

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORTH CLIFTON COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

North Clifton

Newark

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122662

Headteacher: Mr N Rossiter

Reporting inspector: Mr A Clark  
21596

Dates of inspection: 14 – 17 February 2000

Inspection number: 194414

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane  
North Clifton  
Newark  
Notts

Postcode: NG23 7AP

Telephone number: 01522 778609

Fax number: N/A

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Webster

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Andrew Clark	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Music Under Fives Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? results and achievements attitudes, values and personal and social development. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Kath Berry	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Evans	Team inspector	English Information technology Art Design and technology Physical education Religious education Special Educational Needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

North Clifton Primary School is situated between the rural villages of North and South Clifton. The school is in a two classroom Victorian building. It is much smaller than most primary schools with 30 pupils on roll. Pupils are taught in a Reception/Key Stage 1 class and a Key Stage 2 class. The school admits children at the start of the term in which they are five, but they can attend on a voluntary part-time basis from the September at the start of their fifth year. This is a new development. At the time of the inspection there were six children under the age of five in reception, three who attended in the mornings only. The majority of pupils are from the immediate locality, but a few are from outside the catchment area and arrive by mini-bus. All the pupils are of white British heritage and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. Twenty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is similar to the national average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs and there are three pupils on the school's special needs register at stage 3.

The small size of the school means there are often no more than two or three pupils in any year group. Attainment on entry varies significantly depending on the individual pupils. However, the full range of attainment is included and overall, attainment is broadly average.

As the number of pupils at the end of the key stages (7 and 11 year olds) is so small, National Curriculum data will be omitted from the report to avoid the possible identification of individual pupils. However, general references to test results will be made in the body of the report.

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

North Clifton is an effective school with a warm and caring atmosphere for learning. Standards in English are high and at least satisfactory in all other subjects. The teaching is often good. Pupils' attitudes and values are very good, but there are weaknesses in the provision for children under five. The headteacher, staff and governors have a strong commitment to improving standards and the school gives sound value for money.

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

- Standards of reading, writing, speaking and listening are high by the age of 11.
- Standards are also high in information technology.
- The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.
- The high quality of teaching, especially at Key Stage 2.
- Provision is very good for pupils' spiritual and social development.
- The headteacher and staff create a caring, family atmosphere and pupils feel confident and cared for.

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

- The provision for children under five.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning.

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1996. At that time the school was found to have many good features and satisfactory standards. Standards have improved above the national trend over this period. The school has successfully addressed weaknesses in handwriting. Policies and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and effectively guide the teaching. There is still a need for further development in some areas of the curriculum, but the school has rightly placed the emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Appraisal systems are good and the professional development of staff is appropriately reflected in school development planning. The governing body has made successful improvements to monitoring and evaluating the school's work, particularly in literacy, but the monitoring of teaching by the school is not well developed. The level of good teaching is significantly higher in this inspection. The provision for children under five is not as effective as at the time of the last inspection. This has arisen largely through changes to the admission policy, but needs to be addressed.

## **STANDARDS**

Due to the small number of pupils taking tests at the end of Key Stage 2 any comparisons with national averages and those of schools with similar characteristics must be treated with caution. In 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds standards were above average for English and mathematics and well above average for science. They were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 assessment tasks. There has been a trend of improvement over the last three years which has been above the national trend. However, results vary significantly from year to year due to the small number of pupils involved.

On the evidence of the inspection standards of English are above average. Standards of writing are better in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. They are average for mathematics and science, but in both subjects there are strengths in the way pupils approach practical work and problem-solving. Standards in information technology are high and pupils use this knowledge well in other subjects. Pupils' standards in history are above expected levels and good links are made between this subject and other areas of the curriculum. In all other subjects standards are satisfactory. Overall, pupils' learning is good and they attain suitable standards.

Children under five achieve appropriate standards in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. However, they do not develop their full creative potential and aspects of their personal and social development are not highly enough developed. This is a direct result of opportunities that are missed. The school is very aware of the situation but has not effectively addressed it.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are trustworthy and the different age groups mix well.
Personal development and relationships	Very Good. Pupils care for each other and are confident with each other and adults.
Attendance	Good. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average.

