teaching that was seen was satisfactory. By the end of the foundation year, children achieve satisfactorily and their attainment is as expected for their age.

Physical development

76. Since the last inspection, more opportunities are provided for outdoor play and for pupils to use equipment such as wheeled toys. The small amount of teaching seen was satisfactory. In a well taught indoor physical education lesson, the children moved safely in space at different speeds, showing awareness of others. During skipping and bat and ball activities the teacher used examples of the children's work and her own demonstrations well to help the children to improve their control and co-ordination by learning from others. Some boys and girls found imaginative ways of using their rope to jump over. She placed good emphasis on safety and most pupils responded well to her firm insistence on quick response to instructions as they were keen not to miss any of the activities, although several found it difficult to listen without touching the equipment.
77. When making models of traffic lights and road signs for their road mat, the children were able to squeeze, twist and manipulate the plasticine into the shapes that they wanted and made appropriate use of scissors and other construction materials. Overall, most pupils meet the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of their foundation year.

Creative development

78. At the end of the foundation year, the majority of children meet the expected levels. The small amount of teaching seen was satisfactory. For example, when learning a new song, 'Tiny Little Seed', the children memorised the words of the first verse reasonably well because the teacher practised it and built it up in small sections so that by the end of the short session, most joined in confidently, singing quite tunefully. Planning shows that children have opportunities to respond to music in different ways. Children have frequent opportunities to use a variety of materials such as paint, clay and collage. In their work with paint, they begin to mix and explore colours. They enjoy making witches' heads out of dough. They collect leaves and twigs from the school grounds to make collages. One boy was keen to explain how he was making a face out of these. The children enjoyed the role-play that was observed, and co-operated together quite well, although not many opportunities for this were evident during the inspection week.

ENGLISH

79. The small number of pupils in each year group means that fluctuations can occur from year to year in the school's performance in the national tests. This can give an unreliable picture of improvements in standards. Consequently, comparisons made of pupils' attainment with all schools nationally and with similar schools should be treated with care. Results from the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, based on average points, indicate that standards in reading were well above national averages and very high in writing. They were above those of similar schools in reading and well above them in writing. Results in English at the end of Key Stage 2, based on average points, were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. Although these were not as high as the previous year, this was a particularly small year group. The proportion of pupils both reaching and exceeding the expected levels remained well above the national average. In comparing their individual results with those they obtained at the end of Key Stage 1, it is clear that all achieved at least as well as expected and several achieved well. Differences in the performances of boys and girls are not significantly different to the national picture, with girls reaching higher standards in writing than boys, especially in Key Stage 2.

80. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and the work of current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils show that standards overall in English are above the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and are well above them at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in Year 2 are not quite as high as last year because there is an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present year group. However, the detailed records kept of individual progress show that these pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. The school is likely to meet the challenging targets set for this year. Overall standards have improved further since the last inspection.
81. Standards overall in English above the expected levels when children start school and are well above them by the time pupils leave the school. Evidence both from lessons and past work shows that boys and girls of all abilities achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. For example, in the 1997 national tests at the end of Year 2, none of the current Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in writing, whereas several are now working above the expected level. A number of factors have contributed to this positive and improving picture. For example, there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and the national literacy strategy has been implemented well and very consistently. This year, the school has begun to focus on further improving standards in writing. Teacher have worked hard to ensure that resources and the contexts chosen for writing appeal to boys as well as girls through, for example, the increased use of information and communication technology. The gap has begun to narrow, as a result of a school focus on this area. As a result of this, in Year 6, for example, there is already some improvement from last year in the number of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in writing, although standards are still not as high as they are in reading. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully identified at an early stage and the special needs co-ordinator, class teachers and classroom assistants work closely together to help these pupils to do well. Booster classes and the additional literacy strategy are used well for this purpose. Pupils with English as an additional language are also supported well. The effectiveness of the support is seen in the high number of these pupils who reach the expected standards in English at the end of both key stages.
82. Standards in speaking and listening are above the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above them at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. By the age of seven, they engage in conversation with adults confidently. They listen carefully to their teacher and each other. They ask relevant questions and make contributions to class discussions, which show good understanding of what they hear. They share their ideas and experiences clearly, for example, when discussing safety in the home. By the age of 11, pupils respond thoughtfully and often perceptively to each other's views and build on these in discussions. Good examples were seen of this in many lessons, for example, when Year 6 pupils were discussing ideas for the new school prospectus. Higher attaining pupils use an extensive vocabulary confidently. They express their ideas cogently when talking about their work in religious education, for example, giving reasons for their opinions.
83. In both key stages, teachers help pupils to make good progress in speaking and listening through well-led oral work in lessons across the curriculum and frequent opportunities for discussions in groups of varying sizes. Pupils are keen to contribute because all teachers show interest and place evident value on what each pupil has to say. Teachers successfully extend pupils' vocabulary in all subjects through their consistent emphasis on pupils understanding and using technical terms and challenging vocabulary correctly. Several Year 2 pupils, for example, could describe clearly what they thought is meant by a miracle, while pupils in Year 6 used terms such as 'personification' confidently and correctly. This also has a positive impact on increasing pupils' sight vocabulary when reading. Pupils in both key stages develop confidence in speaking in front of large groups, learning to adapt their speech appropriately through opportunities in assemblies and drama productions. On request from the teacher, to illustrate a teaching point in a poetry lesson, a pupil quoted one of Viola's speeches from 'Twelfth Night', learnt for a performance later this term, with excellent understanding, expression and feeling for audience.
84. Standards in reading are above the expected standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above them at the end of Key Stage 2. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve well, and often very well, in both key stages. One reason for this is that phonics skills are taught very well and teachers make good use of the literacy hour, as well as opportunities across the curriculum to

help pupils to apply these successfully. In a Year 2 literacy lesson for example, the teacher used her considerable subject expertise in very skilful questioning to extend pupils' understanding of the different ways the long 'ee' sound can be spelt. She made very good use of white boards to fully involve all pupils and to check on individual understanding. In a very positive way, she effectively used any mistakes made by pupils as further teaching points, rapidly moving pupils' learning on. As a result, by the end of that session, they could not only recognise a variety of ways in which the sound is represented, but had learnt good strategies to help them use this in spelling words correctly. By the age of seven, almost all pupils read an appropriate range of books with reasonable fluency and accuracy and with good expression. They have a good sight vocabulary and use a variety of ways to tackle unfamiliar words. They show a good understanding of what they are reading in discussion, as well as by substituting sensible words for those they do not know. Some higher attaining pupils show an increasing understanding of plots and characters. One pupil, for example, clearly enjoyed, and could explain, the humour of the situation in 'Dumpling'.

