

INSPECTION REPORT

DUNTON VC LOWER SCHOOL

Biggleswade

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109599

Headteacher: Mrs K J M Luscombe

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock
21261

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th July 2001

Inspection number: 194191

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Graham Wiley
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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11094	Ian Murray Blair	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and behaviour Care and welfare of pupils Partnership with parents
14816	Sandra Gordon	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Religious education Areas of learning for the Foundation Stage Special educational needs	Leadership and management

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Dunton VC Lower School is in the centre of Dunton village, in south-west Bedfordshire. There are 44 children between 5 and 9 years of age on roll. It is much smaller than other primary schools. Almost all children have had some form of pre-schooling before starting school full-time after their fifth birthday. On entry, baseline assessment shows the full range of attainment is generally present, although there are variations year by year. Approximately 2.3 per cent of pupils are of minority ethnic origin. The same proportion is learning English as an additional language. Afrikaans is listed as the only language other than English represented in school. No pupils are eligible for free school meals, a figure well below the national average. Approximately 11.6 per cent of pupils are on the Code of Practice register of special educational needs, lower than the national average. Around 2.3 per cent have a Statement of special need, above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Dunton VC Lower School is a very effective school. It has many strengths. Its caring, welcoming ethos ensures that pupils are happy. They are very well taught, so – whatever their age – they frequently achieve good standards in subjects across the curriculum. The headteacher is a very good leader, with high expectations of what all members of the school community will achieve. The school's aims and values are firmly rooted in its Christian principles and in the strong relationship it has with the parish church. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils from Reception age upwards frequently achieve good standards, especially in English, mathematics, science and music. At times, standards in art are also high.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are very good. They enjoy learning and like to be challenged. They form very good relationships with one another and with adults.
- The good and better quality of much of the teaching accounts for pupils' positive attitudes to school and standards achieved.
- The teaching of music is good and the subject makes a significant contribution to school life.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.
- The care and welfare of pupils are very good and at the forefront of the school's practice. Equality of opportunity is a guiding principle; the school provides well for all its pupils.
- Leadership and management of the school are excellent, because the headteacher and key staff work in close partnership towards common goals. School staff form a very strong team.
- Governors play an active role in the school's daily life. They are good 'critical' friends.
- Financial management is very good. The school is well run on a daily basis.
- Partnership with parents is very good. Parents play an important part in the school's affairs.

What could be improved

- The monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms.
- Provision for information and communication technology.
- Accommodation for the headteacher, secretary and staff.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good gains since the previous inspection. It has dealt with all issues identified for improvement. However, whilst gymnastics equipment allows improved delivery of the physical education curriculum, limited space for gymnastics and dance mean that teachers continue to be hampered in their planning for and delivery of these aspects. The school reviews policies and schemes in line with curricular guidance. Parents are well informed about all aspects of their children's schooling in annual reports, although not all reports indicate how pupils might improve and information about attendance is not given.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

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

Key	
top 5% of schools	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

It is difficult to draw conclusions about pupils' results in statutory tests because of the small numbers in each year group (represented in the table). Only eleven pupils took the 2000 tests - one more than the number requiring results to be reported. This means that comparisons with national trends over time are not available and comparisons between girls' and boys' results are not made. Nor are results statistically reliable. Otherwise, pupils attained broadly in line with pupils in all schools at levels expected for seven-year-olds in reading and writing in 2000. They attained below these levels in mathematics. Compared to similar schools' results, pupils attained well below the average in all three tests. Teachers assessed pupils as well below expected levels in speaking and listening and in science. Inspection evidence reveals very varied attainments in the current Year 3 (that is, the one taking the 2000 tests), with a significant proportion of pupils needing support for their learning, especially in writing and mathematics. It also shows that teacher-assessments of pupils' likely test outcomes were reasonably accurate, with one or two pupils doing better than predicted in some tests. Predictions about future test results (for example, for target setting in English and mathematics) are based on good assessment information. Current Year 2 pupils are all judged likely to reach levels expected for seven-year-olds in statutory tests and in teacher assessments, with higher attaining pupils and some of average attainment exceeding these. Pupils make good progress. Year 4 pupils about to transfer to a Middle School reach good standards overall in all aspects of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They succeed at least in line with expectations for nine-year-olds with high attaining pupils and those of average attainment doing much better than this. Pupils in both key stages apply their literacy and numeracy skills well to other subjects. Overall, standards achieved in information and communication technology are satisfactory at ages seven and nine. At times, standards are good. Access to computers is restricted, because few machines are available, affecting standards generally. All pupils achieve high standards when singing and performing pieces of music on a wide range of instruments in assembly. From Year 2, pupils play recorders to a good standard. Similarly, pupils of all ages sometimes achieve high standards in art. In religious education, standards are also good at seven and nine. Pupils build well on previous learning and standards in geography and history are good by the time they are ready to leave school. Across the school, pupils reach good standards in assembling and making products for design and technology, although their ability in the design element of the subject is limited because teachers do not stress this. No overall judgements about standards in physical education are made because only swimming was seen. Here, pupils reach standards to be expected at age seven and nine in developing water confidence and appropriate swimming skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils come to school eagerly and show real pleasure at being there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils care for one another in many ways, both in lessons and at play during break times.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils form very positive relationships with one another and with the adults who work with them.
Attendance	Very good.

This is an area of considerable strength. Pupils are very obviously happy in school. They look forward each day to what is on offer, and have very positive attitudes. They like to be challenged by work set. They co-

operate at work and play with high degrees of skill. Their very good attendance and punctuality positively affect standards.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good

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

Teaching is frequently good (40 per cent) or better (40 per cent). Of the latter, 12 per cent is judged excellent and 28 per cent very good. No teaching is less than satisfactory. The high quality of much teaching explains pupils' enjoyment of lessons and their wish to succeed. They frequently reach higher standards than expected, for their age, across the curriculum. The partnership between the headteacher and her part-time class teaching partner works well in the Key Stage 1 classroom. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. Teachers' planning generally takes appropriate account of individual education plans for pupils on the Code of Practice register of special needs, including those with Statements of special need. On occasion, however, pupils' progress is hampered, because demands in written work are not always matched well to targets. Where teaching is very good or excellent in both key stages, teachers assess all pupils' learning needs and provision is then well matched to these. This practice works especially well with pupils who have behavioural difficulties. The very good support these pupils receive means they frequently do better than expected, joining in lessons and staying on task. Team work between teachers and support staff and at whole-school level is a strength. Class teachers deploy support staff to very good effect. Particularly effective support is that provided by a Nursery Nurse for the youngest pupils in Key Stage 1. Her work ensures that Reception children are monitored so that planning meets their needs within the Foundation Stage curriculum and, later, as appropriate, within the demands of the early Key Stage 1 curriculum. Specialist teaching support for information and communication technology is very good, promoting pupils' learning in data handling in Key Stage 2 –an agreed focus. The school is aware of weaknesses in provision for the subject, affecting teachers' planning and standards reached. Teachers insufficiently stress the design element of design and technology although their teaching of the making and assembling aspects of the subject is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs across the age-range.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Strengths are evident in provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils are integrated successfully into the life of the school and join fully in all classroom and school work, because their learning needs are well catered for.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school strongly emphasises teaching about spiritual matters. Equally, it teaches pupils about right and wrong and about the diversity of society, and of the importance of harmonious relationships within the school and wider community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	To very good effect. This is an area of considerable strength.

The school's very good partnership with parents is another area of strength. Parents are very well involved in the life of the school. A good home/school agreement is fully operational. The school meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Weaknesses identified in aspects of provision for information and communication technology are being addressed through school improvement planning. It is difficult to see how provision for the delivery of dance and gymnastics in physical education could be improved, since this has to do with the size of the school hall. Extra-curricular activities relating to classroom learning are very good. Visits to places of interest and visitors to school are integral to provision. Activities outside school time are limited. In so far as is feasible, the school provides after school clubs (football is organised by a group from Peterborough).

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent, overall. The headteacher and her key colleague work in close partnership towards common goals. The headteacher provides very good leadership, promoting team work in all staff members.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	To very good effect. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their involvement in school life and the good quality information they receive on all aspects of schooling.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good, overall. The headteacher, key staff and governors have a good overview of provision, although teaching and learning are not consistently monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Specific grants are used for their designated purposes. Financial planning is very good and governors monitor all budgetary matters effectively.

In their capacity as subject co-ordinators, teachers do not formally monitor teaching and learning in classrooms. Staffing is sufficient to meet the needs of the age-range taught. Part-time staff members and visiting specialists make a good contribution to school life. Classroom accommodation is adequate, overall. In addition to its limiting delivery of physical education, the hall's size means that pupils are cramped at lunch time when they eat together. Accommodation for the headteacher, staff and secretary is unsatisfactory. All share the same room. There is no private space for the headteacher, whereby she can talk to people in confidence. The school applies principles of best value to very good effect. It seeks consistently to ensure it is achieving such value in all its purchasing.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like going to school and enjoy lessons. They make good progress. Teaching is very good, so children reach good standards. Teachers have very high expectations of all children's work and behaviour. Teachers are very approachable. The school works closely with parents. The school helps children become mature and take responsibility. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well indeed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework provision. Information provided by the school. Activities outside of the school day. The length of the lunch break.

Inspectors agree with parents' very positive views of the school. Homework tasks suitably emphasise reading throughout the school. As children grow older, tasks broaden. Very good quality information is given to parents, but inspectors agree it would be helpful if parents knew in advance what is being taught and had good warning of important dates in the school calendar. As noted, extra-curricular activities beyond the school day are limited. Parents state they appreciate the evident constraints on teachers' time in this matter. Inspectors agree that the time given to the lunch break is quite long.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school notes significant variations in levels of attainment in each year group, making judgements for any group difficult. However, looking at current Reception year children, baseline assessment on entry to school revealed above expected attainments. Inspection evidence, too, shows that these children have reached the Early Learning Goals in all areas and are already capable of managing National Curricular tasks for the start of Key Stage 1. They have very well developed social, personal and emotional skills, are well integrated into school life and take a full part in all it has to offer. They answer questions in class or assemblies articulately and do not hesitate to offer their own observations and questions. They have good reading skills, can re-tell familiar stories by using pictures as clues and read simple texts by recognising commonly occurring words. They are developing well-formed handwriting. For example, they can write their own names and copy words correctly and neatly. They formulate their own sentences about the things they do and are beginning to write these independently to a good standard. They are developing a good understanding of number. Children can count to 100, identifying odd and even numbers by 'whispering' or 'shouting' alternately when counting in class. They make sets of pairs from objects and some count in pairs accurately beyond 10, recording work by using signs for 'addition' and 'equals' correctly in sums of repeated addition relating to multiplication. They join in a science lesson looking for mini-beasts, noticing similarities and differences between them, showing good powers of observation. They use a range of art materials confidently. They love music lessons and know a variety of songs by heart, accompanying these in time with instruments. They join in swimming activities in the school pool and are learning water skills suitable for their age (they can open their eyes under water). They enjoy climbing and balancing on playground equipment.
2. In the 2000 statutory tests, seven-year-olds' scores were close to the national average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics at the expected Level 2 and above. These results hide the fact that pupils achieved very high results in mathematics in terms solely of the expected Level 2 (placing them in the top five per cent of schools on this criterion). Because results at the higher Level 3 were poor, the overall score for mathematics was adversely affected (that is, when points awarded for each level are aggregated to give an average score). In reading and writing, on the other hand, results at the higher Level 3 were, respectively, well above or above average. Here, it was the results at the lower Level 2 and below this that dragged down overall results. Results are well below the average for pupils in similar schools in all three tests. Teacher assessments in science showed pupils attaining well below the national average at expected levels and above this at the higher Level 3. In speaking and listening, assessments placed pupils well below the national average at Level 2, but well above at Level 3. Caution is necessary in the interpretation of results where cohorts of pupils are very small. Only eleven pupils took the tests and were assessed by teachers – only one more than the number requiring results to be reported. It is not possible to place statistical reliance on results of this order. In fact, because of the small size of cohorts, trends over time are not related to national trends, nor are boys' and girls' results compared.
3. Inspection evidence reveals very varied levels of attainment in the current Year 3 (that is, the one taking the 2000 tests). It also shows that teacher-assessments of pupils' likely test outcomes were reasonably accurate, with one or two pupils doing better than predicted in some tests. Predictions about future test results (for example, for target setting purposes in English and mathematics) are based on information gathered both from baseline assessment on pupils' entry to school and on teachers' regular assessments of learning over time. These assessments are of good quality. A significant proportion of Year 3 pupils still needs support with learning in all subjects of the curriculum, particularly in relation to writing tasks and mathematics where difficulties are found.
4. Evidence shows that current Year 2 pupils are likely to improve on last year's results and early indications of test and assessment results show this to be the case. Although the full range of attainments is present, all are judged likely to reach the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, with higher attaining pupils and some of average attainment doing better. Pupils of all attainments have good speaking and listening skills. They are attentive in lessons, asking questions and contributing their own ideas to class discussions. Pupils develop good reading skills by seven. For example, a pupil of average attainment reads quite a demanding text with understanding, using a range of strategies with unknown words (as when he 'sounded out' letters and blended them together). High attaining pupils and those of average attainment develop good skills in writing for a range of purposes.