The very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are a significant strength of the school. These are very effectively fostered by the care shown by all staff and the interest shown in pupils' welfare.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.*

English is taught effectively in both key stages. Reading is particularly well taught both through systematic teaching of basic skills and the enthusiastic use of books in many subjects. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed: in 65 per cent of lessons teaching was good or better and in 13 per cent of all lessons it was very good. This is a significant improvement on the quality of teaching from the last inspection. The teaching meets the needs of pupils in Key Stage 2 well. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory overall for children under five but has areas of weakness.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. Good links are made between subjects, which helps pupils' understanding. The planning for some foundation subjects does not clearly identify what is expected of pupils in each year group.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual and social provision is very good and moral and cultural provision is good. Provision for personal development is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good levels of care for its pupils. Assessment procedures are used effectively to support learning and personal development is closely monitored.

There are good relationships with parents and they are supportive of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and staff are an effective team who are self-critical and plan constructively. However, procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards are too informal and not rigorous enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are enthusiastic and very involved. They fulfil statutory requirements and take a keen interest in the pastoral work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes use of national data and local statistics to evaluate its performance. However, it does not monitor its own practice closely enough.
The strategic use of resources	Appropriate use is made of resources. Good use is made of computers.

There are enough teachers for the number of pupils on roll and they are appropriately deployed. However, there are no support staff, which limits the teaching of children under five. The accommodation is satisfactory and maintained to a good standard. Resources are appropriate and used well. The headteacher and governors take a keen interest in all aspects of school life and debate new initiatives rigorously. They seek information from all sources, particularly parents and they apply principles of best value overall.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards in reading are high and handwriting has improved.</li> <li>• The school provides a happy environment and caring ethos.</li> <li>• It promotes positive attitudes and behaviour and encourages respect and friendliness.</li> <li>• All pupils are happy whatever their ability.</li> <li>• Parents feel welcome into the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information on the work the pupils are doing.</li> <li>• More information about progress, particularly in relation to regional and national data.</li> <li>• The pupils spelling and the skills of information technology. More use of Information and communication technology in all subjects.</li> <li>• Provision for children under fives and preparation for transition from infants to juniors.</li> </ul>

The evidence of the inspection supports the positive views of the parents; the happy environment is an important strength of the school. The findings of the inspection confirm the parents' concern for provision for children under five, although there are no evident issues about transfer from infants to juniors. Standards in spelling are appropriate. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is good and standards are high. The school often involves parents in supporting topics such as the work in history, although it does not routinely send out information on all subjects. This is an area for development. Reports for parents do not always set clear targets. National data is reported appropriately, but the results of other tests are not given to parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are often measured against the results of national tests at the age of 7 and 11. The school's average results are compared with national averages and those of schools with similar characteristics. However, the school is considerably smaller than the average and the results of National Curriculum tests and assessments at the end of both key stages do not provide reliable evidence of the standards of attainment overall. In 1999, eight pupils took the tests at Key Stage 1 and three at Key Stage 2. There are very significant variations in results, year on year, because of the levels of attainment of pupils when they start school.
2. With the proviso given above, the school has shown a reasonably consistent trend of improvement in standards. Standards have risen faster than they have nationally in English, mathematics and science. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards were above the average in English and mathematics and well above for science. They were above those of similar schools in English and well above in science. In mathematics they were in line with those of similar schools. In Key Stage 1, standards were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and well above those of similar schools. At the time of the last inspection in 1996 standards were reported as being in line with national averages and there have been significant variations from well below national averages to the current position. Overall, the positive trend in standards is evident in the work of pupils in both key stages, particularly in English and science.
3. The results of the tests also indicate that a higher percentage of pupils than average attain the higher levels (level 3 at Key Stage 1 and level 5 at Key Stage 2). Pupils with the potential for high achievement make good progress towards the most appropriate levels. This is evident throughout the school.
4. Standards attained are appropriate for individual pupils. The majority of pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 and at least satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 against their earlier learning and are likely to attain suitable standards. It would be unfair to report directly on the standards likely to be attained by the very few pupils at present at the end of both key stages.
5. Children who are under the age of five achieve above average standards in reading and early writing skills. Speaking and listening skills are also a little above average. Achievement in mathematics is in line with the expectations of the desirable learning outcomes and children have confidence to explain their thinking and working out. Personal and social development is satisfactory. Children learn to be good listeners and are polite and often patient and sensitive to the needs of others. However, they do not develop sufficient independence in their learning. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory overall. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their creative and physical abilities and their understanding of the world through role-play. There is little evidence of their competence to explore their world through paint or mouldable materials. Whilst many of them have had good pre-school experiences the children are not building on this thoroughly.
6. In English, high standards of reading in both key stages reflect the good teaching and thorough planning. They are also a mark of the positive and secure ethos within the school, where pupils feel proud and confident to read. Pupils read with fluency and lively expression. They are accurate and acquire a good range of word building strategies to