85. By the age of 11, pupils read books that are often quite challenging, clearly and with expression. Pupils apply their reading skills very effectively to retrieve information from a wide variety of sources, including books, the Internet and data provided by the teacher. They make good use of dictionaries and thesauri. This is largely due to a consistent approach to the teaching of research skills across the school and frequent opportunities to apply them. A good example of this was seen in a lesson for Year 4 and 5 pupils, where the teacher was developing their skills of note-taking through the identification of key words and phrases. This has a positive impact on pupils' standard of work and progress in other subjects including history and geography. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress in reading, noting specific skills that need further development. This makes a good contribution to their rate of learning.
86. The number of pupils meeting the expected standards in writing at the end of both key stages is well above average. Not as many pupils yet reach the higher levels in writing as they do in reading, although almost all pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. By the age of seven, most pupils write in simple sentences mostly using well-formed letters and reasonably accurate spelling. They write in a variety of forms, including poems, letters and stories. They begin to include relevant details and to use capital letters and full stops correctly. Some higher attaining pupils begin to use more structured sentences of varying length, interesting vocabulary and speech marks, as in 'The Day There Was a Flood', - a good example of lively writing, which attracts the interest of the reader.
87. Pupils of all abilities in Key Stage 2 generally write neatly and organise and present their work well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. By the time they leave the school, they write in a good variety of forms and usually spell accurately. However, some still do not use more complex sentences confidently or fully extend their ideas. Pupils are more adventurous in their use of words when writing poetry, but elsewhere they do not always use the range of vocabulary they do in oral work. Several higher attaining pupils, however, vary sentence structure and adapt their style and vocabulary competently to create particular effects in their writing. A very good example of this was seen in an opening to a fairground story, that set the scene and mood very effectively, 'Roll-up! Roll-up!' The younger children were shouting and screaming, 'Mummy, mummy, - Can I have this, Can I have that, Can I go here, Can I go there?' Pupils often make very good progress in literacy lessons in learning a good range of strategies and techniques for improving their writing, including the use of recognised authors as models. However, they do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply what they have learnt independently in sustained writing over time, or to re-draft and craft their own work to improve its content, style and structure, as well as its accuracy.
88. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the lessons seen, it was good or better in 66 per cent of them. It was very good or better in 50 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, compared to ten per cent during the last inspection. There is also a significant improvement in the amount of teaching that is very good or better and this is a key factor in the good overall progress pupils make in their learning as they move through the school. This was illustrated in a very well taught lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4. A number of features helped them make very good progress in learning about techniques that poets use, and to refine their own skills in writing poetry. The teacher explained the main objectives very clearly so that the pupils knew exactly

what they should be learning. Her enthusiastic approach and very good reading of 'Matilda,' by Hillaire Belloc, quickly engaged the full attention and interest of pupils. They were very keen to contribute their ideas, which the teacher continually extended with comments such as, 'What else? -- How do you know? – Tell me more - look at the next line'. She built well on their responses to help them to distinguish between verses and paragraphs and to introduce, for example, rhyming couplets. She made good use of opportunities to link text and word level word, such as the use of apostrophes, without losing the brisk pace of the lesson. As a result of what they had learnt and enjoyed, several Year 3 pupils produced well-written, amusing alliterative tongue twisters, including 'Sammy Silly' and 'Trish Tight.'

89. Teachers show a good understanding of the national literacy strategy. This is evident in their skilful and challenging questioning seen in lessons. This is made particularly effective by the very good knowledge teachers have of each pupils' learning as a result of the detailed assessments they make. They use this so that questions are pitched at just the right level for pupils of all abilities. Several good examples were seen of lesson plans being adjusted in the light of pupils' responses in the previous lesson, where teachers felt pupils needed more consolidation or greater challenge. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which they often help them to achieve by sharing the learning objectives of each lesson and activity very clearly with them. These take good account of pupils' differing abilities as well as their different ages, in classes with mixed year groups. These features contribute well to the good and often very good progress that pupils make in lessons. In addition to this, teachers frequently choose relevant and interesting activities that motivate pupils well, such as a 'Harry Potter' Day, or revising the school prospectus. They also make good use of opportunities in other subjects for pupils to practise different forms of writing or to research information from a variety of sources. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully, often giving useful comments to help pupils improve their work. However, although they agree with pupils a relevant target for them to work on, they do not yet use these to full effect in lessons to help pupils focus on areas for improvement. Some lessons were less effective, although satisfactory, because the teacher had not ensured that all pupils fully understood the activity or allowed too much time for it so that some pupils lost concentration. Occasionally, teachers did not make purposeful use of the plenary session to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.
90. The co-ordinator, who manages the subject very well, has made very good contribution through the in-service training of new colleagues, careful monitoring and reflective evaluation, and well paced and focused development of appropriately identified priorities. The results of this can be seen in the improving standards in areas such as writing as well as the very consistent approach to implementing the national literacy strategy, which helps pupils build effectively on previous learning. This is especially noticeable as the majority of the teachers have been in the school for a year or less. There is a good range of termly and annual assessments that is used increasingly well to track pupils' progress across the school and to identify those in need additional support, as well as to identify and address areas of weakness in the curriculum. Drama productions such as 'The Tempest' and 'Twelfth Night' enrich the curriculum and make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

91. Results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2000 showed pupils' attainment to be very high when compared to the national averages at level 2 or above. The number of pupils obtaining level 3 or above was well above the national average. The broad overview of results for 2000 was that pupils' attainment was well above the national average. Results for the three years from 1998 to 2000 were above the national average with a significant increase from 1999 to 2000. Results of the national tests for eleven year olds for 2000 showed pupils' attainment to be well above the national averages at level 4 or above and close to the national average at level 5 or above. The broad overview was above the national average. Results for the three years from 1998 to 2000 were above the national averages but have fallen from 1998 to 2000. Compared with pupils in similar schools results were well above the national average at Key Stage 1 and above the national average at Key Stage 2. Results show that at both key stages boys and girls perform equally well. However, because of the small number of pupils taking the tests each year, there is a considerable year to year variation in results. These variations mean that care is necessary in the interpretation of change in the school's results from one year to the

next.