All mostly punctuate sentences and spell correctly (especially for comprehension tasks). They have good number skills, swiftly doubling numbers such as 10, 25, 40 and 100 in response to 'quick questions' at the start of lessons. In a discussion about multiplication patterns, a high attaining pupil suddenly realised that if she can work out 8×10 she can also work out 8×100 . Pupils are learning that division is an inverse number operation to multiplication. They reach good standards in experimental and investigative science when working practically. Standards in their recorded work are judged satisfactory. Pupils undertake simple investigations successfully and reach sensible conclusions based on their results. They look closely at themselves to explore how they use their senses, recording their results effectively on picture graphs. They explain the function of each sense and report well what their graphs record.

5. Pupils make good progress and build successfully on earlier learning. Year 4 pupils about to transfer to a Middle School reach good standards, overall, in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. They succeed at least in line with expectations for nine-year-olds, with high attaining pupils and those of average attainment doing much better than this. They are confident at speaking out in class discussions and explaining their ideas. They contribute with equal confidence in school assemblies. Pupils of average and above average attainment read fluently at a level well matched to their capabilities. All pupils use punctuation correctly and read for meaning when reading aloud. They enjoy the activity and can explain a story content well. They are very competent writers. Across attainments, but most notably in average and high attainers, pupils have very good skills in extended story writing by the end of Year 4. These more able pupils strive for interest through the words they choose, varying the way they start sentences. All write for diverse cross-curricular purposes. They manipulate numbers with ease when taking part in whole class 'mental maths' sessions, as when they count in 10s from any given point on a 100 square without using a visual aid (counting from 7 to 297 rapidly, for example). They quickly see how to make a whole from parts when working on fractions in a class game. They show a good grasp of equivalent fractions for recording purposes and when explaining their work at the end of lessons. Pupils reach good standards in practical, experimental and investigative work and in recording results in science, by nine years of age. Through topics such as 'Ourselves' and 'animal habitats', they learn to identify and compare the main body parts of humans and other animals. They learn about conditions needed to sustain life and growth and differentiate living from dead and 'never alive' objects.
6. Pupils with special educational needs in both key stages, including those with Statements of special need, make satisfactory progress, overall. Those with behavioural difficulties make good progress, because of support helping them work alongside peers. Consequently, they reach standards better than might be expected at times. All benefit from support that generally helps them achieve intended learning outcomes in line with their prior attainment. At times, however, progress is hampered because demands in written work, especially, are not always matched well to pupils' needs as identified in their individual education plans. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress and are able to participate fully in school life through the support they receive.
7. Pupils apply literacy and numeracy skills well to other subjects. For example, at seven, they write about history with simple punctuation and correct spelling. They measure accurately, as when pupils in the early key stage measure mini-beasts in science with standard measures and pupils in the later key stage record air temperatures with a thermometer. In both key stages, their exercise books show they can produce careful handwriting during handwriting practice and sometimes across the curriculum. Frequently, however, standards of presentation are below what might be expected, unless work is for public display. Overall, standards achieved in information and communication technology are satisfactory and good at times both by ages seven and nine, prior to pupils' transfer to their next school. Pupils' daily access to computers means that they can apply computer skills to ongoing work. However, access is restricted because of the limited number of machines. By seven, pupils use a computer keyboard confidently. They access relevant programs by means of a 'drop down' menu and save and print work once they know it is complete, using a mouse. Years 3 and 4 pupils have a good grasp of the advantages and disadvantages of using email and chat lines. They find information for history and geography on the Internet. They use a data-handling program to good effect. They know how to enter information about favourite colours on pie charts and bar charts.
8. Pupils across the age-range frequently reach good standards in non-core subjects. For example, they reach high standards in assembly, singing songs and hymns and playing pieces of music on a number of instruments. From Year 2, they reach high standards with recorders. Standards in art are also high at times - as seen in work by pupils from Reception to Year 4 chosen for exhibition at an annual art event in a local High School. Standards in religious education are good, too. By seven, pupils are developing a secure knowledge of the Christian religion. They grasp the importance of celebrations in other religions and are starting to learn about similarities between faiths. By nine, they name and describe

some main festivals, such as Easter and Christmas for Christians and Passover for Jews. They refer to happenings in the New Testament stories as 'miracles', believing a miracle is something 'that is special and different from what usually happens and God is always in it'. Pupils of seven reach standards at least in line with those expected, in geography and history. They build well on previous learning and reach good standards by nine, when recording skills are secure and work demonstrates a good grasp of what has been taught. Pupils across the school reach good standards in assembling and making objects for design and technology. Their understanding of how to 'design' before 'making' is limited, however, because teachers do not stress design in lessons. In physical education, only swimming was seen and overall judgements for the subject are, therefore, not made. Despite limitations in the size of the school pool, pupils reach standards to be expected at seven and at nine in swimming skills. They are comfortable in the water and are refining their strokes to let them swim short lengths of the pool by nine.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. This area remains one of considerable strength, as found by the previous inspection when very good standards were also reported. Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes towards school. They eagerly come each morning and show real pleasure at being in school. Their keen interest in school life keeps them fully involved in the activities on offer (from the Reception year onwards). Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and respond enthusiastically to questions in lessons, as well as asking pertinent questions of their own. They commit themselves to tasks and sustain interest throughout lessons, thus ensuring the high standards often achieved. To maintain such positive attitudes (given the very hot conditions pertaining at the time of the inspection and the general stuffiness of classrooms) is highly commendable. At break times, pupils make very good use of playground equipment available (such as large-scale climbing, balancing and swinging apparatus). They play games productively together. Indeed, the large-scale 'Four in a line' game always attracted a small crowd of enthusiastic onlookers. The very good attitudes of pupils result from both the frequently high quality of teaching and from teachers' expectations, pervading the whole school and contributing to its positive ethos. Pupils enjoy the sense of achievement gained from rising to challenges set.
10. Standards of behaviour by pupils of all ages, both in classrooms and around the school, are very good. For example, pupils' good behaviour on school visits received favourable comment from a coach driver during a recent visit to London's Science Museum. Pupils are well mannered and courteous towards each other and to their teachers and other adults. They benefit considerably from their use of the school's open-air swimming pool, behaving well throughout swimming lessons, enthusiastic and attentive to adults' instructions. No evidence was seen by inspectors of any bullying or other forms of oppressive behaviour, nor was any reported. There were no exclusions over the previous year. Pupils use learning resources and other equipment sensibly. For example, all pupils' careful handling of musical instruments during lessons and in assemblies is exemplary. They generally tidy up at the end of lessons, recognising that it is important to do so, as when pupils from Years 2 to 4 put chairs back where they belonged after talking to an inspector at lunch-time. They also treat school premises with respect. Such respectful behaviour results, again, from teachers' expectations. Lessons and other activities proceed at a good, orderly pace.
11. Relationships amongst pupils and between them and staff are very good. Pupils of all ages get on very well with each other. Their mutual support for each other in and out of classrooms is delightful, occurring in a natural and unforced way, with able pupils readily helping those who have difficulty. Competent Key Stage 2 readers, for example, gave quiet assistance to those who could not manage so well. As a matter of course, pupils send 'get well' cards to class mates when they are ill and receive them back into class with special welcomes when they return. Recently, they learned much about what can constitute anti-social behaviour as well as its impact on others when the school swimming pool was damaged by some younger pupils, meaning it had to be repaired before it was ready for use in the Summer term. Seeking fun during an icy play time, a group of pupils threw stones on to the iced over surface of the pool unaware that these not only pieced the ice but also damaged the pool's lining. They seemed to take this fairly dramatic lesson on 'right' and 'wrong' behaviour to heart. They respect the feelings of others. Through discussions in circle time, Years 3 and 4 pupils are developing sensitivity in detecting feelings of unhappiness behind their peers' naughtiness and know that responding to such behaviour unkindly might only make a problem worse. All know to apologise when they transgress or hurt others, even unintentionally. The strong bond between pupils and class teachers effectively aids pupils' personal development. Relationship between pupils and mid-day supervisors, although perfectly satisfactory, are less secure, because pupils are uncertain about the role of supervisory staff. So, at times, pupils may seem uncharacteristically defensive in explaining what they are doing to supervisors. They respond eagerly to the chance to take responsibilities. For example, designated pupils in Key Stage 2 set out their classroom for lessons and Year 4 pupils operate equipment such as the overhead

projector during assemblies. Parents are pleased that many pupils take initiative for their own learning, by carrying on with their tasks when they get home, even though these tasks have not been set as homework.

- Attendance is very good, being significantly higher than the national average for primary schools. Registers show no unauthorised absences during the current academic year and, presently, no individuals or groups of pupils have poor attendance records. Some are occasionally late, but usually only by a few minutes, so learning is largely unaffected. The very good attendance and punctuality of pupils is symptomatic of their enthusiasm for school, contributing substantially to their progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- Teaching is frequently good (40 per cent) or better (40 per cent). Of the latter, 12 per cent is judged excellent and 28 per cent very good. No teaching is less than satisfactory. Overall, it is very good. The high quality of much teaching explains pupils' enjoyment of lessons and their wish to succeed. They frequently reach higher standards than expected, for their age, across the curriculum. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged good in the main.
- Teachers know their pupils extremely well as individuals, so they have a good working knowledge of pupils' strengths and where support is most needed. Generally, they have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In fact, in most lessons, pupils rise to the challenges set for them by teachers' very high expectations, helped by teachers' encouraging pupils' beliefs in themselves. Adult support is well aimed at making sure that pupils stay on task. In the main, teachers have very good behaviour management skills. In good or better lessons, they stick closely to clear parameters set for behaviour, so that pupils are in no doubt about what is expected of them. For example, in a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson, a teacher insisted that one or two potentially disruptive boys sat up and gave their full attention. Through skilled questioning, she drew them in to the lesson, so they were able to undertake follow-up work. Teachers' sensitivity towards individuals' daily needs very evidently helps pupils overcome personal and emotional difficulties.
- Basic literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. Teachers structure lessons in line with national strategies for teaching English and mathematics, with pupils' prior learning taken into account. They include in such strategies pupils with special educational needs, including Statements of special need and those learning English as an additional language. Where teaching is very good or excellent, teaching is well geared to meeting the needs of all pupils through really skilled questioning and tasks matched effectively to different levels of learning need across the age-range in each class. For example, Reception children in the Key Stage 1 class listen eagerly in order to answer questions in a mathematics lesson, while Year 2 pupils are just as keenly involved. The youngest pupils give correct answers for doubling numbers thrown by a teacher on a die along with everyone else, while older pupils later extend their doubling to much higher numbers, explaining how they arrive at answers. Similarly, in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, pupils make good progress with writing 'persuasive' letters to the local council because a teacher engages all pupils in the introductory discussion and sets follow-up writing tasks that interest them and they can complete successfully. Tasks are structured so that Year 4 pupils work independently, while Year 3 pupils are helped to learn through word-searches in dictionaries and through using the appropriate words in their letters. Pupils have good spelling and reading skills, in part because of the way teaching consistently draws attention to features in words such as letter sounds and how these are blended to form the words. Such strategies help pupils when spelling and reading unknown words. Pupils are keenly interested in looking for patterns, whether in words or numbers and this was demonstrated very well when a Reception pupil excitedly pointed out a pattern of repeated words in a rhyme being studied.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is most frequently secure. They are continuing training in information and communication technology so as to deliver the full curriculum in this area. The school knows it has to tackle weaknesses in the teaching of control technology owed to a lack of resources. Specialist support, available through links with other local small schools, is very good, promoting pupils' learning in data handling in Key Stage 2 – an agreed focus for the support. Pupils' learning in dance and gymnastics in physical education is hampered because no space is large enough for whole-class lessons in these aspects of the subject. Music teaching is good through specialist input from a part-time member of staff. Pupils of all ages 'catch' the teacher's enthusiasm and love of the subject through her good matching of lesson content to their interests and abilities. Consequently, they reach standards, in singing and playing a range of instruments - including the recorder from Year 2 upwards - much higher than expected. Pupils also sometimes reach high standards in art because of good teaching. In fact, from Year 2 upwards, pupils talk enthusiastically to inspectors about all subjects, reflecting the quality of

experiences arranged by their teachers. For example, pupils from Years 2 to 4 talked in detail about religious education. They knew what they had learned about the Jewish and Buddhist faiths from visitors to school and discussed artefacts they had handled, connected with various themes, and features of the local church (such as the font for christenings).

