

INSPECTION REPORT

COLEHILL FIRST SCHOOL

Wimborne, Nr Bournemouth

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113664

Headteacher: Mrs S Williams

Reporting inspector: Mrs Ann Coughlan
21124

Dates of inspection: February 28th – March 2nd 2000

Inspection number: 194388

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Colehill First School Middlehill Road Colehill Wimborne Dorset
Postcode:	BH21 2HL
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Richards
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ann Coughlan	Registered inspector	Science Art Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils' taught?
Jan Zachary	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
June Watson	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Under fives	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
John Wray	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information technology Music	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than average for its type with 150 girls and boys on roll. It has grown in size since its last inspection when the numbers on roll were 118. Most pupils come from the immediate residential area where the housing is predominantly owner occupied, with a small proportion of social housing. The school has identified 16.3 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs; this is below the national average. Children are admitted at the beginning of the academic year in which they have their fifth birthday. Most come from broadly favoured backgrounds and their attainments on entry are generally above average. However, their writing skills are lower than might be expected. The school occupies a split site: the classes for four to seven year olds are in the original school building while the classes for seven to nine year olds are in temporary buildings, on the annexe site, across a road.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and improving school that meets its aims well. It provides a good standard of care for its pupils and has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The leadership and management have established a very positive ethos for learning. Pupils attain higher than average standards when they leave the school at nine years of age. The enthusiasm of the teachers encourages pupils to develop very good attitudes to learning and they enjoy coming to school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain high standards in mathematics and above average standards in English, physical education and religious education by the time they leave the school
- The quality of teaching is good overall and in one fifth of lessons is very good or excellent
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, are eager to learn, behave very well and form very constructive relationships with each other and with adults
- The very good governing body is actively involved in all aspects of school life and the school monitors and evaluates its work very well
- The school's very effective partnership with parents makes a significant contribution to pupils learning
- The school works very hard to help pupils develop a sense of moral and social responsibility
- The school's educational priorities are supported by very good financial planning

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology are below the national expectation for pupils of this age
- The art curriculum is not broad enough either in the materials used or the artists studied
- The daily act of collective worship does not always meet statutory requirements

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 progress since its last inspection in November 1996. It has addressed successfully all the weaknesses identified at that time. There has been a significant improvement in the breadth of the curriculum and the quality of planning in design and technology, history, geography and religious education resulting in a rise in standards. Standards have also improved in English, mathematics, and science in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching has improved significantly; in particular, teachers now identify clearly appropriate learning objectives for brighter pupils. The school assesses the attainment and progress of pupils regularly and the information is consistently used to plan further work. The school now has very effective systems for monitoring the impact of the curriculum and teaching on pupils' attainment and progress.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	A	B	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	C	C	D	E	
Mathematics	A	B	A	C	

These results show that the school is maintaining above average standards in reading and high standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1. The work pupils were doing during the inspection confirmed this. The school has recognised the weakness in writing compared with other subjects and made this area a high priority for teaching and learning. Although standards in reading and mathematics fell slightly between 1996 and 1998, they rose again in 1999. The pupils make good progress overall as demonstrated in the high scores they achieve in their Year 4 tests. Inspection evidence shows that pupils attain above expected standards in English and science by the age of nine, when they leave the school. Standards in mathematics are well above the expected levels for this age group. However, standards in information technology are below those expected in both key stages. Pupils across the school attain higher than expected standards in religious and physical education and in Years 3 and 4 also attain higher than expected standards in geography and history. Pupils' attainments meet national expectations in other subjects, though their learning in art is limited. Most of the five year olds in the reception class achieve what is normally expected for their age and above the expected standards in language and literacy, and in their personal development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: the pupils are enthusiastic, attentive and concentrate well in lessons. They contribute confidently to discussions and respond well to a wide range of challenges.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall. Behaviour in lessons is never less than satisfactory and for the under fives and for the seven to nine year olds is consistently good or very good.
Personal development and relationships	Good: the pupils show initiative and persevere well, taking responsibility for their work. Pupils collaborate very well, being willing to help each other.
Attendance	Good: pupils enjoy coming to school, they arrive promptly and lessons start on time.

The pupils' very good attitudes, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of school activities, together with the very good relationships throughout the school are significant factors in their good achievements.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching of English and mathematics is good throughout the school and the tasks they set meet the needs of all pupils. The group work in mathematics in Year 4 challenges the brighter pupils well and is very effective. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was never less than satisfactory; it was good in 58 per cent of lessons, very good in 17 per cent and excellent in 4 per cent. The wide range of interesting activities, good questioning by teachers and the positive ethos in most lessons encourages pupils to learn effectively. In a small number of lessons, insufficient challenge and slow pace leads to loss of concentration and reduced effort.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils. Visits to places of interest, and extra-curricular activities broaden the pupils' experiences and extend their understanding.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: the work designed especially for them and the high level of care enables these pupils to make good progress in meeting the specific targets in their individual education plans. Although given support in recording their work in other subjects, some aspects are not sufficiently modified to help them gain real understanding.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall: the strong values, clear codes of behaviour and the good role models provided by staff help the pupils to develop a good understanding of moral and social responsibilities. Sound provision is made for spiritual development and for pupils to appreciate differing cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: the school cares well for its pupils and monitors their progress carefully as they move through the school. It works effectively in partnership with external support agencies.

The good quality curriculum prepares pupils well for moving on to the next phase of their education. The statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship are not always fully met. The school fails to exploit opportunities for extending pupils' cultural development in several subjects. The access to large toys and climbing equipment for outdoor play for the under fives is inadequate.

The school works very effectively with parents. It provides good quality information for the parents, whose involvement in their children's learning has a strong impact on the school's work. Parents have very positive views about the school and they make a very good contribution to their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the clear vision of the headteacher for the school's development together with effective monitoring has raised standards successfully. All staff are working together well as a committed team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors make a very good contribution to the school. They are led and organised well, fulfilling their responsibilities conscientiously and very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes good use of the assessments of teachers and the results of school and national tests to evaluate its performance and modify its practice.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of all staff, of time, of material resources and the school building.

The adequacy of staffing, the school's accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory. A good feature is a joint planning day for governors and teachers when the school's work is reviewed and priorities established for the coming year. The management and control of the school's finances are very good. The school follows the principle of best value through comparing the quality it provides against that of others and asking appropriate questions about improving its provision. It regularly carries out a survey of parental views.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school • Children make good progress and achieve high standards in mathematics • Teaching is good and the school works closely with parents • The school is well led and managed • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on levels attained in the annual written report • The quality of the homework set

The inspection team endorses parents' positive comments. Inspectors agree that although most annual reports give useful details of progress in English and mathematics, there is limited information in other areas, though there is better practice in the reports on Year 2 pupils. However, there are parents meetings in the autumn and summer term, and teachers are approachable at other times. Inspectors, however, found homework to be used well to support learning and the policy straightforward.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly above average but with under developed writing skills and around average standards in mathematics. Their achievements in the foundation year are sound and by the age of five, they meet the expected standards overall with above expected levels in reading, speaking and listening and in personal and social development. The school's results for the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils attained standards well above the national average in mathematics and above average in reading. The standards are in line with those of similar schools. However, attainment in writing was below the national average and very low in comparison with the average for similar schools. Trends over the last four years show that the school is maintaining well above the national average performance in reading and mathematics and close to the national average in writing. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys. Inspection findings reflect these results with pupils attaining average standards in English and well above average standards in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.

2. Pupils' achievement in English in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. The school has recognised the weakness in writing compared with other subjects and made this area a high priority for teaching and learning. Since last September all pupils have challenging individual targets that are set and reviewed on a termly basis. These are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievements.