92. Inspection findings shows standards in mathematics are in line with national expectations by the age of seven. This is because of a particularly high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in this year group, compared to previous years. Standards at Key Stage 2 are well above expectations by the age of eleven. At both key stages, pupils use mental and oral strategies well. At Key Stage 1, pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make very good progress. No evidence was observed of any gender differences.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall at both key stages. At Key Stage 2, in a quarter of lessons teaching was very good and in a quarter of lessons teaching was excellent. At both key stages, no lessons observed were unsatisfactory. This signifies an improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be sound overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they apply the national numeracy strategy well. There is a very good commitment to raising the standards that pupils reach. Lessons are well planned and well resourced. In the majority of lessons pupils are taught at a good pace and with a good level of challenge. Teachers use activities that motivate and interest the pupils and lead to pupils enjoying mathematics lessons and feeling challenged. For example, in a very good lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used number patterns found in the 3 times tables to teach strategies for multiplying and dividing by three and for finding the factors of three. Through good questioning, well-matched practical tasks, and good support from learning support assistants and two trainee teachers, the pupils were well motivated and enjoyed the challenge. The high number of adults in the class meant that pupils were able to work in small, well guided, groups. All these factors ensured that the pupils made very good progress in the lesson. Teachers use questioning well to assess understanding but not all use pupils' errors and misconceptions as further teaching points, or ask pupils to explain and share their personal mental strategies. Only in a minority of lessons do teachers display and explain the objectives of the lesson, so that the pupils have a clear understanding of what they are learning and why. In an excellent Years 4 and 5 lesson about the different types of triangles, the teacher shared the objectives with the pupils and used their misunderstandings very well in further teaching points. She used questions that matched well to the different ability groups in the class and recapped the objectives at the end of the lesson by asking pupils to explain their understanding of the tasks. By the end of the lesson, pupils could clearly explain the differences between obtuse, acute and reflex angles and scalene, isosceles and equilateral triangles. Teachers assess pupils well against the lesson objectives and use this information well in planning further work.
94. Lessons are well organised and start with a brisk, whole class, mental warm-up session, in which teachers try to involve everyone. Good use is made of small white boards, which each pupil can hold up to show their answers. This motivates all pupils to take part. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to write down the answers to a number of questions requiring the multiplication of decimals, as was part of the introduction to finding the value of 'pi'. The use of individual white boards ensured that all pupils took part and when the teacher asked to see the answers on the boards she could assess who understood the concept and who needed further support. In all lessons, after the warm-up activities, pupils work in groups. The learning support assistants give pupils with special educational needs, and English as an additional language, good support. The whole class then comes back together to share what they have learnt. Teachers maintain good class management and create a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils respond to this with very good behaviour and very good attitudes.

95. There is no difference in standards between the different areas of the mathematics curriculum. By the age of seven standards in numeracy are sound and pupils achieve well. The majority can confidently add and subtract two and three digit numbers, see patterns in number, continue a sequence to 100, recall their times tables and identify halves and quarters. By the age of eleven pupils have a very good recall of number bonds and the strategies for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of number. They can describe their mental strategies for recalling number facts. They can add and subtract three and four digit numbers and multiply and divide whole numbers and numbers to two decimal places by 10, 100 and 1000. They can convert decimals to fractions, order fractions and can calculate a fraction of money and weight. They use calculators well to check their results.
96. In their work on shape, space and measurement, Year 2 pupils can tell the time on a twelve-hour clock. They can describe the properties of a two-dimensional shape and can measure with accuracy using a centimetre ruler. By the age of eleven, pupils can tell the time on a digital and analogue clock. They use appropriate language when describing two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and know the properties of the different types of triangles. They can use the appropriate formulae to calculate the area, diameter and radius of circle. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed measuring the circumference of different sized circles with lengths of string. They then measured the length of the string and the diameter of the circle and found the relationship between the two. By skilfully questioning the pupils the teacher quickly moved them on to understanding the formulae for calculating pi and the diameter and circumference of any circle.
97. In their work on data handling, pupils at the age of seven can construct graphs to show types of pets belonging to pupils in the class or favourite filling in a sandwich. At the age of eleven, pupils can construct bar, line and pie graphs of their results and interrogate graphs for information. For example, they construct line graphs to show the amount of petrol used on a journey and pie charts to show the most popular means of transport. The well-chosen activities, linked to real life situations, ensure that the pupils are challenged, well motivated and enjoy the tasks.
98. Mathematics and numeracy are used well across the curriculum. It is planned for in the nationally produced schemes being used in other subject areas. In science pupils draw charts and graphs based on information collected. For example, Year 2 pupils draw graphs of favourite vegetables or sandwich fillings and Year 6 pupils draw graphs of changes in shadow lengths and a classification chart of woodland creatures. In information and communication technology, pupils produce graphs and charts. In history, pupils draw and use time-lines. As part of their Egyptian topic, Year 5 pupils play a board game that involves counting on to be the first to reach the afterlife. In geography pupils use co-ordinates and in food technology pupils weigh and mix ingredients from a recipe and design a template for a biscuit packet and draw an evaluation chart of the biscuits made.
99. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. She is an excellent role model for the teaching of mathematics. She has a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and areas to develop, which are identified in her annual development plan. She has had some opportunities to monitor teaching and learning, which has contributed to the consistency of approach. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual and social development of the pupils. For example, in the Year 6 lesson on the calculation of pi, the pupils were clearly amazed when the teacher explained that pi had been calculated to more than a billion decimal places. A mathematics booster class is also held twice a week for Key Stage 2 pupils. Some pupils miss part of their mathematics lesson on days when they receive individual music tuition, which interrupts the continuity of their learning.