17. Lesson planning is generally very good. Teachers share lesson aims with pupils, writing out teaching and learning intentions on boards as reminders of work in hand. These are frequently checked in a question-and-answer 'plenary' before lessons finish and pupils decide whether or not goals have been reached. For example, in a very good information and communication technology lesson, Key Stage 2 pupils explained how they had arrived at their poster designs and the elements incorporated, setting their explanations against the original purposes of the lesson. Planning takes very good account of how support staff are deployed. So, the Key Stage 1 Nursery Nurse works with Reception and Year 1 pupils, helping, especially, pupils known to benefit from consistent support. This includes pupils with identified learning needs on the Code of Practice register of special needs, who thus achieve at least in line with their prior attainment and participate alongside their peers. In Key Stage 2, a teaching assistant similarly helps pupils with identified needs to do well in lessons, with support targeted effectively to match the class teacher's planning. Teachers generally take appropriate account in their planning of individual education plans in line with Code of Practice requirements for pupils with special needs. This is notable, especially, in relation to targets set for pupils who experience behavioural difficulties. The very good support these pupils receive means they frequently do better than might be expected in terms of participating in lessons and staying on task to complete work. On occasion, the progress of pupils with identified learning needs is hampered, because demands in written work, especially, are not always matched well to the needs identified in individual education plans.
18. Where teaching is very good or excellent, class teachers monitor all pupils (including those receiving support) to check difficulties or whether pupils are ready for the next part of the lesson. They intervene judiciously to question or make suggestions, further checking their judgements. Support staff are very well briefed and tasks are well thought out to capture and hold pupils' interest. Satisfactory lessons lack such monitoring. The purpose of some tasks is not clear, nor is the way support is meant to help pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 1 art lesson, a teacher worked very successfully with the oldest pupils on the main task. Others worked, as usual, under the supervision of the Nursery Nurse. However, the task here was not actually incorporated into lesson planning and some pupils appeared less than enthusiastic about it since they had thoroughly enjoyed the whole-class part of the lesson when more stimulating work and ideas had been discussed. Although they were reminded helpfully of the possibility of painting or drawing their own pictures and some chose these options, most stayed with a worksheet, which had them colouring in small pictures of characters from well-known stories. More generally, class teachers and support staff work together as teams in each classroom and as a school team, so that everyone concerned with teaching and learning is informed about these. Support staff have a very good understanding of teachers' overall aims linked to pupils' learning goals. They make sure that teachers are fully informed about progress made and learning difficulties met, so that future planning takes these into account.
19. The assessment of pupils' learning outcomes and the use of this information for planning is very good, especially where teaching is good or better. For example, such use shows in the way teachers question pupils at the start of lessons, then build on answers. It is also a feature of some 'plenary' sessions at the end of lessons when teachers comment perceptively about what they have seen as they move around classrooms from table to table. In Key Stage 1, good time is given by the headteacher and her part-time teaching partner to keeping each other up-to-date on teaching and learning activities across the week. These activities are planned with care so that each teacher works to her subject strengths and so that information where teaching is shared is thoroughly understood (especially important for the daily literacy and numeracy lessons). Teachers' marking is inconsistent. At times, it is good and gives pupils clear guidance on what they have done well and how they can improve. Frequently, though, it consists of a 'tick' to show that work has been seen, or a stamp exclaims 'brilliant' or 'excellent', with no obvious reason indicating why this judgement is given.
20. Teachers set homework suitably in line with school policy. Reading is emphasised as important for pupils of all ages. In addition, pupils are given other tasks, according to their age. For example, Year 2 pupils learn spellings or do work that relates to learning about multiplication in mathematics, while Key Stage 2 pupils may undertake a broad range of tasks relating to ongoing classroom work.

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

21. The quality and range of curricular provision are good. It is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs across the age-range. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally

agreed syllabus for religious education. The school has built successfully on those positive achievements discussed in the previous Report, taking good account of recent Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance, including curriculum guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. The school meets statutory curricular requirements.

22. The school considers, carefully, the needs of its youngest pupils in the Reception year. At the time of the inspection, these were included in Key Stage 1 planning, well able to cope with whole-class lessons and follow-up tasks. For example, following an enjoyable class discussion on authors and illustrators, a Nursery Nurse shared favourite stories both with Reception and Year 1 pupils. The lively discussion, about pictures and story content, revealed a good grasp of such matters by all pupils – including the youngest in the group. Consistent monitoring ensures that a good check is kept on pupils' progress and that practical help is always readily to hand. Such help is geared to keeping children on task whilst taking sensitive account of their comments and opinions. Observations found that children enjoy working independently alongside their peers, knowing how to seek help when required. The Nursery Nurse focuses on Reception children when they enter the school, modifying the Foundation Stage curriculum to match teachers' planned curricular goals. She is fully involved in all aspects of planning and the assessment of learning. Her close partnership with teaching staff ensures that provision is suitably matched to children's needs, adjusted as necessary over time. Good quality provision means that pupils move from an Early Years' curriculum to Key Stage 1 in ways suiting their individual needs as they achieve relevant Early Learning Goals in each area of learning.
23. The teaching of basic skills is planned for and delivered effectively in both key stages, in line with national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Subjects are inter-linked across the curriculum so that pupils can apply their developing skills flexibly and widely. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils record their history learning in simple sentences, paying attention to correct punctuation and spelling. Key Stage 2 pupils write at greater length for history and geography studies. They know how to set out their science experiments correctly and use their knowledge of measurement to record scientific and geographical findings (as when they record air temperatures). Pupils use computers purposefully throughout the school, word-processing poems, stories and accounts of things seen and done and using art programs for their own designs or for versions of famous paintings. Key Stage 2 pupils' good understanding of data handling programs allows them to make graphs for recording findings in different subjects (as when they find out about favourite colours in mathematics). However, planning for information and communication technology is limited by the school's lack of resources for delivering control technology and the small number of machines available for pupils to apply skills they have learned. The school is aware of these deficiencies and school improvement planning suitably outlines the need to address them. The school's very good links with a local 'cluster' of small schools allows it to 'buy in' additional expertise to aid curriculum delivery to good effect.
24. Provision for music is very good. Pupils develop instrumental and singing skills as well as their knowledge of music through well planned, weekly activities. They extend their musical education by taking instrumental lessons from visiting specialists (for example, in string or brass). Art, too, is an important provision. However, pupils tend to produce two-dimensional, flat work and little three-dimensional work, especially large scale. Weaknesses in the planning and delivery of physical education are owed entirely to problems with accommodation. The school has addressed the issue highlighted by the last inspection report, that it provide suitable apparatus for gymnastics, but this does not address difficulties caused by the size of the hall, which is too small for whole-class lessons, with or without apparatus. So curriculum planning and delivery for dance and gymnastics are limited. Additionally, the hard-surface playground is too small to replace the field (when it is too wet) for organised games.
25. More generally, curricular planning for all subjects is very good, ensuring good learning outcomes. Part-time staff members take full responsibility for the subjects they deliver in conjunction with regular discussions with their full-time colleagues. The very good sharing of information between teaching colleagues leads to pupils making progress without unnecessary repetition. Strong links with a local 'cluster' of small schools aid planning for religious education as well as for information and communication technology. So, school planning incorporates the sharing of religious education artefacts. Support staff work well with pupils with particular needs (that is, with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language) to meet planned goals. Detailed schemes of work are set out so as to ensure that subjects are properly covered over time, taking good account of the fact that classes are necessarily organised as more than one year group. Schemes are being reviewed against the latest guidance, since the headteacher is determined that planning continues to match the school's needs and purposes.

26. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Governors' policy for sex education integrates this with the ongoing curriculum, especially with science. There is no formal policy on drug misuse, but the school participates fully in a local education authority programme, now available every two years. The school makes good use of visitors, such as the school nurse and a local policeman, who talk about relevant aspects of the curriculum. In circle time, pupils can explore the range of issues confronting them daily, discussing how to deal with difficult situations they meet in and outside school. Guidelines for Citizenship teaching allow all pupils to take part in ensuring that the school is a safe and happy place. They are encouraged to feel responsible for improving the environment in which they learn.
27. Extra-curricular provision is very good, overall. Routinely, teachers organise a wide range of visits and visitors to school. Clearly, pupils enjoy such experiences very much. For example, Year 4 pupils recalled a visit to an 'Anglo Saxon village' made during Key Stage 1 with great enthusiasm. They enjoy participating in events such as the "Festival of Voices" at Wembley, so extending their musical learning. The school's very good links with local schools helps them place its work in a wider context. For example, it shares sporting events and visiting theatre groups with its 'cluster' group. The village pre-school uses the school's field for its annual sports' day. Links with pre-school institutions and with the Middle Schools, where pupils transfer at nine make sure that pupils' needs are seen in context across phases of schooling.
28. Provision for extra-curricular activities outside of lessons is limited, as parents suggested. It is hard to see how this limitation can be overcome, given the very small number of staff and the considerable time members already give to class-related activities beyond the school day (a factor also appreciated by parents). Currently, a group from Peterborough runs an after-school football club. The school is integral to village life and takes part in all village events in some way. Senior members of the local community are invited to all school performances. Its strong links with the village (including, importantly, links with the church) enrich its life enormously. Many local organisations run stalls at the school's summer fete and individuals from the village and further afield come into school to help out. For example, a visitor from a food manufacturer based in the area contributed recently to a topic on food. Pupils also learn about the wider community in practical ways. For example, they helped to fill an aid lorry bound for Croatia, which was driven by a local teacher, who talked to pupils about the trip and conditions in that country, broadening their knowledge of life in a land very different from their own. Pupils support local and national charities such as the local Hospice, shoe-boxes for Romania and Aid for Africa, which also stimulates them to think of others less fortunate than themselves.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. This judgement is much the same as in the previous inspection report, although provision for cultural development was, previously, judged only to be good.
30. Acts of collective worship based on the Christian faith aid pupils' understanding of spiritual matters. Pupils occasionally lead and close these acts with their own prayers. These reveal pupils' sensitivity and insight into personal matters, connected with the theme of the day. There are special times in assembly and in class for pupils to celebrate their own and others' achievement. The school regularly benefits from the spiritual input of local clergy. Pupils take part in local Church events such as Harvest Festival. Opportunities within the school day focus pupils' thoughts purposefully on the beauty and creative potential of the universe. For example, in a Key Stage 1 science lesson on the habitats of mini-beasts, a teacher spoke reverently about the beauty and uniqueness of each tiny creature. Pupils responded by handling creatures with care and respect, appreciating their fragility.
31. Moral awareness and social growth are promoted to very good effect through a range of planned opportunities. Respect for others and positive caring relationships are important. Teachers are good exemplars in their dealings with each other and with pupils. Pupils can tell right from wrong and the school stresses the importance of telling the truth in all situations. Pupils are aware of what constitutes unsociable behaviour, knowing that, if faced with such behaviour, they can ask an adult for help at any time and they will be supported. Pupils are helped to foresee the consequence of their own behaviour, to show self-restraint and to consider the welfare of others in the school.
32. Pupils' understanding of cultural matters is promoted to very good effect, too. It takes good account of cross-curricular opportunities for finding out about the diversity of faiths, languages and cultural traditions in the school, the local community and wider society, as well as beliefs and traditions relating to the majority culture. For example, pupils have looked at the lifestyles and beliefs of Jewish and Buddhist people as well as Christians. They have learned about the Chinese New Year and Japanese Tea Ceremony, appreciating the importance of festivities attached to Harvest and Christmas. Pupils