3. Pupils make good progress in English in Key Stage 2 and good and sometimes very good progress in mathematics. By the time they leave the school at nine years, pupils have improved their standard of writing to match those for other aspects of English at above the expected level. Their attainment in mathematics is well above the expected level.

4. The development of speaking and listening skills is given a high priority through a wide range of activities. Teachers ensure pupils learn suitable subject specific vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils respond appropriately in different situations and engage confidently in conversation with adults. In Key Stage 2 pupils use their skills successfully to support learning in other subjects such as history and religious education. The well-planned work in the literacy hour enhances pupils' reading skills as they move through the school. By the age of seven, most pupils read a wide range of books and use a variety of strategies well to tackle unfamiliar words. Many older pupils read clearly and with good expression. They discuss plots and character with good understanding and access information independently. Although pupils learn to join letters in Year 2, a fluent joined handwriting is not established firmly and this has a negative impact on the standards achieved. However, they begin to understand punctuation and use capital letters and full stops correctly. Achievement is good in Years 3 and 4 owing to challenging work and constructive assessment by their teachers. Pupils use good planning techniques extend their written work over a wide range. They develop and use their literacy skills well in subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education.

5. The school implemented the National Numeracy Strategy last September. Good quality teaching, effective monitoring and very good assessment of pupils' work leads to good achievement in Key Stage 1 and very good achievement in Key Stage 2. Number skills are a particular strength. Higher and average attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 use mental strategies while lower attainers use apparatus successfully to add and subtract. The pupils are beginning to appreciate pattern in number and give appropriate explanations. Year 3 demonstrate good estimating skills and many pupils demonstrate very high standards in Year 4, especially when solving problems related to mathematical patterns. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use mathematical skills successfully when measuring in science and handling data in geography.

6. Pupils' attainments in science meet the expected level overall by the end of Key Stage 1 and are above the expected level by the end of Year 4. The strong emphasis on investigative work throughout the school has a positive impact on the pupils' achievement of good practical and recording skills. Even the youngest pupils produce clearly drawn and accurately labelled diagrams. From Year 2 onwards, pupils gain a good understanding of the importance of predicting possible

outcomes and of fair testing. Pupils develop their ability to write accounts of their experiments and findings in Year 3. This leads to some high quality work in Year 4, where the higher attainers demonstrate well-organised ideas and begin to provide reasonable explanations for their findings.

7. In information technology, however, pupils' attainments are below the expected level across the school. Although there is a suitable scheme of work, achievement is unsatisfactory because pupils are not given enough time to practise their skills on a regular basis.

8. Pupils attain above the expected levels in physical education and religious education across the school and in geography and history in Key Stage 2. A wide range of extra-curricular sports clubs supports their achievements in physical education. A significant improvement in the breadth of the religious education curriculum, the quality of planning and teaching quality has raised the standards since the last inspection. Similar improvements have also raised the standards in geography and history. Pupils meet the expected levels in other subjects, but the lack of a suitable scheme of work for art limits pupils' learning and achievements.

9. Good teaching and support for pupils with educational needs enables them to make good progress in meeting the specific targets in their individual education plans. Teachers plan appropriate work for them in literacy and numeracy. However, although these pupils are given support in recording their work in subjects such as science, other aspects of the work are not sufficiently modified. Sometimes, this means the challenge is too high for them to gain real understanding.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, throughout the school, are very good overall. The strengths identified during the last inspection continue to have a positive impact on standards. Attitudes and behaviour were at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, and were consistently good or very good for pupils under five and for those in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, attitudes were graded satisfactory in a few lessons, but were very good in almost half. Pupils are very enthusiastic. They respond well to questions and are keen to answer. Pupils concentrate well and even younger ones stay on task. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson on counting in twos, for example, the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils was a major factor in the very good learning taking place.

11. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the support they receive in Key Stage 1 and are willing to 'have a go'. In Key Stage 2, there is a lively response from pupils with special educational needs to the challenges the teacher offers. They particularly enjoy the element of competition in some of their activities.

12. There have been no exclusions in the last year, and the behaviour of pupils in and around the school is very good. The community runs in an orderly way, with pupils filing out from classrooms in a very civilised way at the start of lunchtime. They play noisily but safely, and respond well to supervisors. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good, often very good and at times exemplary. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy and respect property. They have very good relationships with each other and with adults.

13. The personal development of the pupils is good. They collaborate particularly well, building on their very good relationships. In Year 4, for example, pupils gave each other spelling tips in a literacy hour. These sorts of opportunities for supporting each other build pupils' confidence, encouraging them to contribute their own ideas and value those of others. Year 2 pupils, for example, showed great confidence in a lesson about food related to the Last Supper, where they were willing to discuss their own ideas about beliefs. Even the youngest children, in the reception class, are learning the skills of reflection, in the context of very familiar things such as the meaning of birthdays. The pupils show initiative and persevere well, taking responsibility for their work. By Year 4 they can produce interesting presentations, using their own ideas for example, about how children were affected by the Second World War.

14. Attendance is good, and with last year's figures at 96.5 per cent, it is above average. Pupils arrive promptly and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when nearly a quarter of the lessons included shortcomings. Teaching is now good overall across the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievements. Parents recognise and appreciate this. During the inspection week, teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good in 58 per cent of lessons. The teaching was very good in 17 per cent of lessons and excellent in 3 per cent. Most of the very good and excellent teaching was seen in Year 1 and Year 4, where there are considerable gains in learning. Overall, learning is good across the school.

16. The teaching of children under five was good in 70 per cent of the lessons seen. The teacher and assistant have a good understanding of the needs of children of this age. They plan and prepare soundly a wide range of stimulating activities that broaden the children's experiences and organise these well. There is a good pace in most lessons and good use is made of the time to further the children's knowledge and skills. The adults encourage the children to develop independence and to learn to work together.

17. In the key stages, the quality of teaching is good in most subjects but satisfactory in history and geography in Key Stage 1. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on teaching in art or information technology. Teachers closely reference their planning to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They teach literacy effectively, with a suitable emphasis on improving the standards in writing. Their teaching of numeracy is very effective, encouraging considerable intellectual effort by the pupils, who reach high standards.

18. The teachers' very good management of pupils in nearly all lessons is a strong feature. Teachers communicate effectively with the pupils through good use of their voice and facial expression. Combined with the appropriate use of praise and humour, this contributes to a pleasant and purposeful atmosphere that encourages very good relationships. The pupils feel confident to contribute their ideas and to undertake new tasks.

19. There are clear objectives for lessons, usually shared well with the pupils through clear explanations. These build well on prior attainment over a series of lessons to promote smooth progress in learning. The individual targets in writing help pupils develop a good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers provide well for pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy, but sometimes, in science for example, the challenge is too high for these pupils to learn effectively. In Key Stage 1, the support and encouragement of the classroom assistant encourages the self esteem of pupils with special educational needs and they are willing to try hard. There is good quality teaching for pupils with specific learning difficulties in Key Stage 2, where the interesting presentation of a range of activities encourages their interest and effort. Detailed observation and assessment contributes to the progress of these pupils.

20. The teachers have equally high expectations for pupils' behaviour, application to work and achievement and they increase their expectation appropriately for the higher attaining pupils. This is exemplified in the good challenges offered in many lessons; the teachers' use of good quality oral work, combined with direct teaching, helps pupils to think clearly and extends their understanding. This is supported further by the regular, good quality assessments through probing questioning and way teachers interact regularly with pupils engaged in individual or group work. Teachers mark work conscientiously and encourage the older pupils to self-check or check with a partner. The regular homework the teachers provide supports learning well.