SCIENCE

100. The results of teacher assessments at the age of seven in 2000 show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above, and level 3 or above, was very high across all areas of study when compared to the national average for all schools. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance was well above the national average. At the age of eleven, the results of the National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments in 2000 show that attainment was close to

the national average at level 4 or above and below the national average at level 5 or above. The broad overview of results for 2000 was that pupils' attainment was below the national average and well below average when compared to similar schools. However, the tests were taken by a small number of pupils and so the results need to be viewed with caution. Taking together the three years from 1998 to 2000, attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 2 exceed the national average and boys performed better than girls. Again, because of the small number of pupils taking the tests each year, there is a considerable year-to-year variation in results and care is necessary in the interpretation of change in the school's results from one year to the next.

101. The school has reacted promptly to a decline in results at Key Stage 2 in 2000. It has organised the Key Stage 2 timetable so that pupils are grouped by age for science and are given work that is well matched to their age as well as ability. Inspection evidence indicates that this has raised standards. Attainment at the end of both key stages is well above expectations and pupils are achieving well. There has been a good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.
102. Pupils are developing very good scientific knowledge, understanding and skills in relevant practical contexts. At Key Stage 1, they are encouraged to ask questions and predict outcomes of their investigations, which they do with increased confidence. For example, Year 2 pupils were observed discussing the conditions plants require for healthy growth. They understood well that plants needed water and light to grow healthily and that where they were planted could affect growth. The pupils designed their own experiment to test for the best place in the school to grow seeds. By the end of Year 6, attainment in practical and investigative science, and the use of 'fair tests', is well above that expected nationally. Pupils confidently discuss how the outcomes of an experiment can be affected when a different variable is changed or the test isn't a fair one. They also appreciate that school based experiments are not always completely accurate, no matter how fair they try to be. For example, when Year 6 pupils discussed a test for blowing bubbles they appreciated that no matter how hard they tried, the amount of breath used to blow bubbles and the distance they were from the ring used for blowing bubbles, could never be totally accurate and would change slightly each time. Pupils use charts, diagrams and graphs in a variety of ways to record their results and test their hypotheses.
103. In their study of life processes and living things, pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 can name the major organs of the body; the main parts of a flower and can describe conditions basic to animal and plant life. They understand which foods are healthy or unhealthy and keep a chart to record any exercise they have had. They can identify "minibeasts" and habitats to be found around the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to make predictions and carry out observations related to plant growth and the factors that influence plant life. They can describe the life cycle of a plant. Pupils can classify woodland creatures and the characteristics of insects, fish, reptiles, birds and amphibians and they know the development of the food chain. The school's field and conservation area are used well to support this area of the curriculum.
104. In their study of materials and their properties, pupils at Key Stage 1 can sort the properties of wood, glass and plastic by texture, colour, shape, flexibility and hardness. They know that certain materials change when heated and cooled. At Key Stage 2, pupils investigate the properties of materials and record their results well in the form of charts and graphs. They design and carry out experiments to investigate which brand of chocolate melts the quickest and which materials change state. They know changes are not always reversible. They predict what will happen and make charts and graphs of their results.
105. In their work on physical processes, Key Stage 1 pupils have a good understanding of how sound and light travel. They can construct circuits to illuminate a light bulb. They can design an experiment to investigate the forces that act on a toy car. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can explain how light travels to the eye. They have a good understanding of how light travels through a periscope and record how shadows change according to the relative position of the sun. They can construct a variety of circuits and draw the circuit diagram. In a good Year 4 lesson observed, pupils were observed constructing a circuit and then changing one variable at a time, for example the number of batteries, the bulb, the length of wire or conductive and non-conductive materials. They made predictions as to what would happen and gave reasons for the results after experimenting with the original circuit.

106. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is good overall. In a Year 6 lesson observed teaching was excellent. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory at both key stages. This is having a significant impact on pupils' achievements. At both key stages, suitable opportunities are created for investigations and questions. Practical activities are well matched to the abilities and age groups within the class. Lessons are well organised and well resourced. This results in all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, making good progress and achieving well. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they teach science with enthusiasm. This motivates the pupils, who enjoy their work and feel challenged by the tasks set. As a result their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attitudes in Year 6 at times are excellent. Learning support assistants and volunteer helpers are given good guidance by the class teachers and contribute well to pupils' learning. In the Years 1 and 2 lesson observed about growing plants, the class teacher made very good use of the learning support assistants, two trainee teachers and the chair of governors. This meant that the pupils were able to work in small groups organised by age and ability. The very good ratio of adults to pupils meant that the pupils were totally absorbed in each task. The groups moved in turn to each adult, who specialised in a different aspect of the lesson and so gave 'expert' support to each group. Not all teachers begin the lesson by sharing the objectives with the pupils or end the lesson by reviewing them. However, in the excellent lesson observed in Year 6, based on different ratios of water and detergent needed to make quality bubbles, the teacher ensured that the learning objectives were clear to the pupils from the start and that they were reviewed at the end. Therefore, the lesson ended with pupils having a very good understanding of what they had achieved. The teacher also used questions very well to assess pupils' understanding, to share pupils' ideas and to move them forward in their thinking. In doing so, the pupils quickly moved on from discussing the most appropriate mixture for making bubbles to what happens to the molecules in the mixture and why it wasn't possible to blow bubbles in a shape other than a sphere.
107. Pupils are enthusiastic about science, particularly when there is a practical and investigative component to the lesson. They are keen to share their knowledge and understanding with each other. They are co-operative when working in groups and want to learn more. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils contribute enthusiastically to discussion, concentrate on their task and show very good levels of curiosity and interest. Boys and girls work well together and make similar progress. All pupils are aware of the safety routines and work sensibly during experimental work.
108. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has made a good impact on the raising of standards in the school. She is an excellent role model for the teaching of the subject. She has taught in all year groups in order to work alongside colleagues and to monitor the teaching and learning. The subject is enhanced by the school's large field, a small formal garden and a nearby conservation area, which is owned by the school. Unfortunately, this has been closed for some time due to the foot and mouth epidemic. The use of information technology is limited but is in the process of being developed since the new computer suite has been built. The subject contributes well to mathematics. For example, pupils use charts and graphs to record their results. It also contributes well to the spiritual and social development of the pupils. For example, younger pupils sat with rapt attention as the teacher showed them where the plant had been eaten by snails. In the lesson on plant growth, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 were extremely attentive as the teacher explained how the roots of trees could damage buildings.