tackle new words. Learning is helped by the many opportunities to read and follow written instructions in other lessons.

7. Standards of writing are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and high in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught the basic skills of writing effectively and standards are average, but too many opportunities are missed for pupils to practise their writing skills through other subjects. Pupils write neatly and spell well. In Key Stage 2, pupils write well for a broad range of audiences. Their writing has a real sense of purpose and captures the mood of the moment well. Writing is often compelling to read. Ability in spelling and handwriting is appropriate. This is an improvement from the last inspection, when handwriting was a significant weakness. Writing is well developed through other subjects at Key Stage 2.
8. Throughout the school standards of speaking and listening are high. Pupils hold lively discussions in both key stages and use a good vocabulary. They accurately use terms they learn in different subjects. For example, in Key Stage 2 pupils discuss 'acute' and 'obtuse' angles in their mathematics lesson. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, converse well with adults. The good standards are a direct result of the mature way in which they are treated by all staff and teachers' high expectations.
9. Standards in mathematics are about average. There are particular strengths at both key stages in the way in which pupils are developing practical strategies to solve problems. However, although they can explain their thinking, they are often quite slow at answering mental computations and deciding on the best method to use. In Key Stage 2 pupils' understanding of shape and measure is good, and they use measuring equipment such as protractors with increasing accuracy. Data-handling is satisfactory in both key stages and good use is made of information and communication technology. There are good assessment procedures in place to make certain that pupils attain the required levels in most areas of the subject and these help pupils to make effective progress.
10. Pupils' standards in science are at least in line with the average by the end of both key stages. Pupils' approaches to experimenting and investigating are good. They are confident enough to devise their own experiments to find the effect of forces and develop a sound understanding of scientific terms and measures such as "newtons". Pupils use a good range of methods to record their outcomes. Particular attention is paid to making sure that pupils make progress in recording and experimenting and this has a good impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of science.
11. The standards pupils achieve in information technology are well above average. Pupils are very confident in the use of the keyboard and basic skills, across a range of areas of study, by the end of both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and reflects the teachers' good knowledge as to how the subject should be taught. The subject benefits from good use across the curriculum such as data-handling in history.
12. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus and generally typical for pupils of seven and 11. Pupils work is varied and interesting and is enhanced by good links with the local church and a Sikh temple. Sensitive and appropriate prayers during the school day add a spiritual dimension to religious education.
13. Attainment in history is above that typically found at ages seven and 11. Good links with other subjects help pupils to put their historical studies in context and appreciate changes through time. Good use of the local community gives pupils good experience of primary and secondary sources.