21. Teachers structure lessons and organise purposeful practical work well, making good use of most resources. They have a good awareness of safety issues and encourage safe practice in design and technology, science and physical education. They use books effectively to develop vocabulary and language skills and introduce pupils to books as a source of pleasure and information. The teachers make good use of the extensive school grounds to further pupils' knowledge of plants and animals and their habitats. The well-chosen venues for educational visits contribute well to pupils' understanding of, for example, life in previous times. However, the computers in each classroom are

not used enough for pupils to develop their basic information technology skills. Teachers are aware that they need to improve their own competence and confidence in teaching the subject.

22. In a few lessons, pupils are unclear about their task or the pace is slow during the initial input. Where this happens, or where pupils are not sufficiently involved in the introduction to the lesson, pupils' lose concentration and their interest diminishes.

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

23. The school provides a good quality curriculum overall with a broad range of relevant opportunities for learning that meet the needs of all pupils. There has been a significant improvement in the breadth of the curriculum and the quality of planning in design and technology, history, geography and religious education as a response to a weakness identified by the last inspection. The provision is balanced well with the exceptions of information technology, that is under represented in the curriculum, and art, which lacks appropriate structure.

24. The curricular opportunities for children aged under five suitably cover all the areas of learning for their development, with the exception of some aspects of physical development. This is owing to the lack of provision of a securely enclosed outdoor play area with appropriate play equipment and this limits their physical development. The culture for the under fives supports active learning through talk, enquiry and play and they respond positively in this environment. For example, new learning is often linked to familiar stories and children raise their own questions. The curriculum prepares children well for work within the National Curriculum.

25. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum appropriately covers all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is relevant provision for personal, social and health education that includes aspects of sex education and the dangers of drug misuse, but the subject is not timetabled. The school recognises the need to structure this provision more formally and also include citizenship in its planned review. The school has effectively implemented the national literacy strategy and its implementation of the numeracy hour is very effective and these are having a positive impact on raising standards.

26. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Targets on the pupils' individual education plans are linked appropriately to the assessments of the pupils' needs and are put together in conjunction with the specialist teacher. The targets are usefully quite specific and facilitate the planning of suitable activities and the measure of their success. The school provides good equality of access to both the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The way the school operates on a day-to-day basis avoids obvious stereotypical behaviour by gender, as girls and boys work together as equals in all aspects of school life.

27. The curriculum is extended well by visits to places of geographical, historical and scientific interest. There is good provision of extra-curricular activities which focus primarily on a range of sporting and musical interests. These activities benefit the learning of those pupils who attend, especially in music and physical education.

28. The overall provision for pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is sound. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. For example, Year 1 pupils reflect on the reasons people go to church and places and people that are special in their own lives. However, teachers miss opportunities across the remainder of the curriculum for pupils to develop awe and wonder. In some assemblies, the spiritual dimension lacks emphasis and the requirements for collective worship are not always met.

29. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. All the teachers have high expectations of pupils and this was reinforced in all lessons observed. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and they are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. The staff value children's work through sharing assemblies and plenary work at the end of lessons. They encourage pupils to respect property and the school environment that is tidy and litter free. All adults

set good examples to encourage pupils to be consistently courteous and considerate. The moral aspects of environmental issues are raised in some science and geography lessons.

30. There is very good provision for pupils' social development as a result of well planned opportunities for collaborative work across the school. For example, pupils in Year 3 work together in small groups to deliver a weather report to the rest of the class and in Year 4, pupils prepare and deliver a presentation on the impact of World War II on the daily life of children. They work with a partner in mixed ability pairings, discussing and listening to each other very well. Pupils learn to be responsible for themselves and for others and they relate well to staff and visitors. Most parents feel that the school achieves high standards of social behaviour and inspection evidence confirms this view.

31. The quality of provision for pupils' cultural development is sound overall. Teachers build upon the contributions of literature, music and dance through the formal curriculum and pupils respond well to the after school clubs that are available. They visit the church, museums and English heritage centres. However, the school fails to exploit opportunities in several subjects, for example the school does not draw sufficient attention to the work of significant art and craftspeople. Multicultural provision is less well developed although the school is aware of this and is planning a multicultural week.

32. The good and often very good teaching in the upper part of the school and the good liaison with the middle school, to where the majority of the pupils transfer, prepares the pupils effectively for the next stage of their education. The school has established sound links with a nearby retail outlet and pupils' learning is satisfactorily enriched by this and the successful fund raising project for Wells for India.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school makes good provision for the monitoring, support and welfare of pupils and this has been maintained since the last inspection. It has addressed successfully the weaknesses in assessment identified at that time. Staff are accessible and responsive and give pupils good support. They look after pupils with special educational needs well and each class teacher keeps a folder to help plan and monitor the work of these pupils and this promotes their learning.

34. There are good quality procedures for child protection and the staff know and understand these. The headteacher takes responsibility and has had recent training. There are also effective procedures for promoting pupils' well being, health and safety. The accident book is maintained appropriately, and both headteacher and governors take suitable roles in assessing and reducing risks.

35. There are good procedures for assessing, monitoring and promoting academic progress. There is a clear policy, with actions focused appropriately on the core subjects. Planning of future work is amended regularly as a result of the assessments made, especially in English and mathematics. This is effective in ensuring that work meets pupils' needs and also promotes smooth progress in their learning. Good attention is paid also to some foundation subjects. In religious education and design and technology, for example, an analysis of weaker skills resulted in a specific work programme being developed. However, assessment in art remains weak. Senior managers, who also analyse longer-term data such as the results of national and discretionary tests, tightly monitor the teachers' assessments and their use. This analysis is now used well to set whole school targets. There are also good procedures for monitoring and promoting personal development and the school liaises closely with parents. The headteacher is available and approachable and teachers are sensitive and aware.

36. Teachers and classroom assistants keep detailed records of the progress of pupils with special educational needs with reference to the targets in their individual education plans. The plans are reviewed appropriately on a regular basis. The school works closely with the local authority support teacher for learning difficulties and appreciates the advice and programmes it has received from the authority's behavioural support unit.

37. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance, discipline and good behaviour. The behaviour policy is sound, and the school intends to update it. The recent involvement of pupils in developing playground rules in 'circle time' is a positive development. Good attendance is promoted appropriately and requirements for recording and reporting attendance are met.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has very effective links with parents. It is maintaining the strengths identified by the last inspection and, following national policies, has introduced a home-school agreement. It provides good quality information for parents, whose involvement in their children's learning has a strong impact on the school's work. The school involves parents appropriately with the identification and progress of pupils with special educational needs. Parents have very positive views about the school and they make a very good contribution to their children's progress.

39. The prospectus, newsletter and annual governors' report are attractive, comprehensive and readable documents. The information on class topics conveyed in the newsletters and the details sent home in reading diaries help parents to understand and support teaching. Annual reports on pupils are not so strong. Most give useful details of progress in English and mathematics but are limited in other areas, though there is better practice in the reports on Year 2 pupils. However, there are parents meetings in the autumn and summer term, and teachers are approachable at other times. Although most parents who attended the parents' meeting with inspectors were happy with reports, the questionnaire returns did show that 11 percent had reservations.

40. Over 90 percent of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that they would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with their children. They also felt that the school works closely with them. Inspectors agree with these views. For example, the school encourages parents to help in classes, and many also run extra curricular activities. The school values this support highly and the way it enhances the children's learning. The friends association is very active and gives good support, contributing significantly to school funds and organising social events.

41. Parents' responses to the questionnaire show that they feel the teaching is good, and the inspection team endorse this. Parents are less happy with the homework set, however. Although parents at the meeting expressed satisfaction, 11 percent of those responding to the questionnaire again had reservations. Inspectors, however, found homework to be used well to support learning and the policy straightforward.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED ?