ART AND DESIGN

109. Not enough teaching was observed during the inspection week to make a judgement about its quality. However, discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of planning, displays, photographs and pupils' sketchbooks indicate that the majority of pupils reach the expected standards for their age by the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school, as they did at the time of the last report.
110. In Year 1, pupils experiment with mixing colours and use this when painting portraits of themselves. A small group of pupils were seen examining an African carved wooden head through hand lenses and making sketches of it. A learning support assistant worked with them very effectively, discussing with them, for example, how the light fell on the sculpture and

showing them how to smudge their pastel shading for greater effect. As a result, the pupils produced good quality work. One boy showed his sketch book to show how he felt he had improved on his original design for an Aztec mask by making the face look 'happier.' Year 2 pupils further develop their skills of close observation appropriately when representing the textures of different kinds of materials and making rubbings of different surfaces in the school grounds. Their paintings of the Fire of London show appropriate levels of skills in colour matching, line and form. They use a range of media to represent snail shapes after looking at some of the work of Henri Matisse.

111. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to improve their observational skills when sketching parts of the school buildings and artefacts from the Second World War and experiment with pencils of varying softness to improve their shading skills. They work in groups to produce attractive and well finished models of imaginary animals. In Years 4 and 5 make good use of photographs they have taken of small sections of trees, fencing or parts of the school building to produce good quality drawings which show close attention to detail. They use torn newspaper effectively to make lively monochrome portraits that are full of character. By the age of 11, pupils show an appropriate sense of shape and form when making breakfast items such as toast racks and egg cups. They use techniques such as ink blowing to create effective winter landscapes and make good use of information and communication technology to experiment with altering the images of photographs they have taken of individual items and subsequent drawings they made. Colourful, well-designed displays around the school show a steady progression in skills throughout the school and provide good examples of the way that art is often used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects such as English, history, geography and information and communication technology.
112. At present the subject does not have a permanent co-ordinator. However, teachers plan together well to ensure that the requirements of the revised curriculum are met and to help pupils to develop their skills systematically. Although there is no formal monitoring of the subject at present, the school plans to address this next year and to make more use of visitors to further enrich the curriculum. Attractive displays of work around the school show pupils how much their work and efforts are valued and contribute well to their spiritual and cultural development, although evidence of the celebration of art from other than Western cultures is limited.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. During the inspection week no lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 and only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 2. Therefore, judgements are based on the one lesson observed, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils and staff, displays and evidence of past work.
114. Inspection evidence indicates that by the age of 7, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they reach standards that are in line with national expectations. By the age of 11, pupils achieve well and meet standards that are above expectations for pupils of similar age. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards at Key Stage 2 were judged to be satisfactory. At Key Stage 1, Year 1 pupils design and make simple two-dimensional pictures of faces and teddy bears, which incorporate sliding parts to make the eyes and tongue move or have hinged arms and legs. By the end of the key stage pupils can identify appropriate materials that should be used. They design and make models from recyclable materials and evaluate their results. They satisfactorily learn the skills of cutting, sticking and joining. Their skills are used to design and construct models of buildings, such as castles and detached houses, to design and make glove puppets and to design and evaluate playground apparatus. Pupils also use commercially produced construction kits to make models with moving mechanisms.
115. At Key Stage 2, Years 3 and 4 pupils design, make and evaluate monsters made from recyclable material, which also have to be powered by air. They disassemble and evaluate biscuit packets before designing and making their own packets and they follow recipes to make biscuits which, along with commercially produced biscuits, are then evaluated for appearance, shape, taste and texture. By Year 5, pupils design and make string and percussion instruments after evaluating commercially produced ones. With guidance from parent helpers, they also decorated the instruments to a high standard. The instruments are to be used in the school's production of 'Twelfth Night'. In Year 6 pupils make small model buggies with motors and evaluate

commercially produced slippers to design and make their own slippers for Christmas presents. The Year 6 pupils spoken to were clearly proud of their slippers and spoke enthusiastically about the way they were made and the pleasure they had when relatives were given them at Christmas. Some pupils made the slippers for an adult whilst others made them for children. A particular strength of the subject, and one that contributes to the good achievements of pupils, is the way that they often carefully disassemble or evaluate commercial products before designing, making and evaluating their own.

116. As only one design and technology lesson was observed during the inspection, it is not possible to make an overall evaluation on the quality of teaching at either key stage. However, in the one lesson observed for Years 3 and 4, teaching was very good. The lesson was very well organised and well resourced and provided very good challenge for the pupils. The teacher organised the pupils in to three groups for knitting, weaving and designing and making 'mock-up' purses and wallets out of newspaper. All pupils were challenged by the task, achieved well and made good progress. The learning support assistants ensured that pupils with special educational needs were fully included and made equally good progress. The attitudes of the pupils were very good and they showed pleasure and pride in their work. Behaviour was also very good and they worked in a calm and purposeful way. The lesson contributed well to the spiritual, social and cultural development of the pupils.
117. The previous inspection judged that there was insufficient guidance to help teachers plan for progression. This has been addressed by the introduction of a nationally produced scheme of work.