recollect with fun their pancake tasting at Chinese New Year. They visit the local church for many reasons connected with classroom work and school life. Instrumental groups from the local education authority's music team perform in school and pupils attend the local Upper school for a 'Fiddle Fiesta' and 'Brass Bonanza'. They take part in concerts and drama productions during the year, performing for parents and friends. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils learned a medley of songs from the musical 'Oliver'. Those in the early key stage accompany familiar nursery rhymes on instruments. Pupils really enjoy singing at Wembley or seeing their art work on display at a local Upper School. They study the work of famous artists and artefacts from different cultures for such work. They have visited and studied an organic garden in the village and their work has featured in a Garden Magazine.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. This area is another strength. The school has, again, built on achievements noted by the last inspection, fulfilling its duty of care towards its pupils to very good effect. It is a safe, secure environment, bolstered by practical policies. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and procedures strictly followed. There are now three fully trained first-aiders in the school to guarantee full cover for swimming pool activities, an improvement since the previous inspection. In a review, the local education authority noted the need to increase the height of the fence around the swimming pool and this was done well in time for the pool's use this year. A governor regularly audits health and safety and reports to the governing body. The caretaker reports day-to-day health and safety concerns to the headteacher for appropriate action. Parents are informed of all incidents involving their children, which are recorded in an accident book. No significant health and safety issues were identified during the inspection, although it was noted that covering on steps up to the 'mobile' classrooms is becoming worn.
34. The school has very good child-protection procedures. A 'named person' with appropriate training oversees provision. All staff members are well briefed. Relevant documentation is kept up-to-date. Class teachers know each pupil extremely well. Benefits from this were seen during the inspection. For example, a teacher sensibly made changes to time-tabled arrangements because of the extremely hot weather. Her knowledge of Key Stage 1 pupils made it evident to her that they needed to rest for a period before continuing with their activities. Pupils are encouraged to help each other to succeed. They readily assist peers when reading aloud, unobtrusively 'whispering' words when someone is 'stuck'. They are learning to be caring members of the school community, whilst those in need of support are, just as importantly, able to take part fully in school life. All pupils thereby learn to take personal responsibility for their actions and fulfil their citizenship roles.
35. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. Teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils as individuals aids ongoing work. Informative records of pupils' progress begin with baseline assessments made on entry and are added to from statutory tests at seven and optional tests at nine. Records show progress, over time, with teachers' predictions set usefully against actual test results. In fact, the school makes very good links with pre-school providers (particularly with the pre-school in the village) so that important information about individuals can feed into planning at the start of their full-time schooling. Added to this, the youngest children have a very good induction to the school when visiting each afternoon in the half-term before they begin either as Year 1 pupils or (as in the Spring and Summer terms) in the Reception year. They become familiar with their new environment and make friends. Crucially, they are also observed by teachers and support staff so that educational provision is suitably matched to individuals' needs. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress through tasks matching class work, especially in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. On the basis of information and close observation of pupils over time, teachers set realistic targets, in the form of small steps, to improve pupils' performance in these subjects. In Key Stage 2, targets are shared with pupils and written out for reference in lessons. In the earlier key stage, teachers note targets set for individuals and talk about them to pupils. School improvement planning is aimed at formalising learning targets for all pupils so that they are recorded consistently. The headteacher and governors use assessment information to set realistic targets in English and mathematics, taking good account of differences in each year's cohorts when setting such targets.
36. The early identification of pupils with special educational needs results from the school's thorough assessment practices. Pupils are monitored extensively by class teachers when concerns are raised about their progress. The co-ordinator for special educational needs ensures that all parents are fully informed of concerns and relevant outside agencies involved. The very good liaison between parents and class teachers (both informal and formal) means, practically, that an individual's progress is discussed as soon as there are concerns and kept under review. Individual education plans are generally well matched to pupils' needs, especially where these relate to behavioural difficulties. Pupils

are well supported and take part in all aspects of school life. They move up or down the Code of Practice register for special needs, or come off the register completely, depending on whether they reach targets. Review processes for pupils with Statements of special need are carefully adhered to. The school's provision for the very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language is similarly effective. Appropriate judgements about pupils mean that they join with the full range of classroom and school activities alongside their peers. Consequently, they make good progress with English language skills.

37. Although there is a formal behaviour policy, the school's 'Guidelines for Citizenship' best promote good behaviour. These guidelines constitute school rules, to which pupils contribute during personal and social education. So they have some ownership of rules which, consequently, work very well. As good behaviour is expected, no rewards and sanctions system is deemed necessary, yet teachers do verbally praise pupils who have behaved exceptionally well. For example, a teacher congratulated her class on managing to do well the previous day when it had been so hot. She said how proud she was of them. Because teachers' knowledge of pupils is extensive, they can deal appropriately with misbehaviour – this personally focused system underlying all matters of behaviour and discipline. The school is aware that a very small minority might behave anti-socially on occasion and it is clear from its records that such occasions are dealt with appropriately and promptly. Very clear procedures involve everyone concerned (that is, the perpetrator and the victim), including parents if the school takes a matter sufficiently seriously. Pupils experiencing relationship problems are counselled, along with others involved, and solutions worked out. Lunch-time supervision by mid-day supervisory staff is punctilious in monitoring pupils. Behavioural issues that do arise are dealt with promptly and fairly. The lunch break is quite long at almost one-and-a-half hours and some parents have commented on this and wondered whether it is not too long. Certainly, inspectors noted that pupils are more than ready to go back to classrooms for the start of afternoon lessons.
38. Good attendance and behaviour are very effectively promoted. Sound registration procedures involve registers being correctly marked and neatly kept. Nearly all parents conscientiously warn the school if their children are to be absent. On the few occasions when they fail to do so, they are chased up promptly by the school secretary on the first day of absence. The school is strict in applying its rule for approving absence for family holidays during term time, as is well understood by parents. The accurate recording of lateness in registers represents an improvement since the previous inspection. From next term, pupils must sign a 'late book', with reasons stated, if they arrive after the start of school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Partnership with parents, too, is a strength of the school. Inspectors noted that almost all members of the governing body have, or have had, children at the school. Yet they continue to give unstinting support when their children move on. Parents are very satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. Questionnaire responses and contributions to the pre-inspection meeting showed that they especially appreciate the very good teaching, the high expectations that the school has of pupils' behaviour and work and how their children might become mature and responsible. The headteacher is greatly admired and parents are impressed by the excellent way in which she manages and leads the school. Some, however, are concerned by the amount of homework pupils are given (although opinions at the meeting varied about whether this was enough or too little). Others would like a wider range of activities outside lessons, although they appreciate the problems of arranging this in a small village school. Inspectors found the level of homework given to be in line with the school's stated policy and appropriate for pupils' ages and the demands of the curriculum. They agree that extra-curricular provision outside lessons is limited, but also acknowledge constraints placed on staff by the very small number of teachers involved.
40. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and of school events. An annual written report on each pupil describes progress made in each subject, representing a further improvement since the previous inspection. Minor deficiencies remain, however. For example, some reports do not give enough pointers for improvement and all reports have incomplete attendance data. The two formal meetings between parents and class teachers each year are found helpful. The school has an 'open door' policy. Parents are welcome to come in at any time, even without an appointment, to talk to teachers about their concerns. Also, full-time class teachers stand at the school gate, often accompanied by a parent governor, at arrival and home-times so parents may talk to them. Parents very much appreciate opportunities provided for such informal contacts, which are used to very good effect. The governing body sends a detailed annual report to parents that is attractive and 'user friendly'. The school prospectus is also of high quality (although more pedestrian in appearance) and comprehensively covers all aspects of school life. Both these documents fully meet legal requirements.

Regular newsletters are sent home, although some parents think these could improve. For example, they would like the newsletters to be more frequent, contain forecasts of what is to be taught and give earlier warning of holiday dates and school closure days.

41. Parents are fully involved in the life of the school. Some help in classrooms and on school study visits, whilst others have made learning resources for lessons and for the playground. There is a very active Parents and Friends Association, arranging events throughout the year. Some of these are supported by the whole village community (such as the summer fair and the spring fashion show) and raise considerable sums of money. These funds have been used recently to purchase very impressive items of equipment for physical play on the school playground - especially suited to the youngest Reception year pupils. Other events, such as 'Wacky Hair Day' and 'Spooky Fun Day' substantially help raise pupils' self confidence and aid their personal development as members of a community. The Association regularly sends newsletters to parents and its work over the year is fully recorded in the governors' annual report. A good home/school agreement is fully operational. Parents mainly help their children with work at home by hearing the children read.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headteacher and her key member of staff are close partners, striving for common goals. The headteacher's leadership and guidance are of very good quality. She directs her school firmly forward, taking account of its needs for future development. She works exceptionally hard in partnership with school staff and governing body, to raise standards of teaching and learning, so that pupils achieve at their maximum capacity. Staff members are highly committed to providing good learning opportunities for pupils, well supported by governors. The school's aims and values are realised through its work and ethos. Links with the local church are important in that shared, Christian principles ensure that all members of the school community, adult and child, are valued and respected. Equality of opportunity informs all aspects of school life. The headteacher sets the tone in her very high expectations of what pupils and adults will achieve.
43. The headteacher's interactive, shared system of management succeeds in creating a strong team. However, even though many tasks are delegated effectively, her workload remains heavy, due to her acting as a class teacher for much of a week as well as manager. Her varied responsibilities are fully and efficiently covered at no small personal cost. Delegated responsibilities are carried out well, with evident commitment from all involved. It is to the credit of a part-time teacher, for example, that she takes on co-ordinating responsibilities for two subject areas. Teachers' monitoring role as subject co-ordinators is developing although they do not, yet, formally observe teaching and learning across the key stages in their subject areas. This role is, also, mostly confined to English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. For example, teachers sample pupils' work and track progress over time. In addition, the headteacher and her staff acquire valuable information on teaching and learning through regular, informal discussions during each working week. In its school improvement planning, the school accepts that broader, formal monitoring procedures across the curriculum require further sharpening. Nevertheless, what is already done gives the headteacher and her key colleague an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Realistic targets are, therefore, set for the school and for each pupil. The analysis and use of performance data, such as those gained from standardised assessment tests, generates information to aid target-setting, well aimed at raising standards of achievement. The school has directed considerable effort at introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies successfully.
44. The management of pupils with special educational needs is good, overall. Strengths are evident in the management of provision for pupils with behavioural needs. School procedures for identifying and providing for pupils' different needs are thorough. All relevant documentation is clearly presented, accessible and up-to-date.
45. The governing body's governance and management of the school are very good. It has an increasingly effective role over the longer term. Governors are extremely supportive of the headteacher and staff. As good, critical friends, they discuss strategies for improvement and change linked firmly to school improvement planning. Governors bring valuable personal and professional skills to the school (as in expertise in science or special educational needs, for example). They are vigilant in fulfilling their duties, using information gained from the head and from their own visits, regarding the school's strengths and weaknesses. Visits are undertaken as often as is feasible and a formal programme of half-termly visits is also now in place. For example, a governor with curriculum responsibility has observed science teaching and a colleague responsible for special educational needs has scrutinised

provision for pupils in discussion with the co-ordinator for special needs. Outcomes of such visits are reported formally to the governing body. Governors feel able confidently to suggest where improvements might be made, which says much for relationships within the school community and for the esteem in which governors are held. They have introduced a strategy for performance management. Already in place, it will be further supported by the monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms, in line with school development planning. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well.

46. Financial management is very good. The chair of finance meets regularly with the head, taking an informed oversight of budgetary matters. Stringent budget measures monitor all aspects of spending throughout the school year. Grants (such as that for special educational needs) are spent properly for their specified purpose. Financial reports to governors are both regular and detailed. Governors are cautious about finance, given the size of the school and the impact any demand for supply teaching cover would have. They allocate money for any such eventuality, which accounts for the school's 'underspend' being somewhat above recommendations. The school has very good working procedures for handling money and ensuring best value in purchasing. These are followed rigorously. Accounts are audited regularly. The most recent recommendations were acted on immediately. The school development plan is a good working document, updated termly by everyone involved. Costings and financial projections are realistically geared to priorities, within the limits a small school budget allows. The school receives considerable support from an active 'Parents and Friends Association', which raises money and provides 'treats' along with good quality learning resources. New technology is used to very good effect in school management.
47. Teachers and support staff are well matched to curricular needs and their expertise is well used. Teachers are appropriately qualified for the age-range taught. There is a broad, satisfactory range of relevant expertise amongst staff and a very good programme of In-service training to update all members with recent curriculum guidance. Links with 'cluster' schools enhance In-service provision to very good effect. A music tutor also benefits the school with a rich programme of musical activities for pupils, organised for their weekly lessons and beyond. Classroom assistants and a Nursery Nurse, well-deployed in line with their responsibilities, provide valuable and high quality support for staff and pupils. Very good administrative support makes an excellent contribution to the smooth running of the school. In view of the headteacher's class teaching responsibilities, this is particularly notable. New staff are welcomed and introduced to their new situation in a supportive and friendly manner. Staff members say they enjoy being in the school because of its close team work and they know their contributions are valued. It is a happy school. Consequently, they give generously of their time and effort on pupils' behalf.
48. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory. Good features are the outdoor facilities, incorporating a field, wild area, adventure play area and swimming pool. Well kept, mobile classrooms have been transformed into attractive teaching units. Books are readily accessible in all areas and a small comfortable library in the main building is well stocked. Good displays within the school are used effectively to stimulate learning and to celebrate pupils' work. Certain areas restrict curriculum delivery, however. For example, the hall is too small to deliver all aspects of physical education safely and there is congestion at lunch-time, because pupils have little space to eat and socialise with ease. A single staff room is used also as a secretary's office and headteacher's room. This situation is unsatisfactory. The headteacher has no private study where she can meet parents or conduct other private business. The school is cared for to a high standard, both in classrooms and outside.
49. The school has sufficient resources to support most areas of the curriculum. Science and music resources are good. The school sees improving information and communication technology resources as an ongoing matter, accepting that it lacks suitable equipment for the teaching of control technology. It is also aware that more computers are required if pupils are to have good access to machines to support learning and raise standards. All resources are in good condition, clearly labelled and neatly stored.
50. The school maximises every opportunity to prepare a high quality learning environment. Teaching is frequently good or better and teachers match curricular demands well to meet individuals' learning needs. Staff members compose an effective team under the very good leadership of the headteacher. Governors make a very good contribution to the life of the school, including in its financial management. Relative to the national picture, the school has a high unit cost per pupil because of its small size. Nevertheless, it gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:

- Teaching and learning are monitored in line with school development planning in order to:
 - continue to improve teaching, so as to bring it close to the standard of the better teaching seen; and
 - help subject co-ordinators see better how to improve provision where weaknesses are identified.