42. There has been a considerable improvement in the quality of leadership and management since the last inspection and this is now good overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development and has raised standards successfully. She has achieved this through a range of positive strategies. These include the effective monitoring of teaching and target setting; increasing the role and responsibilities of co-ordinators and ensuring that the staff are all working well as a committed team. The deputy head is also making a positive contribution with some shared responsibilities and through monitoring and supporting teachers. As co-ordinator for special educational needs, the headteacher manages this aspect of the school's work well, ensuring appropriate liaison between all concerned.

43. The governing body is very effective. Governors involve themselves actively in all aspects of school life and have a very positive and supportive relationship with the staff. The excellent strategy of arranging an annual joint planning day for all teachers and governors, especially devoted to deciding the priorities for the school development plan, means that there is a good exchange of ideas that directly relate to the budget setting and financial management. The school thus follows the principle of best value through comparing the quality it provides against that of others and asking appropriate questions about improving its provision. It regularly carries out a survey of parental views. The school development plan is now a very effective tool as it reflects the governors' and teachers' awareness of areas for improvement as well as supporting the implementation of national strategies. The headteacher and governors manage the school budget prudently to ensure that the school is in a sound financial position.

44. Since the last inspection governor's roles have been developed and they are now well aware of curriculum development. Reports from curriculum co-ordinators at governors meetings are common

practice. There are also governors with specific responsibilities for the curriculum and special needs and they work effectively with the staff. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory requirements very well although the daily assembly does not always meet the legal requirements for collective worship.

45. The governors have always tried to ensure that the pupil-staffing ratio is good. This is especially evident at the present time in Key Stage 1 where the small number of pupils in the Year 1 classes has a very positive impact on their learning. The way the headteacher combines her management role with teaching is particularly effective in ensuring appropriate challenge for the brighter pupils in mathematics in Year 4 and in science in Year 2. The educational support staff and the administrative staff make a very positive contribution to the life of the school. The bursar is particularly effective in providing up to date information about budgeting. She also gives very good administrative support to both governors and headteacher. The school makes good and effective use of specific grants. The school allocates monies for special educational needs carefully and these have a positive impact by providing good teaching support for those pupils with learning difficulties.

46. The school has satisfactory accommodation, with a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The previous report commented that the accommodation was generous for the number of pupils, but since then the roll has increased. The school benefits from spacious grounds, that are maintained well, sufficient classrooms and many additional work areas such as for design and technology and for special educational needs work. There is no outdoor area for the under fives, however. The school does have two halls, but the more spacious one has a ceiling that is too low to allow for a full gymnastics programme. The split site causes difficulties in terms of movement of pupils in bad weather. The exterior decoration is not sufficiently well maintained in places, though this mostly applies to buildings that are planned for demolition or replacement.

47. While there are difficulties in having a split site, the school uses the accommodation efficiently. Additional teaching areas are used well by small groups for mathematics, special educational needs, music and for design and technology. The library is also a valuable resource although it is not always fully utilised. The school grounds are spacious, well planted and provide a useful environment that supports the work in science and physical education. However, children under five do not have sufficient access to a secure play area with appropriate equipment. There is no information technology support for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2.

48. Taking into account the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of the teaching, the attitudes of the pupils and the overall quality of education provided together with the levels of spending, the school provides good value for money. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. To raise further the standards of work and the good quality of provision apparent in many aspects of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Raise standards in information technology by;

- providing sufficient time for pupils to develop their skills systematically in all aspects of the subject
- providing further training for teachers in order to increase their competence and confidence ***
- providing appropriate resources to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2

(paras. 7, 21, 96, 97, 99, 100)

(2) Improve the breadth and balance of the art curriculum by; ***

- providing a scheme of work that develops pupils' skills and knowledge in a wide range of media in a progressive way
- making more systematic use of a wider range of examples of work by significant artists and craftspeople, including examples from around the world

(paras. 23, 31, 81, 83)

(3) Ensure all daily acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements

(paras. 28, 44)

50. In addition to the main items above, the following less important areas for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- increasing opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness across all subjects of the curriculum (paras.28, 79, 81)
- improving the quality of the annual written report by ensuring that levels of achievement are clearly outlined in all subjects (para. 39)
- improving the provision and access for outdoor play for the under fives (para. 24, 56)

*** The school already has these items under consideration in its development plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	17	58	21	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	Nursery	YR– Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	150
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	18	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	17
	Girls	10	9	12
	Total	25	24	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83	80	97
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments				
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	18
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	26	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87	83	100
	National	82	86	87

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	91
Any other minority ethnic group	6.6

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)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	25

Education support staff: Y1 – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
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	£
Total income	243,198
Total expenditure	242,499
Expenditure per pupil	1,585
Balance brought forward from previous year	699
Balance carried forward to next year	8,807

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	150
Number of questionnaires returned	103

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	51	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	57	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	57	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	56	11	0	2
The teaching is good.	44	55	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	62	11	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	40	3	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	56	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	61	3	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	35	59	3	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	57	0	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	50	5	1	8

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are nearly all very supportive of the school and its work and this is seen in the help they give to the school with lessons, extra-curricular activities and through the friends association. Some parents would like more information on the annual report about the levels their children are attaining in the different subjects. The inspection team agrees this would be helpful. There are varying views among parents about the amount and quality of homework. Inspectors found homework to be used well to support learning and the policy straightforward.

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. Children under five enter the reception class on a part time basis in the September of the academic year in which they have their fifth birthday. They commence full time schooling in the following term. At the time of the inspection, only six of the children were of statutory school age. Results of the baseline assessment and inspection evidence show that children's attainments on entry are above average in personal and social development, physical development and most aspects of language and literacy. The assessments show that their writing skills are under developed and that their mathematical development is in line with the local authority averages. Most children have attended the pre-school playgroup, that is situated on the school site, and they settle quickly into school life. They readily take part in both structured play and teacher led activities. By the time they are five, almost all children reach the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning. In their personal development and in aspects of language and literacy their attainments are above average.

52. Children make good progress in their personal and social development. Behaviour is good and often very good during lessons and around the school, due to the high expectations and consistent routines established by their teacher. Children work independently at their chosen activities with good levels of concentration and they interact well with others, for example when building construction models. The teacher and classroom assistant listen well to children and value their contributions. The atmosphere in the reception class is calm and conducive to successful learning.

53. Children make satisfactory progress overall in language and literacy skills. In writing they make good progress from their low baseline to achieve close to expected levels by the time they are five. The teacher's good use of praise and encouragement develops pupils' confidence to attempt writing tasks. Writing activities such as making story booklets are a popular choice. Higher attaining pupils spell simple words correctly and begin to write captions and short sentences. Most children listen attentively to stories and are keen to talk about their own experiences. They answer questions confidently and show few signs of immature speech. They talk to each other, whilst engaging in role-play at their classroom 'Garden Centre'. Their teacher ensures that there are good opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills. Children have a positive attitude towards reading. Higher attainers are beginning to read simple text accurately and most children are developing a good sight vocabulary. They can suggest sets of words starting with a given letter and make reasonable attempts to spell them. Children were not often observed selecting books in the book corner during free choice activity time and this is an area that is under developed.

54. Children make sound progress in most aspects of their mathematical development and by the age of five, most attain the expected levels for their age with some attaining beyond these. They develop good patterning skills owing to a multi-sensory approach using, for example, bead threading and pasta shape patterns. In number work, higher attainers are more advanced with oral and mental work than their written tasks indicate, as there are insufficient open-ended recording tasks. The teacher presents well-chosen practical tasks to support learning. The children make very good progress at recognising the pattern of numbers during a teacher led activity. The teacher's overall sound teaching and skilful questioning helps to develop children's knowledge and understanding.