GEOGRAPHY

118. No teaching was observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection week. However, evidence from lessons in Key Stage 2, discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of planning, displays and previous work across the school indicate that the majority of pupils reach the expected standards for their age by the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily, as at the time of the last inspection.
119. By the age of seven, pupils begin to distinguish different types and features of buildings during walks around Helmdon and by comparing and making models of homes in different countries. They build upon earlier experiences of making pictorial maps of the village and of their route to school, by using simple keys and locating additional features they would like to see to improve the environment on the Isle of Struay. They compare aspects of life in the village of Tocuaro in Mexico with those in Helmdon. Younger pupils do traffic counts of the road outside the school to find out if it is busier at different times of the day.
120. By the age of eleven, pupils have a sound knowledge of the features of their own locality, which they compare with those of contrasting localities that they visit, such as Torquay. They develop appropriate mapping skills and can describe, for example, some of the main characteristics of mountainous environments in different parts of the world. They made good use of their skills in information and communication technology to obtain additional relevant information from the Internet to extend their knowledge of such areas and to make links with economic factors such as tourism. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make confident use of four figure grid references to locate places on maps and to describe routes and some extend this to six figure references. Pupils in Year 5 use atlases and reference books to research factual information about different countries. Some higher attaining pupils question apparent discrepancies and cross check sources to resolve these, while pupils with special educational needs are helped to make steady progress through well pitched activities and the effective help of learning support assistants.
121. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good. In Year 6, for example, the teacher made good use of pupils' experiences and knowledge of outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in the local area to engage their interest. She used skilful questioning to help them make links with the national situation from this, and to increase their understanding its effects on people's lives. Several pupils explained clearly ways in which tourism and agricultural businesses have been affected. The teacher also gave good attention to extending pupils' vocabulary by ensuring that they both understand and use terminology such as 'economic links'. Teachers often plan

activities that enable pupils to practise their skills in mathematics and information and communication technology as well as improving their geographical skills. Pupils, for example, use databases to collate and sort factual information about different countries and interpret graphs and charts about the incidence of foot and mouth disease. However, in one lesson seen, the pace of geographical learning slowed when the teacher took the class to search for relevant web sites in the information and communication technology suite.

122. Since the last inspection, the subject has not been a priority for development and some aspects of the subject are not taught in sufficient depth. At present, for example, teachers do not make enough use of fieldwork and opportunities in the local area, including the school's own environmental area, for pupils to develop their fieldwork techniques and enquiry skills. However the co-ordinator, who is new this year, is addressing this by appropriately monitoring planning and undertaking training this term, which she intends to share with colleagues next term.

HISTORY

123. It was not possible to observe any teaching of history during the inspection week. Therefore, judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning, displays and discussion with pupils and teachers.
124. By the age of 7 and 11, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they reach standards that are similar to other pupils of their age. Pupils are able to recall their work in history lessons and are developing a sound understanding of chronology and historical facts. They find information through books, pictures and from videos and have opportunities to handle relevant artefacts. Good use is made of visits to local places of interest. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils visit the Egyptology section of Abington Museum and also the Iron Bridge Museum. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know the main facts of the Fire of London, the key moments in the life of the Victorian nurse Florence Nightingale, and the effect the Second World War had on the lives of children. They know the difference between holidays taken by their parents and grandparents to holidays of today. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can soundly recall their Egyptian and Greek topics and their work on the Tudors and the Victorians. The Year 6 pupils spoken to during the inspection week recalled their work with enjoyment. They were especially eager to talk about a visit by an archaeologist, who brought in boxes of sand with buried artefacts. The pupils then had to carefully carry out an archaeological dig in the boxes to find the hidden artefacts. It clearly brought to life for the pupils the work of the archaeologist.
125. No teaching of history was seen during the inspection week. Therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about teaching and its impact on learning. However, the work in pupils' topic folders is well presented and indicates high expectations.
126. There are good links between history and literacy. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils write letters to their relatives to ask about their childhood holidays. In the scrutiny of pupils' work, examples were seen of letters written in response by grandparents to their grandchild about their recollections of family holidays by the sea when they were children. Pupils also write accounts of the Fire of London and the importance of Remembrance Day. At Key Stage 2 pupils write an Egyptian fairy tale and chronicle the main events in the life of the musician, John Lennon. There are also good links with mathematics. Time lines put each topic in to context. At Key Stage 1, pupils produce their own timeline of the Fire of London. In Year 6 pupils use time lines to show the changes from 1953 to today.
127. Resources are satisfactory. However, the number of artefacts owned by the school is limited. Good use is made of loan services and contributions from parents to supplement artefacts for the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

128. During the inspection week, it was only possible to observe lessons at Key Stage 2. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1. Therefore, judgements at Key Stage 1 are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, teachers' planning and assessment records and discussion with pupils and teachers.
129. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with what is expected of seven and eleven year olds in all aspects of the subject. Increasingly, good opportunities are being provided for pupils to use information technology across the curriculum, notably in English, mathematics, geography, science and art. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve appropriately against their prior attainment. The new computer suite is having a positive impact on the raising of standards, as whole class lessons can now be taught, which ensure pupils have the skills needed to use computers and the programs.
130. By the age of seven, pupils confidently use the mouse to open files and folders, select from an on-screen menu, delete and insert letters and words and print their work. They know that information can be obtained from television, video, tape and CD-ROMS. Displays show that pupils use the computer to word-process and to produce block graphs and pie charts to show the most popular pets.
131. By the age of 11, pupils confidently log-on, manipulate screen icons using the mouse, select items from an on-screen menu and use the 'drag and drop' features of a program. They write stories and fact-files using different fonts, font sizes, colours and border patterns and draw pictures to show symmetry or to represent the painting style of well-known artists; for example, Seurat. Pupils can import clip art pictures in to their text. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed rewriting and designing the school prospectus to be sent to parents. They confidently used the keyboard to word-process their text, changed the font style, colour and size, resized the school logo at the top of the text and imported pictures to enhance the text. Pupils then saved their work on a floppy disk for later use. Year 6 pupils also confidently work the tape recorder and over-head projector in assemblies.
132. It is not possible to judge the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory overall. In a third of lessons observed the quality of teaching was very good. The improvement in teaching is partly a result of staff training, which has improved teachers' confidence and expertise. The school secretary, who, until recently, was the governor for information and communication technology, is very knowledgeable and also gives teachers good practical support, which is much appreciated by them. The development of the computer suite now allows for whole class teaching of skills. Pupils are taught about new programs with an initial demonstration to the whole class. This gives them a clear understanding of how the program works and the aims of the program. In a very good Years 4 and 5 lesson observed, the teacher introduced a data base program with a prepared bank of information about the pupils in the school. The bank contained simple information of pupils' names, age, date of birth, eye colour, height and weight. The teacher began the lesson by comparing a database to a geography box file of index cards, in which the class had written key facts about different countries. She also showed the pupils how index cards were used in the school office. This immediately allowed the pupils to see how a database is simply an electronic version of an index card system. The class then moved to the computer suite, where the teacher's good subject knowledge, appropriate use of technical vocabulary, and a well prepared lesson plan for guidance, allowed her to quickly talk through how the database worked. The use of information that pupils could relate to meant that they quickly understood the basic principles of data handling and sorting. The pupils were very motivated and interested and showed a clear sense of achievement as they began to sort fields using the on screen arrow keys. The lesson contributed well to geography and mathematics.
133. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily and are now beginning to build effectively on their skills and knowledge. At present, there is no established system of assessment to support tracking of pupils' skills