14. Few lessons were observed in physical education and music but standards are at least appropriate to pupils of their ages. Standards are high in swimming. There is no school hall, but teachers largely overcome the limitations of space by careful planning. Pupils show enthusiasm for singing and musical activities and are lively performers.
15. Standards in art and design and technology are at least in line with expected levels and sometimes above at Key Stage 2. Pupils work well with clay, but there are few examples of observational work with paint.
16. Standards in geography are about average. Pupils at both key stages have a good understanding of their own locality and the impact of change on a community. However, there is no clear progress in mapping skills.
17. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection and strengths have been maintained. Achievement is generally at least satisfactory. It is often good at Key Stage 2 and for pupils with special educational needs. A hallmark of achievement is that pupils are generally given a sound basis of knowledge and skills and then opportunities to practise and develop them. This is less effective at Key Stage 1. There are no significant weaknesses in standards in the core subjects and teachers and governors are keen to see standards improve. Parents have no concerns over the standards achieved. However, the curriculum planning in the foundation subjects does not ensure that particular skills are consistently identified and built upon. This is evident in the limited development of mapping skills in Key Stage 2 for example.
18. The school has set targets for attainment in English and mathematics for the end of Key Stage 2 in line with statutory requirements. The targets are based on the good knowledge of the pupils and objective tests of reading and numeracy skills and non-verbal reasoning. The small number of pupils means that targets can be set for individuals and directly worked towards. The targets set are appropriate for the pupils concerned. Broad numerical targets are not a lot of use to the school in planning for the future so they supplement this with detailed breakdowns of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and plan to this. It is effective and appropriate. The school is looking to improve the range of external tests used in analysing achievement.

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

19. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are very enthusiastic about their work. From the start of the day they settle quickly to their reading tasks, and concentrate and are well motivated throughout. Young children in reception enjoy coming to school and are content to leave their parents. They take an eager part in their first letters/reading session. They listen carefully but sometimes show signs of restlessness when expected to sit for longer periods in the morning. On the few occasions when these children have the opportunity to choose their own play activities with sand or construction materials their enjoyment is very evident. In Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils make an enthusiastic and orderly start to the day through a quiet reading session. This establishes the pleasant learning ethos for the day, which contributes very significantly to the pupils' attitudes to learning. Parents comment that their children are happy to come to school and appreciate the atmosphere.
20. The pupils behave well in all circumstances through the school day. At playtimes and lunchtimes pupils of all ages play well together. Very good relationships are established between younger and older pupils. The older pupils of all abilities act as good role models and understand that their more boisterous activities are not suitable for the youngest pupils. At the same time young pupils learn to feel confident in the presence of all ages. The headteacher and all staff are an intrinsic part of this positive and helpful ethos. They are involved in activities such as regular football games at playtimes and talk socially with

pupils through a relaxed lunchtime. Pupils are trustworthy, showing regard for the school's property. This is encouraged by the teachers' general philosophy in Key Stage 2 that 'if it's in the classroom, the pupils can use it.' Hence, they quickly learn where equipment is, gather it, share it and tidy it away. In science and mathematics in Key Stage 2 pupils regularly select and organise their own apparatus. They also check to see if it works and that scales are calibrated correctly. There is no evidence of unsatisfactory behaviour or any oppressive behaviour. There are appropriate policies for handling bullying and racism, but they are rarely called upon. The school has never had to exclude a pupil. Lunchtime supervisors are appropriately trained in the management of behaviour.

21. Attendance has improved considerably over recent years and is now well above the national average. Pupils are happy to come to school and arrive on time ready to learn.
22. Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons. This is very evident in the quick way they settle to work, move into groups or gather round the teacher. They tackle their work in an orderly and thoughtful way. They listen carefully to instructions and rarely need telling twice. This is a good advantage when pupils of such age ranges settle to their group work in literacy and numeracy.
23. Pupils' personal and social development is very good. They respect each other's views and opinions and talk very openly about them. Through their studies in history and religious education they effectively explore the beliefs of others. Children in reception and Year 1 develop a strong empathy with the characters in their stories and by Year 6 they write with feeling and understanding about the plight of local evacuees. Pupils take some initiative for their work in both key stages; although under fives do not have enough opportunities to explore their own ideas. Despite the good attitudes and the emphasis given to independent learning a small minority of pupils need a lot of reassurance before committing themselves to paper. A few pupils are also slow to get started, although they are not messing about. Teachers keep the pupils well informed about the time scales in which to finish work and there is certainly an overall sense of striving and achievement, but there is also a relaxed calmness.