55. The children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They engage in well-structured activities using a multi-sensory approach, for instance listening to sounds on a walk around the school and making 'feely' pictures. The teacher uses well-chosen stories effectively as stimuli for children's learning. For example, she demonstrated with stick puppets of a town and a country mouse to develop children's knowledge of contrasting geographical language. Most children use the computer mouse to operate a simple counting game. They explore mouldable materials and learn about cutting and joining methods when making a basket for 'Goldilocks'. They discover the basic needs of a plant as they follow the growth of their broad bean. The teacher's promotion of an extensive vocabulary and her effective questioning are central features of the good teaching in this area of learning.

56. Good teaching helps the children make sound progress in their physical development and there is a resulting refinement of their fine motor skills. For example, they show increasing control in the use of a variety of tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and bead mats. Children thoroughly enjoy their dance lessons and they begin to sequence several simple movements with growing confidence. Learning is enhanced because of the good use of demonstration and the lively pace to the lesson. Good movements are pointed out and the children are given clear learning objectives. Although children have regular use of large indoor physical education apparatus there is no immediate access to the outdoor environment. The under fives have insufficient opportunity for outdoor play with large apparatus and wheeled vehicles for physical development and creative role play and this limits their progress.

57. Progress in creative development is satisfactory. Children participate in regular impromptu singing and movement rhymes and games with their teacher. They experiment with mixing their own paint colours and discover that mixing one colour with another produces a third colour. They use their imagination well in role-play situations using puppets, a class shop and story-telling. They join in a whole school Victorian Day with enthusiasm and talk eagerly about their experiences of special occasions such as birthday celebrations and Christmas. Many remember the reason for celebrating Christmas and some recall the wise men's gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In dance lessons children listen carefully for particular phrases of music. They find a space, showing awareness of others and move with control in response to the music. The teaching is good overall.

58. The quality of teaching for the under fives was good in seven out of ten lessons and all lessons were at least satisfactory. Teaching is based on a sound understanding of the needs of young children and how they learn. High expectations of behaviour, brisk pace to lessons and good organisation lead to the effective gains in learning. Although the teacher checks that all children experience the full range of activities being offered, there is currently no system for monitoring children's choice of activities, through for example, personal record charts.

59. The school makes good provision for children who are under five. The curriculum leads appropriately to the Desirable Learning Outcomes and there is a smooth transition into the National Curriculum when children are ready. The classroom assistant supports children effectively and unobtrusively, such as ensuring that they begin their letters in the correct place during a handwriting lesson. Children's attainment is monitored well using the local education authority's assessment system and achievements are checked. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

ENGLISH

60. By the end of Key Stage 1, the overall level of pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national averages. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessments, 7 year old pupils achieved results in reading that were above the national average although in writing their results were below the expected standards. These results are confirmed by inspection evidence. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of 9, their attainment is above national expectations in both reading and writing. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection for the older pupils. Pupils make sound progress overall at Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment owing to good quality teaching related closely to the targets on their individual education plans.

61. Attainment in speaking and listening is above the national expectation throughout the school. Pupils enter the school with good linguistic skills evident, for example, when telling their news and raising questions. Teachers give the development of speaking and listening skills a high priority through collaborative tasks, group discussions, role-play, drama and question and answer sessions. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently engage in conversation with adults. They listen carefully to teachers and to each other and respond appropriately, for example using animal voices to respond in a repetitive story. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to work with a partner discussing their task and working co-operatively. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson, boys and girls worked together effectively to complete a dictionary task. Pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are sound throughout the school. By Year 4, pupils are able to interact with each other very effectively, for example when conferring with a partner to identify spelling tips and when testing each other. Speaking and listening skills are an important feature of other subjects such as history when

older pupils prepare and deliver class presentations about children's lives during World War II. In religious education Year 3 pupils use and practise these skills when involved in an investigative task to discover the different types of literature contained in the Bible.

62. Attainment in reading is above average throughout the school. By the age of 7, most pupils read a wide range of books and use a variety of strategies well to tackle new words and establish meaning. They read texts from a wide selection of appropriate reading material with much of their learning based on the National Literacy Strategy, which has been implemented successfully throughout the school. Pupils' reading skills are enhanced by the daily-shared reading when a class uses common text from for example a big book, together with guided reading in small ability groups. Pupils enjoy reading and there are well-established routines for regular practice. In Year 1, pupils play a game using letter cubes to make simple words, which they place in the appropriate sense or nonsense column. Their gains in learning cover a number of skills as they negotiate answers within their group, such as reading, spelling and increased vocabulary. They are familiar with terms such as author and illustrator and develop an understanding of fiction and non-fiction. Pupils continue to develop their skills in Key Stage 2 through the National Literacy Strategy and through work in other subjects. Pupils confidently locate books in the library. The library is a valuable, attractive and well-stocked resource that is currently underused. For example although pupils visit it independently it is not timetabled for whole class use to promote library skills. Many older pupils are reading an extensive range of literature and they discuss plots and characters with good understanding. They read clearly and with good expression. They use their reading diaries effectively to produce useful book reviews.

63. Pupils' attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 is below the expected standards. The school has identified this weakness and the subject is highlighted on the school development plan. Several strategies have been implemented, such as half termly individual writing targets. These are already having a positive impact on raising standards. The pupils learn how to use dictionaries and Year 1 high attainers successfully order sets of words with reference to their second letter. Lower attainers are taught how to look in the correct section of the dictionary to find given words, using an alphabet card to help them. These tasks meet the pupils' needs well and promote good gains in learning the basic skills of writing. Although pupils learn to join their letters at the beginning of Year 2, at the time of the inspection about half of them had not yet developed fluent joined handwriting. This has a negative impact on their writing standards. Pupils use good vocabulary with accurate definitions articulated well, for example, when analysing a character from their class big book. They understand about punctuation and begin to use capital letters and full stops in their own writing. They recognise when words should and should not be included within speech marks, prior to using them in their own work.

64. In Key Stage 2, pupils are achieving above average standards overall in writing. Year 3 pupils experience a range of writing opportunities including an alphabet rap poem which they build up effectively with their teacher, learning about the conventions of poetry writing and consolidating punctuation and spelling skills during the lesson. Year 4 pupils extend their range of written work to include media reports, letters, instructions, information guides, research and narrative using good planning techniques such as notes, story frames and questionnaires. Pupils make good advances in their writing skills due to challenging stimuli and constructive teacher assessments. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects such as in religious education when writing about the life of Dr. Barnardo. In a mathematics lesson, pupils were using a dictionary to look up unfamiliar vocabulary and giving a definition for their peers to identify the shape being described

65. The quality of teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 all teaching was good or better. In nearly all lessons pupils' behaviour was good and in Key Stage 2 it was very good. The pupils are keen and interested in their work and concentrate well. This is because lessons are challenging and interesting and pupils are actively involved in their learning. For example, the high emphasis on collaborative work, the brisk pace and good integration through mixed ability groupings all make a positive impact on gains in learning in Key Stage 2. Learning is less successful in Key Stage 1 when pupils are unclear about their task, especially when their teacher does not identify this during the lesson. Some pupils become restless during whole class teacher input when the pace slows or they are insufficiently involved in the input.