progression but one is being trialled ready for introduction in September. Boys and girls display the same good attitudes and the same growing confidence and interest in the subject. They are eager to learn new skills and happy to share these with their classmates. However, the computer suite does not have enough computers and stools for pupils in the larger classes to be fully involved in the lesson. Not all pupils have enough time in the lesson for 'hands on' experience although they happily watch and discuss the work with their peers.

134. The previous inspection judged that the computers were dated and unreliable. This has been addressed by the hard work and dedication of the staff, governors and parents in the school, who have built a computer suite, which presently has 11 multimedia computers. The school plans to add at least two more computers in the near future. The generosity of those who gave up their time to build the suite, and who also donated computer hardware, stools and building material, meant that the suite was built at a third of the planned cost. As well as the equipment in the suite, the reception class has 2 computers and the Years 1 and 2 class has three computers. There are no computers in Key Stage 2 classrooms but the school plans to equip the library with computers, which will allow Key Stage 2 pupils to have better access to computers. The school does not have a digital camera, video camera or sensor equipment. At present it relies on borrowing digital cameras from parents, staff or governors. Sensor equipment is used very effectively during the school's residential visits. Therefore, all areas of the information technology curriculum are taught. However, the school recognises that further equipment is needed. It is borrowing a number of sensors for a science week, which will be used by the pupils and also trailed by staff before the most suitable are purchased.
135. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has identified the strengths of the subject and the areas for development. She is aware that staff training and confidence is still an issue and this is being addressed through a national training initiative. Teachers have sufficiently high expectations in lessons but not all have sufficient knowledge of programs and cross-curricular links. Good use is made of learning support assistants and parents in lessons. They are given good guidance by teachers and support pupils well. The introduction of a nationally produced scheme of work is ensuring that the curriculum is broad and balanced and has continuity and progression. The school's secretary and the newly appointed governor for the information technology give good support to the subject. Displays are used well, especially at Key Stage 2, to celebrate work in information technology. The subject is well placed for continued improvement and development.

MUSIC

136. Limited evidence from lessons seen during the inspection, together with evidence from discussions with staff and pupils, and scrutiny of planning, indicates that the most pupils reach the expected standards for their age by the end of both key stages. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. Many make good progress in performing in singing as at the time of the last inspection, because they are taught well and have good opportunities to practise their skills beyond lessons.
137. By the age of seven, pupils sing an appropriate variety of songs from memory, tunefully and with enthusiasm. When learning 'On The Street Where I Live', they maintained a steady beat, although not all were confident at first in clapping parts of the rhythm. The teacher kept up a brisk pace, which helped pupils to concentrate well on practising the small sections suggested. By the end of the short lesson, their diction was clearer and they showed improving control over the tempo. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to build progressively on their skills. By the time they leave school, they perform a good range of songs confidently, in school assemblies, services and performances such as 'Papa Panov'. The majority can maintain steady pulse when playing different rhythms together using untuned and body percussion and show an appropriate understanding of how elements such as dynamics, duration and texture can be used to achieve particular effects. They record their compositions, making use of graphic and simple conventional notation. However, the only pupils to show good rhythmic awareness, listening and appraising skills are those bringing additional knowledge from individual instrumental tuition. The school is aware of this and has introduced a new scheme that supports teachers in planning a curriculum that is now well balanced and helps pupils to build their all of their skills systematically.

138. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good. In a well taught lesson for Year 6 pupils, the teacher told the story behind Saint-Saens' 'Danse Macabre' very effectively in a way that at once fully engaged pupils' interest and also set a purposeful context for their new composition. She built effectively on their previous experience of composition by introducing the pentatonic scale and its use in melodic ostinati. Although some pupils found this challenging initially, her own carefully structured, very precise explanations and demonstrations and the links she made with other areas of their learning, such as the use of the iambic pentameter in poetry, increased both their understanding and confidence. As a result, they worked well in pairs using xylophones to successfully compose and perform together appropriate ostinati. Teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject and the very good relationships that exist help to motivate pupils well, while their use of an interesting range of activities in lessons and a brisk pace help pupils to sustain their interest well. However, in general, teachers do not make enough use of opportunities to introduce music and musicians from non-Western cultures.
139. The recently appointed co-ordinator has ensured that the new scheme that meets the requirements of the revised National Curriculum and provides useful support for teachers' planning. She has also increased the range of extra-curricular activities in the subject. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have good opportunities to extend their musical interests. The lunchtime choir and recorder clubs are well attended and the school is very appreciative of the help they receive from parents and the local vicar in running these. A considerable number of pupils also receive individual brass, woodwind or strings tuition and they have regular opportunities to extend their developing skills by playing or singing together in concerts and festivals. This promotes their social and cultural development well. However, the present timetable arrangements for individual music lessons result in some pupils repeatedly missing lessons in other subjects, such as literacy, numeracy and physical education.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. During the inspection week, it was only possible to observe one indoor games lesson at Key Stage 1 and two outdoor games lessons at Key Stage 2. No gymnastics, dance or swimming lessons were seen. Therefore, judgements are based on the limited observation of all areas of the physical education curriculum, teachers' planning, assessment records and discussion with teachers and pupils. Judgements are similar to those of the previous inspection.
141. By age of 7 and 11, standards overall are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately. By the age of 11, standards in swimming are above expectations with all pupils being able to swim 25 metres and the majority more than 100 metres.
142. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1, therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. However, teaching in the lesson observed was good and pupils made good progress. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and set a good example to pupils by dressing appropriately and leading by example. They ensure that all pupils dress appropriately. Lessons include the essential elements of warming up and cooling down. Lessons are well paced, which ensures that pupils work hard all of the time and make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and manage the pupils well throughout lessons. This results in good behaviour in lessons. In the Key Stage 1 lesson observed, the well-planned activities quickly developed the pupils' skills with a large ball. By the end of the lesson, they were able to send and receive the ball with accuracy, and within a defined space, and control the ball using the chest as well as feet. In a good Years 3 and 4 athletics lesson, the pupils clearly felt challenged by the tasks set by the teacher and enjoyed rising to challenge. The pupils were set personal targets to improve in throwing the beanbag, skipping and running and recorded their progress on individual record sheets. Good use was made of the learning support assistant to take small groups to practise throwing a soft javelin, in a safe environment away from the main group of pupils. Teachers do not always give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate to each other or to constructively evaluate each other's performance and they generally do not make pupils aware of how continuous exercise affects the body and heart rate. All teachers stress the need for safety in lessons and have good control. Pupils are usually good at responding immediately.