(paragraphs 8, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 58, 65, 71, 72, 76, 77, 78, 80, 82, 87, 91, 92, 96, 113)

- Provision for information and communication technology improves along lines stated in school development planning so:
 - pupils have more consistent access to machines in order to raise standards; and
 - all elements of the curriculum can be properly planned for and taught.

(paragraphs 7, 16, 23, 49, 55, 92, 96)

- Accommodation for the headteacher, staff and secretary is improved.

(paragraph 48)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in an action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs: 19, 37, 57, 72

- The consistency of teachers' marking.
- Pupils' presentation of their work.
- The length of the lunchtime break.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	28	40	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	44
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	5	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	8	8	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (100)	73 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	8	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (100)	82 (100)	82 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Statutory test results and teacher-assessments are only included in a Report where there are more than 10 pupils in a cohort. The total number of pupils reaching Level 2 or above is stated in the table but the number for each gender is not given because there were fewer than 10 girls or boys in the 2000 cohort.

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	1
White	42
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.7
Average class size	21.5

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	146,154
Total expenditure	144,875
Expenditure per pupil	2,787
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,162
Balance carried forward to next year	8,441

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	44
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	37	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	48	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	48	22	0	4
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	30	15	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	26	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	26	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	56	41	0	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	63	37	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	33	37	0	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51. The Foundation Stage curriculum is planned carefully in accordance with children's needs, identified by assessment information gained on entry to school and through ongoing assessment in the course of teaching and learning. At the time of the inspection, close to the end of the Summer term, it was evident that the present group of four children are all performing at above average levels for their age and are now working competently within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. They have already achieved relevant Early Learning Goals in each area of learning. Inspection evidence shows that teachers are sensitive to the needs of these children and the curriculum is presented in an interesting and relevant manner, helping pupils to succeed and achieve well. A skilled Nursery Nurse works very closely and effectively with teachers in setting tasks and assessing children's learning outcomes to plan future work. The children have every chance to develop their skills within a level of work organised for them. They work happily and competently alongside older peers, showing well-developed social and personal skills. At times, it is hard to tell the youngest from the older Key Stage 1 pupils (for example, in the answers given to adults' questions and in their concentration on tasks). Comparing children's base line entry results in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development with their present performance reveals the very good progress they have made since they began school. Because of the level at which pupils are working, they are included in paragraphs throughout the Report as part of Key Stage 1.

ENGLISH

52. In the 2000 statutory tests, seven-year-olds attained broadly in line with pupils in all schools in reading and writing; results were well below those of pupils in similar schools. Teachers assessed pupils' speaking and listening skills as well below the national average at the expected Level 2, but above this average at the higher Level 3. However, results for test and assessment purposes are not statistically reliable, because the number of pupils concerned is very small, making it difficult to draw firm conclusions relative either to national or similar schools' results. Teacher-assessments predicted results in reading and writing broadly similar to those achieved, given baseline assessment information gained on pupils' entry to school and ongoing assessments over the two-year period prior to statutory tests at seven.

53. Inspection evidence shows that current Year 2 pupils are likely to improve on last year's results and early indications of results show this to be the case. Although the full range of attainments is present, all pupils are judged likely to reach the expected Level 2 in reading and writing, with higher attaining pupils and some of average attainment doing better than this. Pupils across the attainment range have good speaking and listening skills. They are attentive in lessons, asking questions and contributing their own ideas to class discussions. Pupils make good progress and build successfully on earlier learning. In Year 3 (that is, the 2000 test cohort), pupils achieve generally as expected for their age in reading and writing. Some continue to need consistent support with tasks set for written work, showing teacher-judgements about attainment (as noted above for test purposes) to be realistic. Inspection evidence shows that Year 4 pupils about to transfer to a Middle School reach good standards. They succeed at least in line with expectations for nine-year-olds in all aspects of English, with high attaining pupils and those of average attainment doing much better than this. Nine-year-olds are confident at speaking out in class discussions and explaining their ideas. They frequently use very good speaking and listening skills in subjects across the curriculum and when talking about their learning to inspectors. Pupils with special educational needs in both key stages, including those with Statements of special need, make good progress in lessons because of teaching support well focused on their identified learning needs. Standards achieved are similar to those reported in the previous inspection and reflect the varying attainment levels evident across the year groups.

54. Pupils develop good reading skills by the end of Key Stage 1. Those in the Reception year are already confident readers. They know a lot about how books 'work' and that authors write books and illustrators create pictures. Almost all pupils in the Key Stage 1 class, including Reception pupils, talk knowledgeably about information on a book's cover and predict something of its content from this. They talk enthusiastically about reading scheme books they enjoy and are familiar with all the books (by the Ahlbergs) on a display for 'author of the week'. A Year 2 pupil of average attainment read quite a demanding text with understanding, using a range of strategies for working out unknown words in his

choice from the display (as when he 'sounded out' letters and blended them together). He carefully selected details of interest from pictures, making good links with history studies of the Victorians. During a lesson on identifying common words in a text, a Reception pupil leaped up to point out a repetitive pattern of rhymes, as the teacher turned another page. Correctly locating "abracadabra" and "find me", he was, then, justly proud of this achievement. An older pupil with identified learning needs was also well supported by the repetition, making progress in line with his peers in copy-writing his choice of a 'colour' word to put in the pertinent page of the book. His success was owed to the unobtrusive help supplied by a Nursery Nurse. By Year 4, pupils of average and above average attainment read fluently at a level well matched to their abilities. All pupils use punctuation correctly and read for meaning when reading aloud. They enjoy the activity and can explain the story content well.

55. By seven, high attaining pupils and those of average attainment develop good skills in writing for a variety of purposes. They mostly punctuate sentences correctly (especially for comprehension tasks) and spelling, too, is often correct: at least, it follows the sound of letters in a word so that a good approximation to correctness is achieved. High attaining pupils write imaginatively at length, producing lively work, involving readers, especially when ideas stem from pupils' own interests. Such work reflects a wide vocabulary and a good knowledge of 'book language' and conventions in relation to a story's structure. At times, pupils of average and below average attainment manage good effects in their story writing. They know, for example, that it helps when an opening sentence 'grabs' a reader's attention. When supervised, pupils write neatly, with good levels of presentation in their work. For example, Year 1 pupils copied out sentences they had helped their teacher form earlier in a lesson, neatly, with well-formed letters. More frequently, presentation of work across Key Stage 1 is untidy, although Reception year pupils often achieve pleasing results, showing a good grasp of letter shapes and sizes in the work they do. Pupils build well on previous learning and are very competent writers by nine years of age. Across the attainment range, but most notably in those of average and higher attainment, pupils have very good skills in extended story writing by the end of Year 4. These more able pupils use speech marks fairly correctly. They strive for interest through the words they choose and vary the way sentences are started. All pupils know how to write for different purposes. Key Stage 2 pupils' exercise books show that they can produce carefully joined script for handwriting practice. Such work is seldom seen in other aspects of English or in other subject areas, however, and, as with the earlier key stage, their presentation of work is frequently untidy, unless it is for public display. Pupils across the school apply word processing skills on the computer to good effect and for a range of purposes. They are limited, though, in access to computers because of the number of machines available.
56. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent across key stages and is most frequently good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and the teaching of basic skills is good. Planning is firmly within the National Literacy Strategy framework. It takes very good account of pupils' individual learning needs, especially where teaching is good or better. Where it is, teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can do by challenging them to extend their thinking. For example, in an excellent Key Stage 1 class lesson, Reception year pupils were as involved in the whole class discussion about books and subsequent follow-up work as their older peers because of a teacher's skilled questioning. So, a Reception pupil was able to say, confidently, in response to a question about an exclamation mark on a page that it showed "everyone is shouting". Another spotted an illustrator's 'trademark' pair of glasses in a picture and was pleased to point it out. Pupils revealed exactly what they had learned from a discussion, at the end of a very good Key Stage 2 lesson by evaluating their success against learning objectives written on the board and discussed at the start of the lesson. For example, they read out 'persuasive' letters to local councillors about recycling waste and gave one another points for improvement.
57. Assessment is well-integrated into teaching and learning activities. It is regularly undertaken in the course of ongoing class work to assess learning following a series of lessons. Future planning is then closely matched to pupils' learning outcomes. In Key Stage 2, pupils have personal targets in their English work-books set through assessment. For example, they might strive for more correct spelling or to extend the length and complexity of sentences in stories. In Key Stage 1, targets are not formalised for individuals in this way, although teachers have set these targets, for teaching purposes, in light of assessments. Marking is sometimes good and gives pupils a clear perception of how work can be improved. However, some marking is bland and uninformative. Pupils apply their computer skills well to English and word-process their work for a variety of purposes, such as poems as well as stories.
58. The co-ordinator's good overview of teaching and learning is gained from discussions with colleagues and appraisal of pupils' learning outcomes in their books. She 'tracks' pupils' progress over time to ensure that targets are being met. She has some knowledge of classroom practices through occasionally observing teachers, but such observations are not formalised or regular. Resources are

sufficient for curriculum coverage. Homework is set across the school with an emphasis on reading, especially for Reception and Year 1 pupils. The scope of homework broadens suitably as pupils grow older. As in the previous inspection, the subject has continued as a high priority for the school in order to ensure that the good standards reported then are at least maintained. An emphasis is placed on pupils using their literacy skills to good effect in other subjects such as history, geography and science.

MATHEMATICS

59. In the 2000 statutory tests, seven-year-olds attained below the national average at the expected Level 2 and above. They attained well below the average gained by pupils in similar schools. In fact, results have to be treated with caution. They cannot be used, reliably, for purposes of comparison because of the very small number of pupils involved. Teacher assessments placed pupils below what they actually achieved in tests, but a scrutiny of teachers' records and assessments of pupils' progress over time shows these reflect well how pupils perform. Inspection evidence reveals varied attainments across the cohort taking the tests last year (now Year 3), with a significant number of pupils needing adult support.
60. Evidence also shows how current Year 2 pupils succeed at least in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Higher attaining pupils and those of average attainment do better than this in all aspects of the subject. These findings are upheld by early indications of statutory test results. Pupils make good progress and reach good standards by the end of Year 4, with a significant proportion doing better than expected at age nine. Pupils with special educational needs in both key stages make satisfactory progress and attain in line with their prior attainment through carefully targeted support.
61. In Key Stage 1, seven-year-olds swiftly double numbers such as 10, 25, 40 and 100 in response to 'quick questions' at the start of lessons. They halve 50, realising they need to share the number exactly in to two parts. In a discussion about multiplication patterns, a high attaining pupil suddenly realised that if she can work out 8×10 she can also work out 8×100 . Pupils know that $8 \times 10 = 10 \times 8$. They are beginning to have a good understanding of division as an inverse number operation to multiplication, helped by a large scale illustration of a 'function machine' they find attractive and stimulating. Pupils strengthen their grasp of these two operations by working through problems on a worksheet. Those of average and higher attainment soon complete the first set of problems, moving on to writing their own, showing a very good knowledge of the concepts involved. Lower attaining pupils manage well in setting out their own problems, guided by an adult's questioning. They explain what each mathematical symbol or word on a worksheet means. At the end of a lesson, it is clear from their assured answers to a teacher's questions that pupils have made good progress in detecting the relationship between x and $\frac{1}{x}$. They use correct vocabulary when talking about 'inverse operations' (especially more able pupils). Reception pupils count in 2s correctly from 0 to 20 when counting aloud in a whole class Key Stage 1 lesson. They see that nought or zero is an important starting point. They 'shout' out an even sequence of numbers and 'whisper' odd numbers, in company with their older peers. These youngest pupils understand the symbols for addition and subtraction and know these mean either 'more than' or 'less than' a given number. They can work at matching pairs of animals going in to Noah's Ark and use a correct vocabulary to describe what they do or (as with higher attaining pupils) complete a worksheet asking them to add in twos to count pairs of ears on mice. These pupils see the pattern of 2s as the pairs of ears increase to make 16.
62. In Key Stage 2, all pupils in Years 3 and 4 count together in 10s from 0 to 200. Year 4 pupils count in 10s from any given starting point on a 100 square without reference to the visual aid. They go well beyond the final number. Year 3 pupils use the number square until the sequence is well established and then go beyond 100 (as when counting from 7 to 297). Pupils thoroughly enjoy games' reinforcing their knowledge of mathematical vocabulary or giving practical support to their number work. For example, they loved being part of a 'denominator' pop group (complete with microphone for the lead member!) when recapping on fractions to establish how many parts make a whole. Through a teacher's lively questioning, all pupils showed they had learned the functions of the 'denominator' and 'numerator' in a fraction. That is, volunteer 'band members' knew they each had to pick up the correct denominator for their group (3, 4 or 5) and the number 1 as their personal numerator. All knew the '1' they picked up represented one part of the whole band and had to be placed about the denominator to show, for example, a quarter or a third. Year 4 pupils quickly calculated how to add together parts to make a whole when the teacher partitioned the 'band' (with two fifths at one side of the classroom leaving three fifths behind, for example). Year 3 pupils confidently dealt with thirds and quarters through this strategy, benefiting from the repeated questions focused on the concepts taught. In follow up work, most of these younger pupils complete a worksheet aimed at reinforcing learning when dealing with halves. They knew that this involved dividing numbers equally and most could halve numbers below 20 by using their

2x table. Pupils needed practical apparatus to divide 22, however. In studying equivalent fractions, these pupils were helped by a 'fraction wall' on the worksheet: those of average or higher attainment saw how to get correct answers by making comparisons. They were well supported by a teacher's good questions, checking understanding and helping to move thinking on. In a 'question and answer' session at the end of a lesson, older Year 4 pupils showed they had consolidated their understanding through their independent problem solving and were secure in dealing with equivalent fractions.