66. The subject co-ordinator has had well targeted opportunities to monitor teaching and has identified clearly areas for improvement in handwriting throughout the school and writing overall in Key Stage 1. Currently there is no portfolio of moderated writing to assist teachers, especially those who are newly qualified, with assessing pupils written work. The school is updating its English policy and schemes of work to take account of curricular changes. Resources for the subject are generally good, although there is a shortage of thesauri and some group readers. Funding from the parent association has supplemented the stock of individual reading books and thereby increased the pupils' choice.

MATHEMATICS

67. The National Curriculum tests in 1999 showed that pupils are achieving standards well above the national average. In Key Stage 1, the inspection findings are similar to the test results. By the end of Year 4, standards are well above the national expectations with some pupils achieving very high standards. This represents a real improvement since the last inspection. The trends over the last four years show that the improvement is well above the national average. In comparison with all schools the results are well above the average and are in line with similar schools.

68. Numeracy is central to the mathematical work and is a real strength. The majority of pupils enter school with sound standards in numeracy being able to count simply and having the appropriate mathematical vocabulary. In Year 1, the rate of learning is always good and in the lessons seen was very good. This is mainly due to the very good teaching coupled with the very small class sizes and the pupils' very positive attitudes. Pupils have a clear understanding of odd and even numbers and learn how to add and record simple numbers. Many can do this quickly using mental strategies while the lower attainers use practical apparatus successfully. In Year 2, learning is always sound but sometimes the work is not always matched appropriately to the needs of the brighter pupils. The pupils are perceptive in that they see patterns in numbers very successfully and explain the reasons. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 make good progress overall.

69. In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to learn at a good rate and when in the smaller groups often make very good progress. The work in Year 4 is often of very high quality with many pupils demonstrating very high standards. This is seen in the work involving solving number problems associated with mathematical patterns. The pupils could explain how they arrived at their solutions. They could do this because they have very good numeracy skills including knowledge of tables. In Year 3, the pupils have good estimating skills and weigh objects and record their work carefully. They count reliably in grams using a variety of differing units.

70. Standards in other areas of mathematics are also high as is the rate of learning new skills and knowledge. In Year 4 pupils made particularly good gains in understanding the attributes of three-dimensional figures. The excellent teaching introduced them to new vocabulary so that they could describe the attributes of the shapes with clarity and understanding. The pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of length and many can measure in standard units. Skills in graphing and data handling are also being developed and are evident in geography when pupils made graphs about hours of sunshine and rainfall using the computers. A minor weakness is the under emphasis on using and applying mathematics.

71. The pupils' attitudes are always good and sometimes very good. These contribute significantly to the quality of learning and the high standards. The pupils listen attentively during the initial input and answer questions with enthusiasm, often drawing upon their good mathematical vocabulary. They produce sufficient quality written work during the lessons and their general behaviour is very good.

72. In Key Stage 1 the teaching in two thirds of the lessons seen was very good, while in Years 3 and 4 the teaching was either sound or excellent. All lessons successfully follow the numeracy strategy and the quality of the introductory sessions is always good. In the most successful lessons the work is planned very well and meets the needs of all the pupils. The weakest feature of some of the less successful lessons is the pace and challenge. This is particularly evident in Year 2 where some of the pupils are given work that is too easy. By contrast, the group work in Year 4 challenges the pupils and is very effective. All teachers maintain good standards of discipline and class control.

73. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for the subject and has made a very positive impact on the quality of teaching. All teachers have had their teaching monitored and are aware of the particular skills required to deliver the national numeracy strategy. The assessment of pupils' work is very good. Pupils are often assessed at the beginning of a new mathematical topic so that they can be given appropriate work. Testing takes place on a regular basis and is particularly useful in improving levels of numeracy. Standard Assessment Test results are analysed carefully and indicate that there are no real differences in the performance of boys and girls.

74. Information technology is being used to support some areas of mathematics and help pupils to reinforce basic numeracy skills as seen in Year 1. Homework is set on a regular basis for almost all pupils and has a positive impact in raising standards. The quality of reports to parents is variable as not all teachers make clear reference to the standards achieved by the pupils or the progress that they make.

75. Overall, the quality of work, the progress made by the pupils and the standards achieved in mathematics are a strength of the school. They show a significant improvement on previous inspection findings.

SCIENCE

76. The teachers' assessments of seven year olds in 1999 indicate that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels was very high compared with the national average and an above average proportion attaining higher than expected levels. As found in the last inspection, this indicates a higher level of attainment than observed in the school during the inspection. Although the majority of pupils are meeting the expected levels there is little evidence of above average attainment by the end of the key stage. However, there has been an improvement in standards for the older pupils. By the time they leave the school, at nine years of age, pupils are attaining above the expected levels for this age group. There is no difference in the attainment of girls and boys in either key stage.

77. A strong emphasis on investigational work in science is evident throughout the school. This enables pupils to acquire good practical and recording skills. In Year 1, pupils learn to sort and compare materials and understand the differences between living and non-living things. In discussion, many Year 1 pupils show that they clearly understand that some objects are made from something that once was living. The pupils relate their work to their everyday lives, for example, through discussing the uses of electricity. The consistently good quality teaching, with a high teacher to pupil ratio, promotes a good rate of learning through discussions with adults and with each other. It is also exemplified by the improving quality of diagrams as the pupils progress through the year. The pupils label their diagrams clearly, using correct vocabulary. Good teaching of experimental processes helps pupils to understand the importance of prediction and fair testing. Some good and very good teaching in Year 2 was helping pupils to understand and practise these concepts as they investigated the factors necessary for the successful germination of seeds. Scrutiny of pupils work in Year 2, indicates broadening of understanding and a sound level of achievement. For example, the pupils begin to link their knowledge of living things to where particular animals and plants may be found. Their investigations with simple circuits help them to understand how a torch works.

78. In Years 3 and 4 most pupils continue to acquire skills and understanding well. They use, for example, measure of length and temperature and present their findings in a variety of ways. The principles of prediction and fair testing are well-established. The work in Year 4 is often of a high quality with evidence of good achievement by the higher attaining pupils who demonstrate well-organised ideas and are beginning to provide reasonable explanations for their findings. This represents an improvement from the last inspection when the brighter pupils were not challenged sufficiently. Training for teachers in questioning skills has had a positive impact on the pupils' learning. The planning in Year 3 indicates that pupils with special educational needs will be given support with recording. The teacher gives good individual support to help all pupils improve the quality of their written accounts. However, scrutiny shows that the work by pupils with special educational needs is often unfinished, as the challenge is sometimes too difficult. Pupils fail to understand, for example, why shadows change length according to the time of day.

79. The teachers plan and prepare science lessons carefully. They manage the practical work well. The pupils' interest and curiosity in their scientific work is demonstrated in attentive listening to the introduction to lessons and an enthusiastic approach to practical work. They respond positively to the clear explanations and instructions given in most lessons. The pupils co-operate well in small groups, using resources sensibly. Their behaviour is always good and frequently very good as their interest is maintained as lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers however, do not always use science lessons sufficiently to develop pupils' sense of awe and wonder.

80. The experienced and enthusiastic co-ordinator monitors the school's work in science carefully and has a clear idea of the development of the subject. Besides evaluating planning and samples of work, she monitors teaching when the school has a particular focus on science. This is due again during the next academic year. The co-ordinator is currently reviewing the policy and scheme of work to take account of the latest requirements. She liaises with the middle school regularly about the Key Stage 2 Programmes of Study. Teachers make sound assessment of pupils' achievements in each area of science but the end of Key Stage 1 assessments have not yet been analysed in detail and this may account for the discrepancy in results and inspection findings for Level 3. The quality of reporting to parents varies as teachers do not always indicate the standards pupils achieve or the progress they make clearly to parents.