143. As part of the school's initiative to improve standards in science, Year 5 pupils, in the same class as Year 4, join Year 6 pupils for games lessons whilst Year 4 pupils have a science lesson. Although this generally works well, the teacher takes a much larger group for games than normal. The result is that pupils work well together in small group activities but some get bored in a whole class game because they have to wait too long to get a turn.
144. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to perform with suppleness, control, accuracy and safety, a range of basic skills such as throwing, catching, balancing and travelling in a variety of ways and directions. They generally work well in teams and understand the tactics and rules of a variety of attack and invasion games.
145. The school uses a published scheme and national guidelines as a basis for planning. This ensures continuity and progression. The main playground and hall are adequate in size and there is a large field, which is also used by the community. There is a good range of extra curricular activities, which includes football, netball, cricket, rounders, cross-country running and dance. They are well attended, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school takes part in a number of league activities and has danced at local festivals. The use of information and communication technology to support the subject in school is underdeveloped. However, pupils make good use of computers and sensors during the residential visits. For example, they use personal sensors to monitor their heart rates when abseiling and when travelling down a wire from a height to the ground. The results are then fed into a computer and analysed. Pupils also take photographs of the activities using a digital camera. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has ensured that it has remained high profile within the school. She has a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and areas to develop, which are highlighted in her development plan. Some pupils regularly miss all or part of the physical education lessons to have music tuition, which reduces their time spent on this subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. Evidence from the small number of lessons seen during the inspection, together with discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of planning, displays and previous work indicate that standards broadly meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve satisfactorily overall as they move through the school. They develop a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity. Standards are similar to those described in the previous report.
147. By the end of Year 2, pupils are familiar with the events of the Christian celebrations of Easter and Christmas. Some pupils show a detailed knowledge, for example, of the role of Pontius Pilate and the Resurrection stories. They can offer some reasons why Christians go to church such as to say thank you and to worship God and Jesus. They know that Harvest is a time of thanksgiving and find out about the Jewish festival of Sukkot. They explore and share their thoughts about friendship and what makes them sad or happy. By the age of eleven, pupils are familiar with many of the stories from the Old and New Testaments. They show a good knowledge of Christianity when discussing the differences between the Anglican, Baptist and Roman Catholic traditions. They can describe the origins of Sikhism and some of its main beliefs and how these influence the way that its followers lead their lives. They reflect thoughtfully on the importance of concepts such as equality to themselves and they feel this is reflected in some religions, drawing examples from Christianity and Sikhism. They have a superficial knowledge of some of the festivals and practices of Islam and Hinduism, but confuse the religions to which these belong.
148. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good. A particular strength was the way that teachers modelled good listening skills very well and used carefully structured and targeted questions to help pupils to clarify their ideas and feelings. This helps pupils to improve their oracy skills as well as promoting their personal and spiritual development. In a very well taught lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, skilful questioning resulted in several pupils giving clear explanations of their understanding of a miracle. The teacher had high expectations of pupils, which were underpinned by very good classroom organisation and challenging tasks that were very well matched to their differing ages and abilities. She made good use of well-briefed students and adults to help lower attaining pupils. These factors resulted in all pupils working

hard and completing a remarkable amount of good quality work in a very short time. Within five minutes, for example, a group of higher attaining pupils, working on their own, had neatly recorded two or three reasons why Christians believe that Jesus is special. Good examples of skilful questioning were also seen in a well taught lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5 about the Christian teaching of treating others as you would wish to be treated. Pupils' learning was enhanced by opportunities to discuss their views on this in small groups and to explore how it might be seen in action through role-play. The teacher kept pupils well focused on these activities by the effective use of time targets. As a result of such teaching, many pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in understanding and expressing their thoughts and emotions as they move through the school. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers mean that pupils of all abilities are confident in sharing their ideas and feelings, secure in the knowledge that both teachers and their peers will value and respect what they have to say.

149. The co-ordinator, who is part-time teacher, has only been in post this year. She has already carefully revised the yearly planning of the curriculum to ensure that pupils in Key Stage 2, in particular, have opportunities to study Hinduism and Islam in greater depth than at present. Regular visits from the ministers and priests of local churches make a very useful contribution to pupils' learning, but, as yet, not enough is done to enrich pupils' experience through, for example, visits to places of worship of other faiths. The subject makes a good contribution to the personal, spiritual, moral social and cultural development of the pupils, for example in fostering respect for the values and beliefs of others and in forming their own. Assemblies often include themes that support topics in religious education lessons and teachers make good links with these.