63. A scrutiny of pupils' work reveals that all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught, assured by the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy. In fact, pupils in both key stages cover a lot of work over time, based on practical activities leading to a consolidation of knowledge and understanding through completing work sheets in each area of the curriculum. Worksheets are matched well to pupils' different levels of attainment. Pupils are assessed regularly (at the end of each series of lessons). Their progress is recorded carefully for future planning. Pupils make appropriate use of computer programs for mathematics across the school and this aspect of the subject is being developed (as when pupils in Key Stage 2 use a data handling program). They also apply their numeracy skills to other subjects as required. For example, they make graphical representations of their findings in science.
64. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent, but is very good, overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Very good planning takes pupils' learning needs properly into account. Where teaching is very good or better, pupils are stimulated to work at their fullest capacity. Teachers imbue lessons with a sense of fun, especially in 'mental maths' sessions where questions might try to 'catch pupils out'. In the early key stage, such teaching enables all pupils, including those in the Reception year, to take part fully in wholeclass sessions in ways capitalising on their good mathematical expertise. Follow up work is well-aimed at further reinforcing such learning and support staff are well deployed. For example, a Nursery Nurse questions pupils skilfully to check their understanding of number values given to letters of the alphabet, to see if they know how addition 'sums' can be made from words. Subsequently, they enjoy working out the number value of their own names. Their grasp of the meaning of symbols for addition and 'equals' strengthens as a consequence.
65. The school has made good progress in addressing weaknesses identified in the previous inspection in the subject policy and resources. It has addressed points raised about the scheme of work by its successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The subject is well coordinated because of high level discussions between teachers, ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum are covered, so that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are built on over time. Teachers are well informed about all pupils' progress in addition to information gathered through assessment procedures. The co-ordinator does not monitor teaching in the adjacent classroom formally, however. Resources are sufficient for curriculum requirements. Very good emphasis is placed on the use of practical equipment, readily accessible for pupils and teachers. Stimulating displays also enhance classroom provision, providing a ready source of information about mathematical vocabulary and symbols for pupils while they work.

SCIENCE

66. In the 2000 teacher assessments, pupils' were assessed as achieving well below the expected Level 2 compared to pupils in all and similar schools. At the higher Level 3, pupils were judged to be above the national average, succeeding broadly in line with pupils in similar schools. However, since the number of pupils involved was very small, such comparisons have to be regarded with caution as they are statistically unreliable.
67. Inspection evidence is based on observing one Key Stage 1 lesson (involving Reception year pupils), talking both to pupils and teachers, looking at pupils' work sampled from across the age range and studying planning documents. Evidence shows that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach good standards in experimental and investigative science when working practically. Standards in their recorded work are judged satisfactory. By seven, pupils have a growing scientific knowledge and vocabulary. They undertake simple investigations successfully and reach sensible conclusions based on their results. They are asked to predict what will happen, explain their thinking and make accurate observation. Their success stimulates them to undertake investigations and report results with some confidence. Key Stage 1 pupils have looked closely at themselves to explore how they use their senses, recording their results effectively on picture graphs. They explain the function of each sense and report accurately what their graphs record. Pupils talk about healthy eating and name foods that promote better health. They have planned appetising, healthy meals. Progress is good as pupils move through the school and they reach good standards in practical, experimental and investigative work and in recording results, by the time they move to a Middle School at nine years of age. Pupils with special

educational needs in both key stages get good quality support from classroom assistants. They make satisfactory progress. Pupils with behavioural difficulties make good progress because of support that enables them to participate in lessons alongside peers.

68. In the lesson seen, pupils across the age range in Key Stage 1 recalled previous work, explaining that plants and animals have different habitats and describing differences between habitats found in their locality. They know their local environment is 'all the field and playground and wild area beside our classroom'. They grasp what an investigation is and can follow instructions. For example, when working practically in the school grounds, they discovered many different creatures in wet, dry, shady and water habitats. All pupils are curious and observant. They predict sensibly what they may find. Older pupils describe these as 'good guesses'. When handling creatures, pupils realise they must place these carefully in specimen jars, showing respect for their environment and for living things. They state that 'all creatures in the environment should be safe'. Pupils, including Reception pupils, patiently search given habitats, using good observational skills. They watch creatures until they are able to describe them, before using nets to transfer the creature to specimen jars. When pupils describe what they see, they reveal their good observational skills. They describe crested newts as 'long and slimy' and note the different colours and 'spots underneath'. Snails are 'hard outside and soft and slimy inside'. Pupils compare the size, shape and appearance of different creatures, and then draw their findings, noting special characteristics such as the orange underbelly of a newt. Pupils make good progress in lessons. Their teacher makes very clear what is expected of them and they respond well, working hard. Their enjoyment of the subject is obvious from the way they listen well and are keen to answer questions. In the session seen, a good emphasis was placed on discovering, observing and discussing, rather than on more formal recording.
69. Although no lessons were seen in Key Stage 2, examples of work and discussion with pupils in Years 3 and 4 show that a good selection of topics are covered and pupils experience all aspects of science. For example, through topics such as 'Ourselves' and 'animal habitats', pupils learn to recognise and compare the main body parts of humans and other animals. They learn about conditions needed to sustain life and growth and successfully differentiate between living, dead and 'never alive' objects. Examples of written work show them able to say in simple, correct terms how force makes things speed up, slow down or change direction. Simple experiments involving force are recorded effectively. Pupils' recording of work demonstrates the good progress made. Year 4 pupils organise experiments correctly. They show the materials they use, methods they apply, their results and what they feel about their results. All pupils have a list of pointers in their books, reminding them of the stages to consider when experimenting and recording. They also record their findings in graphs, charts and simple tables. They explain simply how they make a test fair: 'we must do the same to each thing we test for the same time, we can't change what we do in the middle because this changes what happens'. Pupils enjoy science. They especially enjoy their experiments and investigations and their recall of previous learning is good. They use scientific vocabulary such as 'predict, test, investigate and record' easily and correctly. Records of work undertaken are thorough and well presented.
70. A good resource has been established within the grounds; this is a wild conservation area, appropriately fenced. Wild plants are clearly labelled, as are wet areas, dry areas and shady areas. This resource is used well for practical work, at different times of day and different times of year.
71. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan well. They have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good grasp of its practical nature. Learning objectives are clearly stated. All pupils develop positive attitudes to the subject because of teaching strengths. They are well motivated and even the youngest sustain concentration very well throughout lessons. Literacy skills are reinforced well through teachers' good emphasis on correct scientific vocabulary. Numeracy skills are exercised suitably during recording work, when pupils measure and record data in graphs, charts and tables. Teachers are also good at recapping previous work to establish what pupils know and to reinforce teaching points. They question pupils skilfully for such purposes. However, at times, adults supervising groups during lessons complete tasks for pupils rather than letting the pupils work independently, hindering spontaneous responses and the development of important observational skills.
72. The subject is effectively managed, although its coordinator does not formally monitor teaching and learning in the adjoining class. There is a structured policy and a recently reviewed scheme of work, detailed as a good framework within which teachers plan their lessons. This scheme and teachers' own planning help ensure that pupils' learning builds on what has gone before and prepares them for their next steps (from the Reception year upwards). Systematic assessment helps support pupils' progress. In marking, the emphasis is mostly on commending work. Comments in books might benefit from specific written targets to enable pupils to move on. Good resources, maintained at an appropriate

level, are easily accessible and well used. The school has continued to build on the good provision reported in the previous inspection and to improve standards reached.

ART

73. Only one lesson in Key Stage 1 was seen during the inspection. Judgements are based on this, on sampling pupils' work across the school and on discussions with teachers.
74. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach standards in two-dimensional work at least in line with expectations for their age. Year 4 pupils similarly reach standards at least to be expected for their year-olds. At times, pupils across the age range (including those in the Reception year) reach standards considerably above what might be expected. The school contributes a selection of work, completed during the year, from pupils of all ages to an annual exhibition held by the local 'pyramid' of Lower, Middle and Upper schools. A viewing of this year's selection showed it to be of high quality. Pupils with special educational needs attain in line with their prior attainment because of good quality support, helping them take part in lessons alongside their peers.
75. Pupils in both key stages study prints of paintings by famous artists, creating their own pictures 'after the style of' these. Their work shows good attention to detail, relative to colour, line and the proportion of elements studied. Picture space is used to good effect. Media such as oil, pastels, chalks, crayons and colour wash are applied carefully, with a good grasp of the possible effects gained from overlaying colours. Overall, pupils make very creditable representations of famous paintings. At times, these are of a high standard and show, for example, a good grasp of three-dimensional space on a flat surface. So, a study of Van Gogh's bedroom by a Reception pupil accurately captured the room's perspective and the way objects are placed within it. Pupils also study artefacts from different cultures, often in connection with work in other subjects. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils looked at a silk fan from China when learning about the Chinese New Year. Older Year 2 pupils can paint quite small flower details with precision and a good sense of scale in relation to the size and shape of the original fan. Hand-drawn pictures, depicting a rural scene in South East Asia, demanded from Key Stage 1 pupils a very good ability to handle a difficult medium. In Key Stage 2, pupils took equal care, executing pencil drawings of an African mask for geography studies. Imaginative work on 'dragons' and 'monsters' by pupils across the school shows how pupils in each key stage use media differently to realise their ideas. So, pupils of all ages in the early key stage give small to medium sized creatures colourful bodies that appear to be in motion, sometimes breathing fire. Pupils in the later key stage tend to make larger creatures. They are concerned to ensure that colour is applied densely with correctly drawn features and everything in proportion.
76. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They have high expectations of what pupils will achieve in terms of learning outcomes linked to teaching input. For example, a teacher very effectively captured the interest of all pupils at Key Stage 1 when looking at a print of a painting by Jackson Pollock. So a Reception pupil noticed a "very thin line". A Year 2 pupil found adjoining spaces that "looked like eyes". Others responded just as pertinently to the teacher's good, open, questioning. Pupils' observations were reinforced as their teacher built on previous learning about the way drawing tools are manipulated, by demonstrating how different qualities of line are achieved, depending on how a tool (in this instance, a felt tip pen) is held. Subsequent teaching support given to Year 2 pupils made sure they located "islands" in their versions of the Pollock print and thought about how colours might be applied to fill in spaces enclosed by lines. Activities for younger pupils, however, were less demanding and not well matched to the earlier part of the lesson these pupils had all enjoyed. Although there were opportunities for choosing to paint on an easel or to invent their own versions of a "Winnie the Pooh" character for their literacy work, most chose quite a low level 'colouring-in' task on a work sheet. Since they were well supervised by a skilled Nursery Nurse, it was difficult to understand why they could not undertake more challenging work that better matched their earlier learning.
77. Teachers in both key stages make sure that pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop their ideas through computer programs. For example, a Year 2 pupil made a line drawing 'after Jackson Pollock' and began to fill in the 'islands' with colour during the lesson observed. Younger pupils claimed, confidently, that they too would make pictures when a machine was available. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn modelling with materials such as plasticine. Clay is more appropriately deployed for art purposes in the later key stage. Here, pupils enjoy learning the many properties of clay when (for example) making coiled pots or masks following on from line drawings of an African mask. The school recognises

that large-scale three-dimensional modelling does not feature sufficiently in the curriculum. Most art work scrutinised, especially in the later key stage, was done with pastels and similar media rather than with paint.