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

24. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and for children under five. English and mathematics are taught effectively in both key stages and, in particular, there is thorough teaching of reading. After an initial struggle to match the approaches of the literacy and numeracy strategies to the needs of classes with such a wide age range, teaching is becoming increasingly focused and challenging.
25. The teaching of children under five is generally appropriate for basic skills. The teaching of early reading, writing and mathematical skills is effective; however, children under five do not have enough suitable opportunities for improving their creative and physical development and some aspects of personal and social development. Planning for these areas is unsatisfactory. There are significant strengths in the relationships with this age group, which helps the general learning. There is a good focus on learning the sound that letters make and children are successfully led to a love of stories and books. The reception children are taught these skills at the start of the day when the whole school is involved in silent reading and this contributes to the learning ethos. However, the children are then involved in the literacy session with Key Stage 1 and they spend too long sitting and do not have many chances to select their own activities or learn through structured play. The current organisation of the reception/Key Stage 1 classroom limits such opportunities, as there is no easy access to role-play facilities or sand and water play. The school recognises the urgent need to address this situation particularly as numbers are likely to increase. The teacher does not have sufficient knowledge or experience of working with the youngest children to make the best of the opportunities. There is no

additional support for the teacher and the school proposes to employ a nursery nurse for the morning sessions.

26. The teaching of literacy is good in Key Stage 1 and 2 and underpins the learning of basic skills. Teachers use the literacy strategy effectively to match work to the needs of the pupils. They plan different learning objectives and activities for the age groups within the class. Teachers ask challenging and thought provoking questions, which are skilfully aimed at different ages and abilities, and achievement is accurately assessed. As a result pupils learn to read well. Their lively expression is modelled on the teachers' effective reading and story telling. Tasks are explained briskly and pupils are expected to work with independence and initiative. However, in Key Stage 1 opportunities are missed for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects and cutting and sticking activities are overused. Despite these best efforts a significant minority of pupils depend heavily on the teacher for support and instructions. In Key Stage 2 the text is often linked to other subjects, for example history, and this improves pupils' understanding.
27. Teaching in numeracy is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1, the mental and oral session is at the end of the lesson because of the need to explain tasks to reception and Key Stage 1. Whilst this is a considered response which has some merit, in practice the pupils often miss out on a plenary session and they do not start the lessons with as challenging a mathematical focus as they would otherwise do. However, in both key stages the mental activities are skilfully and imaginatively structured to challenge pupils of different ages and maturity. For example, questions on number recognition for reception children lead to the identification of numbers on cards, which then form the basis of calculations for older pupils. The impact is evident in the pupils' confidence to explain their calculations, although they are often slow in doing the calculations. Pupils are directly taught how to use measuring equipment such as a protractor and then given good opportunities to practise in challenging ways. The plenary sessions at Key Stage 2, draw together different aspects of learning well and reinforce understanding.
28. In general teachers' subject knowledge is at least satisfactory and sometimes good in both key stages. In science teachers ask questions which encourage the pupils to follow new lines of enquiry and develop investigative strategies. A strong emphasis is put on practical activities and learning through problem-solving. For example, in history pupils are collecting data from the local churchyard and organising it through the use of information technology. This not only improves their understanding of the locality and the use of primary evidence in history, but also improves their skills in using information and communication technology.
29. The management of pupils is good and relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils feel safe and secure in the classroom. They know what is expected of them and feel confident to speak out and express opinions. This encourages positive attitudes to learning and a pride in achievement shared by all. Teachers encourage pupils to listen by effective use of tone of voice and pauses for attention. There is very little noise beyond calm discussion about the work in hand. Marking is usually accurate but is not often used to set targets for learning or to measure achievement overall.
30. A significant feature of the teaching is the sensitive and useful groupings of pupils. They are grouped according to age and attainment in English and mathematics, and form strong cohesive relationships. Higher and lower attaining pupils are confident to work together to the mutual benefit of both. This is of benefit to pupils working on computers and when engaged in complex reading tasks such as the work on local history. At other times the grouping of pupils of similar attainment means that new skills and concepts are efficiently learned.