ART

81. Only one lesson, in Year 2, was observed during the inspection, and judgement is based on teachers' planning and scrutiny of work in photographs and on display. Standards are similar to those found in the last inspection with most pupils meeting the expected levels for their age within a limited range of media. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in developing their basic drawing, colouring, cutting and sticking skills. They learn how to mix paint to make different colours and how to achieve different shades of one colour. Pupils throughout the school draw accurately and clearly. They illustrate work in subjects such as science, geography and English well. However, pupils are not given sufficient encouragement to develop finer detail and appreciation of texture through observational drawing. Pupils' achievements are also limited by the lack of opportunity for self expression and imaginative work.

82. The teaching in the lesson seen was sound. There was good preparation and organisation of the lesson. The teacher emphasised the correct way to apply paint as pupils made designs based on their sound knowledge of Mondrian's work. However, the teacher did not emphasise sufficiently the way to hold the paintbrush or choice of width of bristle for different purposes. Pupils were taking turns to use information technology to create a similar design but their skills of mouse control varied considerably. Pupils enjoyed the work and quickly settled to their individual tasks and maintained concentration.

83. As found in the previous inspection, the pupils' techniques and skills of observation are not reinforced and developed systematically as they move through the school. The present scheme of work is merely a list of suggestions and not helpful to teachers in planning the progressive development of skills and knowledge. Although teachers clearly value pupils' work illustrating other subjects, through the attractive way they display it in all classrooms, art is not so well celebrated for its own sake. There are few examples of the work of well-known artists shown around the school and planning indicates that teachers lack understanding of the way that the work of artists and craftspeople can be used to stimulate and involve pupils.

84. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, in particular the need for a new scheme of work. She is preparing herself well for the school's focus for improvement in art that is planned for the next academic year and is increasing the school's stock of examples of the work of well-known artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Only two lessons in design technology were seen during the inspection. Examination of teachers' planning, discussions with staff and pupils and scrutiny of the pupils' work provided additional evidence.

86. By the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Year 4 standards are in line with national expectations. This is an improvement on previous inspection findings. The overall rate of learning is sound and in the Key Stage 1 lesson learning was good. The pupils made good progress in understanding how to fix materials in a variety of ways to form a paper caterpillar. They also evaluated why some fixings allow for movement and which are better than others. In Year 4, the pupils have learnt about designing pots for carrying water and are starting to understand the importance of function. They are beginning to realise why some pots are better than others, and why it is important to think carefully at the design stage. This work showed that pupils are making sound progress.

87. The good working ethos makes a positive contribution to the learning. The pupils are attentive, co-operative and very enthusiastic. They work at a good pace and the younger pupils are particularly keen to explain what they have done, and how successful they have been.

88. The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved. This is mainly because there is a good scheme of work that is used well by the teachers. The regular teaching of skills ensures their progressive development. Teachers prepare and use resources effectively and conduct the lessons at a good pace. Teachers use questioning skilfully to develop pupils' understanding and reinforce their knowledge. The plenary session in the Year 1 lesson was particularly effective.

89. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has had a positive effect on the teaching. She monitors the planning and has provided very positive support to other staff by emphasising the importance of teaching skills and demonstrating how the subject should be taught. This has helped the school to address the weaknesses highlighted in the previous report very successfully. The resources are adequate and the accommodation is good as there are sufficient facilities to allow for specialist areas for design technology including working with food.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

90. Pupils' standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with national expectations for both geography and history and by the end of Year 4 pupils' attainments are above the national expectation. Pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

91. Two geography lessons were observed during the inspection, both at Key Stage 2. Scrutiny of pupils' work, documentation, displays and discussions with pupils provided further evidence. In Key Stage 1, pupils make simple maps of their route to school. They know their address and some nearby locations and understand the purpose of a compass. Younger pupils are gaining a broader knowledge of the countries of the world from postcards sent by their previous teacher during her worldwide travelling. Most pupils have gained a clear understanding about India owing to the whole school fund raising project to provide wells. They compare and contrast some of the physical differences in their surroundings with India. They know why much of India has a hot climate.

92. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop an understanding about different weather conditions around the world. Pupils in Year 3 interpret world maps to define areas where extreme weather conditions are found such as droughts in desert regions and monsoons in tropical rain forests. They use books, globes, atlases and computer programs for their research and report back to the rest of their class in a role play situation as 'weather forecasters'. In Year 4 pupils build on these skills well by interpreting meteorological information to discover seasonal patterns of rainfall, temperature and hours of sunshine. They use their mathematical skills when making graphs to plot the mean temperature and sunshine rates, rounding figures up or down to one decimal place. They use weather measuring equipment such as a thermometer, rain gauge, anemometer and a weather vane with confidence, interpreting their findings meaningfully.

93. In history, lessons were seen in both key stages. Year 1 pupils identify differences between ways of life at different times. They learn to ask and respond to questions about the past. Pupils made

good links with a previous topic about the Victorians and their visit to Scaplens Court. They can identify differences between their own holiday and past ways of life on farms and at the seaside. Year 2 pupils learn about the life of Florence Nightingale and they begin to appreciate why people acted as they did. They suggest sources of historical evidence to provide information such as books, photos, videos, computer programs, grandparents' memories and the Bible. Older pupils use questionnaires and appropriate artefacts to find out, record and give a class presentation on the impact on children's lives during World War II. Parents and older family members contribute to their research findings. They gain a sense of chronology by making time lines for the Victorian period and the Second World War.

94. The quality of pupils' response is good throughout the school due to stimulating activities and the opportunities provided for collaborative work and personal research. Behaviour is good and sometimes very good and pupils show a high level of sustained involvement, particularly in Year 4. Teaching is satisfactory overall in both subjects in Key Stage 1, although the methods of recording work do not show clear progression in the separate subjects. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good and sometimes very good. In the better lessons there are good gains in learning because teachers support pupils well in their tasks, the lesson is brisk and the teachers use a variety of independent, collaborative and whole class initiative. In these lessons, also, teachers ensure that pupils are clear about the purpose of their activities.

95. In response to a key issue from the last inspection, the curriculum policies and schemes of work for geography and history have been updated well, and this has had a positive impact on standards. Resources have been supplemented to cover the curriculum adequately and visits are used effectively to enhance learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

96. The pupils are attaining standards that are below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Year 4. The school has not managed to keep pace with the demands and changes in information technology since the last inspection as previous inspection findings indicated standards were satisfactory. Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory and this is mainly because the pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their skills on a regular basis.

97. In Year 1, pupils begin to learn how to use arrow keys and the space and enter bar when working with 'Amazing Maths' program. They are also learning how to write simple sentences about their 'likes' at school. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have developed some simple mouse skills when using the 'Textease' drawing program and produced some interesting animal pictures. However, they are not able to load or save the work and many have very limited keyboard skills. The work with the programmable floor robot is satisfactory as the pupils are aware of how simple programs can be written to control movement. In Years 3 and 4, pupils do learn further skills and most know how to load a program but are not confident in saving work. Some have very poor mouse skills and overall the rate of learning is unsatisfactory. Those pupils with the best skills have learned most from having a computer at home.

98. The pupils do enjoy the work and are pleased to discuss what they have produced. They are enthusiastic about using computers and have very positive attitudes towards their use. Their behaviour is always good when they are engaged in computer work.

99. No secure judgement about the quality of teaching can be made through lack of evidence. However the planning is sound and covers all the required elements. The major weakness is that the computers are not used as often as they should be. Teacher confidence and competence is highlighted as an area for development in the school development plan and this is a priority.