78. The school has continued to build on the good picture presented in the previous inspection report. For example, pupils are taught specific techniques and provided with good opportunities to apply them for a variety of purposes. The coordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has gained a good overview of what pupils do across the school through informal talks with colleagues and through looking at pupils' finished work. She does not, however, monitor teaching and learning practices in classrooms to see how the subject is actually delivered. The latest curriculum guidelines are used for planning, each half-term, and the school is reviewing its existing long-term planning to include all elements, properly, across the year. Resources sufficiently meet curricular demands, in line with planning. The school takes care that these are of good quality. For example, a variety of art pencils are seen to be important as a means of supporting the development of pupils' drawing skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

79. Because of timetabling arrangements, no lessons were seen. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, on teachers' planning and on discussions with staff and pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1, seven-year-olds reach satisfactory standards in making 'products', in line with what is expected for their age. Nine-year-olds reach good standards prior to transferring to a Middle School in this aspect of the design and technology curriculum. Across the age range, many examples of good work for model making purposes are seen. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and achieve in line with their prior attainment. At times, they make good progress.
80. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explained how they drew pictures for special Easter cards before making the cards. They designed their cards, using paint, paper, textiles, collage and sewing. They explained how to measure and cut shapes, fit them together, decorate them, then finally assemble the pieces to complete the task. They knew which glue to use and could describe the effect the glue had on different materials. They also talked enthusiastically about their models of a village on the imaginary Isle of Struay (connected to geography and literacy). They said they painted their ideas of what the island looked like, then made the houses, trees and other buildings, using 'hard paper'. They then painted it all, glued pieces together and finished off their model. The model was carefully executed, showing good standards for these young pupils. Colourful models of Chinese dragons, linked to discussions of the Chinese New Year, show pupils' original ideas and their capacity for completing good quality models. However, pupils in this early key stage have not developed skills in the designing process prior to making products, because opportunities to extend learning in this aspect of the curriculum are limited. They do not, for example, spend time discussing, investigating, suggesting and choosing materials they can use, or choosing tools, noting these down on their designs. Similarly, pupils do not evaluate finished products to see how effective their choices are at a level related to their capability.
81. By the end of Year 4, the standard of work seen is good. Pupils are very keen to share their experiences of using construction kits to make models for a local exhibition. They also spoke of a visit by a model maker who demonstrated how such materials could be used to construct sophisticated, moving models. Pupils know why wheels and cogs are used in their models. Their photographs show the moving parts of the models constructed.
82. Year 4 pupils have designed and made clay African masks. They described how they 'played' with the clay before using it so they could 'find out about the material'. They then 'sketched ideas, chose colours, shapes and turned the ideas into a design, then planned how we would make the design'. Pupils said what tools they used and could talk about safety when using cutting tools of any kind. It is clear that safety aspects in this subject have been thoroughly discussed in class. Pupils know that using certain glues on the final product will make it shiny. They also know that different types of paper have different properties. Pupils have looked at sewing designs and discussed them before designing their own patterns. They decided which colours they wanted for their patterns, then the group produced pieces of sewing to use in various ways. They explain how they make notes about their designs, then, having finished their models, consider how effective their choices of materials and designs have been. There were, however, few examples of good quality designs available.
83. The curriculum is managed well by its coordinator. She has good subject knowledge and has worked hard to introduce and support developments since the previous inspection. The recently revised scheme of work closely follows the latest national guidance, ensuring that design and technology tasks become increasingly more challenging, as pupils grow older. Its coverage suitably meets National

Curriculum requirements. As yet, the scheme is in the early stages of implementation. Adequate resources, supporting the curriculum, are well labelled and efficiently stored.

GEOGRAPHY

84. Because of timetabling arrangements, no lessons were seen during the course of the inspection. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and talking to pupils and teachers. By the end of Key Stage 1, seven-year-olds attain at least in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 4, similarly, attain at least in line with what can be expected for nine-year-olds, with higher attaining pupils achieving good standards in their work. It is evident, both in pupils' work and when listening to what they say, that pupils gain from the many practical activities they undertake in connection with geography studies. Consequently, they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs attain in line with their prior attainment through the good support they receive.
85. At seven, pupils know that geography involves finding out about "the world". So they recognise their studies of a sea-side resort, its features of coastline and differences between life there in summer and winter, as geographical. They are establishing concepts of 'the environment' and learning how people affect what happens to the world around them through the actions they take. For example, pupils note changes to their immediately locality when walking about their village. They record 'special places' that are important to village life. They know that a globe shows where different countries are and that maps give important information about countries and localities. They talk about the 'British Isles' in connection with work they have done (as when they compared a village on the imaginary island of Struay in the Western Isles - featured in favourite story books - with their own village). By Year 4, pupils know the different countries of the British Isles and use a key correctly. They make firm links between studying similarities and differences in a range of localities, both within Britain and beyond. Pupils across Key Stage 2 talk with understanding about their work on Kenya. They contrast Britain with an African country in terms of climate and lifestyles, comparing their own village to an African village. Pupils use a rain gauge and weather vane to record weather observations, making comparisons over time on bar charts. Higher attaining pupils and those of average attainment in Year 4 demonstrate a secure grasp of how to identify features on a map, follow directions and complete their own maps with relevant features and a key.
86. Since no teaching was seen, a judgement about this is not made. It is evident, though, that teachers strongly emphasise practical work, allied to purposeful discussion, as underpinning learning. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils clearly enjoyed making a model of the village on the island of Struay, placing important features (such as the Post Office and the road running alongside the harbour) according to a map in their story books. Year 2 pupils had a good recall of this work. They could talk about the model knowledgeably, although work on it had taken place some time before the inspection. The immediate locality represents an important way by which pupils are introduced to geography studies. It remains a valuable source as pupils move in to Key Stage 2. So, pupils in Years 3 and 4 talk about their "local environment" with good understanding. They link this to a Kenyan village, for example. Also, they recalled in detail a visit to an "African village" deep in the Hertfordshire countryside. This visit gave a practical insight into activities they had clearly enjoyed. Teachers make good use of visual material (such as postcards of seaside resorts and large scale posters and photographs) as well as a range of book resources to support themes of work.
87. The school has made good progress in addressing weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. For example, it has developed its subject policy and scheme of work to take good account of the school's own needs for the planning and teaching of curriculum content. Planning now also takes suitable note of the latest recommendations for the curriculum 2000. The coordinator gains knowledge of what pupils do through informal discussion with colleagues. She has no clear picture of teaching and learning processes other than in her own classroom. Teachers assess pupils' learning well, relative to planned lesson content and to level descriptors for geography. They make suitable adjustments to future planning in light of ongoing assessments in lessons and those made at the end of a theme of work, as well as through their good knowledge of individuals' learning needs. Resources are sufficient for curriculum requirements.

HISTORY

88. One Key Stage 2 lesson was observed. Judgements are based on this, on a scrutiny of work across the school and on talking to pupils and teachers. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well. Standards are at least in line with levels expected for their age. They make good progress and, by Year 4, do

standards are evident when pupils talk about the work they do. Pupils of average and higher attainment frequently reach good standards in written work, giving clear accounts of events they have studied. Pupils with special educational needs attain at least in line with their prior attainment because of good support and through an emphasis on firsthand experiences linked to classroom learning (as far as practicable).

89. By seven, pupils know that history has to do with learning about the past. They talk knowledgeably about time-lines. For example, a Year 2 girl explained that a time line was used to illustrate '100 years ago, 50 years ago and the present', "and some years in between these times". She was referring to Key Stage 1 studies, when pupils learn about how people lived 'then' as compared to 'now'. They know this span of time encompassed part of Queen Victoria's reign. They benefit noticeably from activities that stimulate their imagination. For example, they learned much from walking round the village to pick out 'old' and 'new' buildings and from visiting a Victorian kitchen in the house of a school governor. They chose a Victorian object from the kitchen to draw. Drawings, including those by the youngest pupils, are well observed and executed. Objects are recognisable (for example, a washboard or a mincing machine), suggesting the high level of interest in what was observed and talked about. Written work by Years 1 and 2 pupils is informative, again revealing a real interest in the objects chosen and good recall of learning. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils write diaries from Samuel Pepys' point of view about the Fire of London, presenting a clear account of main events. Years 3 and 4 pupils know that objects from the past are often called 'artefacts'. They know how a time line 'works'. In a lesson, they can answer questions about 'what came before' and 'after' the Tudors by using a visual timeline on the classroom wall. The oldest pupils know that the Tudor period was approximately 500 years ago. A boy can recall the dates. Pupils know that historical evidence is collected from a variety of sources and that new technology helps historians reshape the past and might even change ideas about events. For example, they know that scientists can work out the age of bones quite precisely by means of a scanner. Through a teacher's skilful questioning, pupils are led to think about what it might have been like to be a 'spit boy' in a Tudor kitchen, in charge of turning the spit as meat roasts, even on the hottest days, such as those pupils were experiencing. Subsequently, pupils in Year 4 make a good start on a writing task about their imaginary experiences, well supported for their independent work by the thorough nature of the preceding discussion.
90. In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching was very good. It is evident from planning and pupils' work in both key stages, as well as from talking to pupils from Year 2 upwards, that teachers have secure subject knowledge and impart enthusiasm in teaching about the past. Learning is made interesting to pupils through many visits connected to classroom work and by visitors coming in to school to talk to pupils about times past. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 recalled a visit to an 'Anglo-Saxon village' with great excitement. They remembered details about the lifestyle of those times in relation to ways of cooking, kinds of pots used and how people dressed. On an exploration of the parish church, they were amazed to discover it was built long before Henry Tudor came to the throne. Teaching builds successfully on such firsthand learning by capitalising on pupils' interests and extending these through relevant story and information books and by using CD Roms on the computer. An emphasis on learning through talk, whereby pupils are expected to listen attentively and to contribute extensively, also provides a sound foundation for pupils' written work, as evident in the lesson seen. Here, a teacher's thorough planning allied to high expectations ensured that older pupils managed a set task independently, while Year 3 pupils were helped with their writing.
91. The school has maintained the good picture presented in the previous inspection report. Planning takes appropriate account of the latest Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance. The coordinator has a good overview of the subject in terms of what is taught and learned, through ongoing discussions with her teaching colleague and her knowledge of the work pupils actually do. However, time for classroom observation of teaching and learning processes is not formalised. Satisfactory resources are considerably enhanced through visits and visitors, as well as by borrowing artefacts. Homework in Key Stage 2 enables pupils to undertake research in connection with classroom studies and pupils' talk shows their keen interest in extending learning through homework tasks.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

92. Evidence is based on one dedicated information and communication technology lesson seen in each classroom, on work completed by pupils throughout the school, a scrutiny of teachers' planning, the routine use of computers in lessons observed in other subjects and on discussions with pupils. Overall, standards achieved in information and communication technology are satisfactory and good at times. Pupils' daily access to computers means they can apply skills learned to their ongoing work. However,

such use is restricted because of the limited number of machines available, affecting standards generally. On occasion, there is a gap in time between pupils being taught a new skill and their being able to use it for themselves. To date, control technology is not taught and the school has insufficient equipment for this area of the curriculum. This weakness is acknowledged. Remedying it is forecast as part of school development planning.

93. By seven, pupils use a computer keyboard confidently. They have sound subject knowledge and appropriate vocabulary. They follow instructions on a screen with a mouse, clicking on the correct icon. They access relevant programs by means of a 'drop down' menu and save and print work once they know it is complete. To illustrate: in an information and technology lesson connected with art, pupils experimented with different qualities of line and colours to simulate a painting 'after the style of' Jackson Pollock. They clicked on their choice of lines and moved these around the screen to gain a desired effect, placing colours accurately between lines to fill spaces. In response to questions from a supporting adult, they reviewed what they did step-by-step. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, Years 3 and 4 pupils revealed a good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using email and chat lines. All have email addresses and passwords and know how to use them. So, pupils find information to assist their work in history and geography on the Internet. They use a data handling program to good effect. They know how to enter information about favourite colours on pie charts or bar charts. They can design a poster aimed at teaching an 'alien' how to use a computer. They choose and use tools appropriately. In a session at the end of one lesson, pupils articulated why they had chosen elements included in their designs. Pupils apply word processing skills successfully in literacy lessons. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson on letter writing, pupils word processed their work. They knew that this produced a better presented copy for others to read. They could move text, change fonts, underline and embolden print until they were satisfied with results.
94. Teaching in the lessons seen was good or very good. Teachers check pupils' understanding of teaching points during wholeclass sessions through skilled questioning, maintaining a good focus on the main aim of lessons. Planning is very good and the purposes of lessons are shared well with pupils. Where teaching is very good, pupils check whether learning intentions have been achieved at the end of lessons and evaluate what they have done. Teachers' questioning and relevant vocabulary are strong features, here. Support is well deployed in both key stages and helpers' good knowledge of pupils allows tasks to be completed successfully. Pupils are encouraged to work cooperatively at computers, in pairs, with adult support, and they enjoy this. They help one another, carefully heeding questions and instructions. A discussion in a Key Stage 2 lesson about use of the Internet was sensitively handled. Teaching was aimed to very good effect at reinforcing and extending pupils' views, so that everyone stayed interested. Pupils in the later key stage interact well with teachers and make good decisions about when to seek help. For example, when unsure about how to complete part of their poster work, they made an informed guess (based on existing knowledge) in order to progress. Where this didn't work, the teacher they asked for help responded in a constructive and sensitive way well matched to their needs. Specialist support for pupils working on a data handling program made sure they knew the processes involved, and progressed in their learning. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly. Information for future planning helps learning move on. Informative records show clear progress over time.
95. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their competence in information and communication technology. For example, in the Key Stage 1 classroom, pupils across the age range listen to taped stories, independently, on headphones. Older pupils are responsible for using equipment during assembly to ensure that pupils enter and leave the school hall to music. They also manage the overhead projector for projecting the words of hymns and songs on to screen, managing both these tasks competently.
96. The school has developed the subject since the previous inspection and continues to prioritise the need to improve levels of resourcing. The subject is well coordinated and a recently revised scheme of work is being implemented. This scheme includes opportunities for continuous monitoring and recording of pupils' progress. The coordinator has audited and reorganised resources to make them readily accessible and available. A need for more hardware and software to support the curriculum has been identified. At present the coordinator does not monitor teaching and learning in classrooms or standards of attainment reached. Additional, part-time, specialist support staff is strategically deployed to develop pupils' skills in specific areas (as outlined above in relation to data handling). This support derives from a partnership with other small schools in the locality. Teachers continue to undergo training in information and communication technology to ensure that all strands of the curriculum are properly delivered.