31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good through careful planning and effective use of individual education plans. In literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 2, and at Key Stage 1 where appropriate, separate tasks are set for pupils with special educational needs. An outreach teacher gives good support. The school identifies the needs of particularly talented pupils. Those who show a special talent are encouraged by outside support where necessary.
32. The contribution homework makes to learning is satisfactory. Homework is given for reading from the time pupils enter school and this is appreciated by the parents. It contributes significantly to the pupils' achievement and they speak with assurance about the reading they do at home. Tasks are also set for mathematics and there are good systems in place for pupils to monitor their progress in learning multiplication tables at home. Although, the school involves the pupils in investigative tasks for some school projects, homework is not regularly set for other areas of learning.
33. Teaching makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning and life in the school. Overall, the quality of learning is good. It is better at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1 as there are not enough opportunities for independence among the younger pupils.
34. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2 in most subjects. In literacy and numeracy achievement is carefully monitored and learning is progressively built on. Teaching is challenging and motivating. Progress in English is particularly good because the subject is at the heart of much of pupils' learning. The progress in writing is not as effective at Key Stage 1 because it is underused in subjects such as science and history. There is evidence of good practice in writing in other subjects in Key Stage 1, such as the letters written to a local newspaper in history, but this is not common practice. In mathematics and science progress is appropriate and earlier learning is consolidated and reinforced. Teachers' plan effectively in these subjects by identifying different learning objectives and tasks for all ages and stages of development.
35. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. They are identified early and individual education plans provide suitable guidance for the class teacher to plan daily lessons from. Good attention is given to these pupils in both key stages. The progress of targeted pupils is helped by extra tuition from an outreach teacher. The good knowledge of pupils and their strengths and weaknesses means that higher attaining pupils make good progress. For example, in Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 3 or 4 work alongside the older juniors if it is appropriate. This helps both their academic achievement and general maturity.

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

36. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. A reasonable time is devoted to the teaching of each subject and a suitable emphasis is placed on English and mathematics with a view to raising standards in reading, writing and number. The school organises the curriculum successfully to ensure that it promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares them well for subsequent stages in their education.
37. Subjects such as history, geography, art and design and technology are planned under a series of themes and topics over a period of three years. This is a successful strategy, which allows older pupils to study elements of these subjects for a second time at a higher level. It gives all pupils a better understanding of how subjects fit together and makes the curriculum coherent in both key stages. Many topics include visits out of school, to a neighbouring graveyard for example, or to a Sikh temple in Nottingham to add

breadth to pupils' understanding. A long-term plan provides a helpful overview of the three-year cycle.

38. Since the school's last inspection, changes have been made to the way the curriculum is planned. These have been beneficial and represent an improvement. The school now has clear policies to describe how each subject will be taught. These are fleshed out in schemes of work which give teachers detailed and helpful guidance about the content of the curriculum. While the schemes show the detail of the content of each topic, they do not explain what pupils of different ages within each class will learn in each subject. This makes it difficult for teachers to be certain that the work planned for pupils builds incrementally on what has already been learned and understood.
39. The school has also succeeded in using other subjects of the National Curriculum to provide pupils with opportunities to improve their skills in reading and writing. In history, for example, the pupils are learning about the Second World War. A lesson for junior age pupils in the literacy hour was based on a Louis MacNeice's journal about the announcement that war had broken out. This brought history to life, while at the same time pupils learned how to extract information from the text and discovered the meaning and use of onomatopoeia. This exemplifies the school's considered use of the National Literacy Strategy, which has been implemented successfully, overcoming the difficulties presented by the wide range of ages in each of the two classes. The strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' reading at both key stages. It has less effect on standards in writing in Key Stage 1 where, in contrast with Key Stage 2, pupils do not get enough practice in the use of skills learned in literacy lessons. The school is also using the National Numeracy Strategy effectively as a basis for its curriculum for mathematics. Although its introduction and use are recent, it is already beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' understanding of the language of mathematics and on their skills of mental calculation.
40. The curriculum for the school's youngest pupils is not working effectively. The school is successful in promoting the children's early development in reading, writing and mathematics, but other important areas of their learning are given insufficient attention. The curriculum does not include clear strategies to help children to develop socially through play, to enhance their physical development outdoors or to promote their creative development. The school has recognised these shortcomings in the curriculum but faces constraints imposed by the buildings in bringing about changes. Nevertheless, pupils have too few chances to make choices about their activities and spend too much time sitting on the carpet.
41. The school's curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 ensures that all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those who have the potential to attain high standards, have an equal access to all elements of the curriculum. The provision that the school makes for pupils with special educational needs is good. Clear targets are set for their learning in individual education plans and effective systems are in place to make sure that pupils' needs are identified promptly.
42. The school includes sex education as part of its programme for personal and social development in science lessons. There is no planning, however, to ensure that pupils build up their understanding sequentially from an early age. While older pupils benefit from their participation in a local education authority programme to increase their awareness of the dangers of drugs, the school's curriculum does not include earlier work to prepare pupils for this scheme.
43. The school has established good links with other local small, rural schools. The schools work as a family to the mutual benefit of their pupils. Pupils with special educational needs, for example, benefit from a system whereby resources for learning are shared