100. The co-ordinator has developed a policy and a scheme of work that is used by the teachers to promote the progressive development of skills and knowledge. The co-ordinator also monitors the teachers' planning. This is a real improvement on previous inspection findings. Pupils use information technology in other areas of the curriculum, in Year 4 geography for example. Here pupils produce graphs about rainfall and hours of sunshine. They use the CD ROM to investigate facts about World War II. Year 3 pupils have printed useful information and made an attractive

display. Although pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 1 have access to a spelling program those in Key Stage 2 have not had appropriate access to the computers as there is no suitable software for their work.

MUSIC

101. Only two music lessons were seen during the inspection but there were other opportunities to see pupils making and enjoying music. Discussion with the co-ordinator and looking at teacher planning also helped to form the judgement that standards are overall in line with national expectations and that the quality of singing is above expectations. These standards are similar to those evident at the last inspection.

102. In the Year 1 lesson, the pupils made significant gains in their understanding of tempo by singing a simple song in a variety of ways by altering the speed. Some also directed the whole class through hand signals. They also listened to classical music and learnt how tempo and dynamics affect mood by describing their feelings in a simple but thoughtful way. The rate at which the pupils acquired these skills is good. The work in Year 3 is also of a good standard as the pupils controlled their own sounds to create atmosphere. They make good progress as they learn how to use notation to control sound and the volume. In these lessons all elements of the subject are covered as the pupils perform, compose, listen and appraise.

103. Other musical activities such as recorder clubs and whole school singing add to the pupils' learning. Some pupils are beginning to read music and play in parts. The whole school singing showed that pupils are learning about intonation and enunciation as well as experiencing the joy of music. The school choir produces sounds of high quality and sings with real vigour and enthusiasm.

104. The good quality teaching and the attitudes of the pupils contribute significantly to the overall standards achieved by the pupils. Teachers plan lessons well and conduct them at a brisk pace. They have a secure knowledge of the subject using the appropriate vocabulary and develop the lesson effectively in response to the pupils' learning.

105. Music is a valuable part of the schools' work and extends to areas outside the school. The choir sings in the local music festival and there are concerts and performances for religious festivals and the school fair. Visits from musicians and local school orchestras and groups also allow the pupils to appreciate the joy of playing and listening.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

106. In both key stages, pupils are attaining above the expected standards for their age and as found at the previous inspection, the provision for the subject is a strength of the school. The quality of teaching is good overall, frequently very good in both key stages and promotes high standards. The high level of expertise and interest among the teachers has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Nearly all pupils show good levels of agility, balance and co-ordination. From the reception class onwards they learn the importance of warming up before exercise and relaxing muscles afterwards and they learn how to move apparatus safely. These become part of the routine of lessons so are undertaken quickly and efficiently. The teachers then ensure that pupils are kept physically active and learn effectively in the main part of lessons. Although most teachers use demonstration of good work this is not always exploited sufficiently to help pupils develop their own skills of evaluation.

107. The good progress pupils make in Key Stage 1 is demonstrated in their work on dance. Through helpful instructions and demonstration by their teacher the reception class pupils learn to listen and respond to particular phrases in music, use space safely and perform simple arm and leg movements. Many can hold the shape of a 'hen' as they move around and they are beginning to put movements together in a short sequence. Year 1 pupils develop their imagination and express themselves at different levels in response to the teacher 'telling a story'. Clear instructions making good use of positional vocabulary and the teacher's suggestions for improvement led pupils to make bolder movements and increase their range. Year 2 pupils show good contrast between the light,

quick movements of a bird and the slow strong movements of a lion when they portray different animal characters in dance as the teacher helps them with descriptive vocabulary.

108. Key Stage 2 pupils build well on the range of skills acquired in Key Stage 1 and in brisk and challenging gymnastics lessons show confidence in using large apparatus. By the time they reach Year 4, pupils are deciding on their own solutions to problems of balance and respond well to suggestions that help them consolidate skills and techniques. Good quality questioning by teachers helps the pupils to develop better understanding of what they are trying to achieve. All the teachers adapt their gymnastics lessons well to the inadequate space of the narrow hall so there is minimal effect on the pupils' learning.

109. The pupils respond well and take great pride in their achievements. They listen attentively and follow their teachers' instructions quickly. They develop very positive attitudes towards the subject and persevere well with individual and co-operative work. This was demonstrated well in a Year 2 gymnastics club session where pupils were practising for their next award. The pupils' behaviour is good or very good in nearly all lessons. A few boys became a little boisterous in a Year 2 dance lesson, but most pupils were involved and keen to organise themselves into groups and the behaviour in the lesson was satisfactory overall.

110. The good quality outdoor facilities promote learning in all types of team games. Both girls and boys have equal experiences in physical education and the school participates successfully in a range of competitive activities. The regular well-supported extra-curricular sports clubs such as gymnastics, short tennis and football enhances the broad and well-balanced school curriculum considerably. For example, a teacher took advantage of a short tennis club session to give specific teaching on overhead smash technique, service positions and attention to rules when scoring. As noted by the previous inspection, these clubs are led enthusiastically by staff and parent volunteers with a strong commitment to the pupils' enjoyment of and achievement in sport.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. Standards of attainment throughout the school exceed the expectations set by the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make good progress in both strands of the curriculum. Since the previous inspection, when significant weaknesses were identified, the school has made considerable improvements in the breadth of the curriculum, the quality of planning and teaching standards. These have had a positive impact on pupils' attainment. The subject now fully meets statutory requirements.

112. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about religion and begin to recognise that people have different beliefs. They learn about Christianity and Judaism and their important celebrations and festivals. They understand about the importance of food at special occasions such as birthdays and weddings and they know about the Seder meal in Judaism and the symbols of bread and wine in Christianity. Most pupils can recall the story of Moses and explain the reason God sent the plagues. They are familiar with the story of The Last Supper and they reflect on beliefs and customs by contributing their own thoughts and ideas in circle time discussions. Younger pupils know that religions have special places and that Christians go to church. They explore their own spirituality by reflecting on the reasons why people go to church, and suggest they go to celebrate, to pray and to show that they love God. They understand that the church is a special place for Christians and they reflect on special people, places and objects in their own lives. There were positive gains in learning during a Year 1 lesson owing to the excellent teaching creating a calm thoughtful setting by using peaceful music for pupils to listen to and a lighted candle to focus thinking. Pupils demonstrated their increased understanding by the high quality of their drawings and the group discussion.

113. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop their study of Christianity and learn about Islam. They know about key events in Jesus' life such as meeting the tax collector Zacchaeus. They understand the importance of the Bible to Christians and the Quran to Muslims. They consider the reasons behind the main religious celebrations and festivals in the faiths studied such as Christmas, Harvest Festival, Ramadan and Hajj. Year 3 pupils develop an understanding that the Bible contains many different kinds of literature through a well planned investigative task which involved sorting examples of songs, advice, prayers, rules, reminders, promises, questions and family stories. They

demonstrate a good understanding of the Bible as a special book for Christians and knowledge of the types of writing it contains.

114. Behaviour is good in religious education as pupils are very interested in their lessons. They listen very well to their teacher and each other and respect the ideas of others, even when different from their own. Teaching is good overall with the one excellent lesson in Year 1. This represents a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

115. The newly appointed religious education co-ordinator is already having a positive impact on standards in the subject. The school has revised the policy and scheme of work to take account of the new locally agreed syllabus and there has been good liaison within the local pyramid of schools to agree areas of learning. The clear planning has had a good impact on attainment. Teachers all use the plans to teach a well-structured curriculum. There are satisfactory plans to implement the assessment guidance within the documentation, although this is still at an early stage. Resources have improved since the last inspection. For example, a new set of Bibles enables pupils to practise their literacy skills of reading and research as well as improving subject knowledge. The curriculum is enriched by regular visits from the local rector.