MUSIC

97. Pupils reach standards above those expected by the end of Key Stage 1 in singing and playing a variety of tuned and untuned instruments to accompany songs when performing. They also play recorders to a good standard, with some reaching a very high standard. By Year 4, nine-year-olds similarly reach standards better than expected for their age in these elements of the music curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs attain at least in line with their prior attainment. At times, they do better than might be expected, because of good quality teaching. During the inspection, Key Stage 1 lessons were observed and all pupils were seen performing in assemblies. A video of a school performance in the parish church was also watched. Activities relating to pupils composing and performing their own pieces were not seen.
98. In Key Stage 1, pupils in the Reception year work alongside those in Year 1 with no differences noticed in standards reached or in understanding of a lesson's content. For example, all pupils clap a first beat in time to a pulse of four on the metronome. A teacher's good demonstration ensures that all pupils clap successfully on alternate beats. A Year 1 pupil realises that the pulse alters to three beats and knows the bell 'pings' on the first one. All pupils subsequently clap to match the bell and keep time together. They know the words to a range of songs by heart. They can recall names of almost all the instruments they use (such as castanets, maracas and guiro) and know how to hold and strike instruments properly. They keep time to songs with tuned and untuned instruments. They come in on time for their parts in "Hickory Dickory Dock", with the xylophone player and cymbalist running up and down the clock or striking 'one' correctly. Pupils improve their performance through practice, thoroughly enjoying their activity. A good pace of teaching and care taken making sure that all pupils know exactly what is being aimed at helps them participate fully and achieve success.
99. Pupils in Year 2 practise previous recorder work, demonstrating good knowledge of the three notes being studied and the value of these on the staff (for example, crotchet or minim) as well as the meaning of symbols, such as the one for 'staccato'. Pupils have good recorder skills. They hold the instrument correctly, can control their breathing and most produce clear notes. They play in time together. They tackle a new tune with assurance and manage a fair success for their 'first' effort. A group of Key Stage 2 girls played the introduction to the hymn "Morning has broken" on the recorder in assembly, making a pleasing sound and keeping good time to a piano accompaniment. Pupils across Years 3 and 4 play pieces on a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments extremely well. For example, they play recorders, glockenspiels, xylophones, tambas, cymbals and shakers when performing pieces they have learned. They know their parts and watch the teacher conducting to come in on cue. They listen to one another to keep in time. In a video of a concert performance in the church, these older pupils sang a medley of songs from "Oliver" to a good standard. They knew all the songs and sang tunefully in time to a piano accompaniment. In assemblies, pupils across the school sing joyfully together. They learn many hymns and songs, so that very few need watch the screen where words are projected. The youngest in the Reception year and Year 1 shake instruments (such as some with bells or maracas) in time to the singing.
100. Teaching is good. The specialist teacher matches activities well to pupils' ages within class groupings. She has very high expectations of pupils' learning and attitudes. For example, she insisted Reception and Year 1 pupils were very quiet before entering a hall for a lesson, so that they could start promptly, once inside. Pupils immediately organised themselves at tables with their instruments, ready to begin. They know and understand routines and expectations and enjoy their learning. A good pace of teaching and a variety of activities introduce them well to different kinds of music and instruments, listened to from taped programmes, as well as heard in their own singing and playing. Teaching uses taped programmes effectively. Parts are selected from these programmes for specific purposes and programmes are interspersed with many practical activities thoroughly engaging pupils' interest. From the youngest upwards, pupils' ability to organise themselves for performances (such as in assembly) is exemplary. They move quietly into position and wait until everyone is ready (both players and audience), watching for the conductor's signal to start. Lesson planning is good, taking account of previous learning in setting teaching and learning objectives. Assessment throughout lessons is good with individual guidance linked to assessments of performance (as in a Year 2 recorder lesson when pupils were helped to make a clearer sound through their fingering technique). At times, however, too much emphasis is placed on supporting a few pupils in this way so that others are not sufficiently involved in lessons.
101. The school has made good progress in its provision since the previous inspection when standards were judged satisfactory, overall. Planning takes appropriate account of National Curriculum requirements in

line with the latest recommendations. It is, nonetheless, being revised to reflect the school's context and particular needs. Good quality resources are varied and sufficient for all pupils to be able to play during lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have made attractive 'rain sticks' in design and technology. These add variety to the school's existing range of 'shakers'. Pupils' learning is enhanced through participation in outside events, such as when they sing in the church or in activities involving local schools and when they participate in the "Festival of Voices" at Wembley.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102. Due to time-tabling arrangements the only aspect of physical education seen was swimming. Consequently, no judgement is made on general standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 or at age nine, when they move on to Middle School. In swimming, pupils' skills and confidence are equivalent to what can be expected by age seven. Older pupils further develop skills and learn how to improve their strokes, although they are hampered by the small size of the pool. Plans are in hand to extend these older pupils' learning, in deep water, from the start of the next academic year, in September 2001.
103. The scheme of work and teachers' planning were scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils from Year 2 upwards and with teachers. Evidence reveals that pupils experience as full a range of relevant physical education activities as are possible within the restrictions of the accommodation available. The school has addressed a key issue identified in the last inspection by the acquisition of gymnastics equipment in the hall.
104. The school has a small, shallow, swimming pool and pupils plainly have fun in it as well as learning basic swimming skills. Teachers are extremely conscious of water safety and always revise safety rules with pupils prior to their entering the pool. Whilst some pupils have 'free time' in the pool, observed by a teaching assistant who is a First Aider, others, grouped according to their expertise, are taught stroke improvements or exercise to raise water confidence. Teaching is good and pupils work hard. They have keen to succeed and make considerable efforts to improve (including the youngest Reception year pupils). Pupils' water behaviour is good and teachers' exemplars of good practice effectively encourage others. Pupils respond well to instructions and listen carefully to what is expected of them, before applying themselves with good concentration to tasks. By the end of lessons, pupils are tired by their physical exertions. Almost all progress with skills and water confidence during the course of lessons. No inappropriate behaviour was seen.
105. Pupils talk enthusiastically about physical education lessons. They especially like summertime, when they play many games on the school field (such as rounders, cricket and tennis). Older pupils explain their progress in using the new gymnastic apparatus in the hall. At first, they said, they were hesitant and unsure of the apparatus, but now make maximum use of each piece. The pupils understand, however, that 'only half a class can use the apparatus at any one time, whilst the others watch'. This happens because of the small size of the hall, which precludes the organisation of other activities whilst apparatus is out. Pupils are very conscious of safety, making evident how this is stressed by teachers. They know they have to 'warm up and cool down' in lessons, so that their bodies 'can move more easily and things don't hurt'.
106. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. Her detailed scheme of work covers the development of skills over time and the general organisation of physical education. Good account is taken of all aspects required by the National Curriculum, necessarily adapted to what can be delivered safely in the available accommodation. Because the hall is also used for assembly, music lessons and lunch, furniture stored around the perimeter reduces the space for effective delivery of dance and gymnastics skills. When apparatus is used, other activities are, as the pupils explain, restricted because of a lack of safe space. In fact, even without furniture, the space would still be too small for a whole class gymnastics or dance lesson, especially for Key Stage 2 pupils.
107. The school arranges football tuition by local coaches and a football team comprising girls and boys has played against other local schools. Good use is made of a spacious field for games and athletics and pupils can play in school teams when matches are arranged with other Lower Schools. The hard surface is too small for organized games, which again restricts curriculum delivery when the field is too wet for use. Parents have provided an imaginative range of large scale equipment, for pupils across the age-range from the Reception year upwards to enjoy at break times. It challenges pupils to learn how to climb and balance. The youngest pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop their physical skills on the outdoor equipment during the school day in addition to play times, under the supervision of the

Nursery Nurse. Planning for such use is in accordance with judgements made about their learning needs and changes over time in line with the progress pupils make.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Because of time-tabling arrangements, no lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work on teachers' planning, on talking to pupils from Years 2, 3 and 4, on talking to teachers and school governors and on observing daily assemblies.
109. Standards in religious education are good by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 1. Because pupils make good progress, standards are maintained until age nine, when pupils are ready to leave the school. Pupils complete all that is expected in the locally agreed syllabus, experiencing an appropriately broad curriculum. Those with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress and attain in line with their prior attainment. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by widening their appreciation of beliefs founded in their own faith and in the religions and lifestyles of others and by deepening their understanding of moral and social matters.
110. By the age of seven, pupils know some significant facts and are developing a secure knowledge of the Christian religion. They grasp the importance of celebrations in other religions and are starting to learn about similarities in all faiths. They know that Christians have a special book called the Bible and that it contains stories about people who lived 'before Jesus and after Jesus'. They know that Christians worship in a church and are familiar with the local church through visits. They talk knowledgeably about their local vicar, who visited school regularly before her recent retirement. Pupils learned how Chinese New Year is celebrated from a parent who came in to school to talk about the celebrations and share some special food. As part of this experience, they enjoyed tasting pancakes and making dragons. Pupils can discuss important people and events in their own lives and openly talk about what makes them happy or sad. They are at ease sharing this information. Teaching helps pupils learn through practical experience and through discussions based on these, so that their learning extends to other subjects where relevant (for example, to art where pupils draw the artefacts they study). It need not always involve pupils writing about what has been learned.
111. In Key Stage 2, there is more stress on pupils recording work covered and written work is of good quality. Pupils can name and describe some main festivals, such as Easter and Christmas for Christians and Passover for Jews. They can relate New Testament stories such as Jesus walking on water and turning water into wine. They refer to 'miracles' in these stories and believe a miracle is something 'that is special and different to what usually happens and God is always in it'. Visits to school by members of the Jewish and Buddhist faiths give pupils an insight and respect for different ways of worshipping and prayer and different lifestyles. Older pupils compare features of religious beliefs and opinions on what they discuss. They all discuss moral issues and come to see how people feel in different life situations. Teachers make good use of everyday opportunities in the classroom to introduce such discussions during circle time. At times, issues are raised, allowing pupils to think seriously about matters of importance in the wider society, as well as in school. So, for example, they reflect on what it might be like to speak another language and be unable to communicate easily in English and how they might help someone in that situation.
112. Well-organised assemblies are primarily Christian in content. Pupils learn about famous Christian people from the past and present and think about how these people have benefited the lives of others. For example, during the inspection, pupils learned about the work of Gladys Aylward in China. They thought about how a small child in desperate circumstances might feel trying to get away from fighting in a time of war. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in assemblies by answering questions, by singing and by playing instruments. Questions are answered by children of all ages, suggesting very good levels of listening and skills in extracting relevant information. For example, pupils explained about the journey Gladys Aylward took with Chinese children and their mothers. Music complements the message of assemblies to good effect, with hymns and songs chosen carefully. Pupils and staff members sing joyfully together as a community. Pupils compose prayers thoughtfully, to be used in assembly. Four Year 4 pupils read out prayers about what it meant to be a part of the school and how they felt about leaving at the end of term. Children can reflect peacefully during assemblies, in a way supporting the effective delivery of religious education.
113. Teachers' planning is organised so that pupils' knowledge is built on over time, in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers make good use of visitors, artefacts and other resources to illustrate features of different religions. The coordinator has a good overview of the subject and monitors provision

through discussion with colleagues, giving guidance on planning and resources. She does not monitor standards achieved by pupils or teaching of the subject. Artefacts and book resources are limited, yet their good organisation gives pupils and staff members ready access.