between schools. Other links with the community are strong and the school is increasingly becoming a focus for local events. These links benefit pupils' understanding of the rural community in which they live.

44. The governing body is beginning to implement the principles of best value in the curriculum. It debates different views held within the community vigorously and is beginning to increase its understanding of what parents and the local community expect of the school and of the curriculum it should provide. For example, a desire that the school should be well placed to teach information technology resulted in fundraising events so that the school could participate in the National Grid for Learning. This level of interest and of practical action has challenged the school and has already led to pupils achieving better standards in this subject.
45. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual and social development. Provision for their moral and cultural development is good. These continue to be strengths of the school and the positive impact on pupils' personal development is recognised by parents. The principles of respect, courtesy, honesty, trust and friendship are at the heart of the daily work of the school and underpin the confidence that the pupils have about their schooling and establish their unique individual importance within its organisation. The school's provision is subtle and understated, but its impact is pervasive and owes much of its success to the example set by the headteacher and the staff. Daily assemblies bring the school together as a family and provide a time for thought, worship and discussion. The school seizes opportunities offered by the curriculum to add further dimensions to pupils' personal development. In Key Stage 2, for example, pupils are learning to empathise with the plight of evacuees during the Second World War.
46. The family atmosphere provides the background to the school's moral code. Expectations that pupils will behave well are high and consistent. The school's behaviour policy is simply stated and forms part of an agreement between parents, each child and the school. The school ensures that pupils are clear about what is right and what is wrong and know how to make the right choice when faced with a dilemma.
47. The school provides many opportunities for pupils' social development within the context of each working day. Pupils frequently work in small groups or pairs during lessons, often with friends who are in other year groups within the class. All pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, benefit from these chances and learn how to work co-operatively. The school offers chances for pupils to take responsibility. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils take turns to be responsible for looking after the guinea pigs. The lunchtime meal is a significant social event. It is an unhurried affair, which offers time for socialising and conversation. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are given responsibility to act as servers and to take care of younger ones. Others have chances to lend a hand to clear up afterwards.
48. The school echoes the culture of the rural community that it serves and helps its pupils to value and understand its nature. Pupils take part in local events and visit the two local churches to celebrate harvest festivals and Christmas. The school seeks to broaden pupils' awareness of different cultures and has organised visits to cities – York, for example, and Nottingham, where they visited a Sikh temple as a part of a study of festivals. A subsequent performance at Christmas included songs from Jewish, Sikh and Christian traditions. Pupils learn to play the recorder and are given opportunities to perform in assembly. The pupils have the opportunity to take part in a suitable range of extra-curricular activities including a computer club, French teaching and inter-school sporting activities.

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

49. The care the school provides is of a high standard.
50. Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science. They are satisfactory for children under five. Detailed records are kept of achievement against National Curriculum expectations. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum levels and use them accurately. Progress in reading is tracked carefully and there is good involvement of parents. Mathematics and science assessments are very detailed and frequent and enable the teachers to match work closely to the individual's needs and enable them to make suitable progress. The headteacher has introduced a computerised system that will eventually contain a wide range of assessment data to help track pupils' improvements in learning as they move through the school. National Curriculum tests are supplemented by objective tests in Years 3 and 5. Baseline assessments are used in reception and the school adds to this with further testing. Not all this information is passed on to parents yet. Complementing the academic assessments the teachers produce regular 'pen-pictures' of the pupils to aid their monitoring of personal development. Overall, assessment procedures make a significant contribution to pupils' development.
51. There is a 'family' atmosphere that the pupils enjoy and adapt to very quickly.
52. Teachers know their pupils well. Their health, safety and protection are a priority and every effort is made to provide individual support and guidance where needed. Lunchtime staff are trained to promote good behaviour and relationships during break times. The friendly lunchtime sessions contribute to pupils' welfare. Medical and accident procedures, although not documented, are effective. Child protection issues are dealt with under the guidance of the Local Authority.
53. The school promotes good attendance and behaviour and has the necessary procedures in place should they be needed. Pupils are happy, confident and self-assured and respond positively to the school's care and support.

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

54. The school has an open working relationship with parents to which they respond positively by showing a keen interest in the work of the school and the progress of their children. Parents are very satisfied with what the school provides and achieves; they particularly praise the staff for the care and support of their children.
55. The quality of information is satisfactory overall. It is widely distributed and well presented. However, parents would appreciate more information on their children's progress and current work. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress twice a year and receive a full annual report. The reports are evaluative, but do not set clear targets for improvement. The governor's annual report to parents is informative and meets statutory requirements. The prospectus is attractively presented but does not contain enough information on the different areas of the curriculum. Parents are well informed of the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and are involved in reviewing achievement and setting future targets.
56. Parents respond positively to the new home/school agreement that provides an understanding of the expectations of all the parties involved. They help in the school when they can and provide additional support for curriculum activities such as swimming. For example, a parent with experience of working with young children gives some support to the under fives.

57. The parents and other members of the local community make a significant contribution to fund-raising events and other social activities. Through their efforts the school has dramatically improved its resources for information and communication technology. The family ethos of the school extends to the parents and carers and pupils' learning benefits from the close relationships.

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

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and have several good features. There is a clear educational direction to the school arising from the shared commitment of the headteacher and teaching staff to raising standards and offering the best to all its pupils. In his teaching and style of management the headteacher creates and maintains the calm and effective learning ethos of the school. He brings imaginative teaching of a high standard to the school and knows the teachers and pupils well. Curriculum development is a shared responsibility amongst the three staff and this is effective. Each teacher has responsibility for a core subject, and other areas of the curriculum are managed jointly. The staff meet regularly and it is very evident that they are self-critical about the success or short-comings of teaching and learning. In particular the introduction of the literacy strategy led to many soul-searching reviews of practice to make the system work efficiently for them. Literacy and numeracy have been successfully introduced through this approach.
59. There has been some strategic monitoring of standards and planning. However, this is not well developed and the monitoring of teaching tends to be informal and lacks structure. This is a weakness which undermines the quality of leadership and limits the progress that is made overall. An impact of this is the failure to address the weaknesses of provision for children under five and weaknesses in writing across the curriculum at Key Stage 1. On the whole, however, the co-ordination of subjects has led to effective improvements in the teaching of English, mathematics and science.
60. The governing body is effective in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities and contributing to the aims and ethos of the school. Governors have strong opinions and are prepared to debate issues in a lively and proactive way. They ensure that policies and schemes are in place and are reviewed appropriately. They review the outcomes of national tests and have a sound understanding of the general standards of attainment. The governors' involvement in curricular issues has been largely a passive one to date, but there are positive signs of improvement in developing procedures for monitoring literacy and numeracy. However, the governors do not generally monitor the impact of all educational initiatives rigorously enough to ensure success is being achieved in curriculum areas. They are involved in deciding priorities for the development of the school and have a sound understanding of the targets for expected achievement. There are particular strengths in the governors' role in ensuring that the school benefited from the purchase of new computers through the national grid for learning, even raising substantial sums to match the grant. They have followed this through by monitoring pupils' progress and supporting learning through a computer club. There is a great deal of enthusiasm and talent amongst the governors which remains untapped in monitoring and promoting learning in all areas. The headteacher's report to governors is appropriately succinct and comprehensive but does not reflect sufficiently rigorous monitoring of teaching and progress.
61. The school development plan is appropriately prioritised to reflect most of the needs of the school. However, the need to review provision for under fives is not reflected in the plan. This is partly because the plan is set over a three year period and is not responsive enough to current issues. Costings are accurate and reflect the available budget. Governors have a clear priority to maintain staffing levels and provide value for money. On all major areas of purchase governors vigorously debate the issues and seek a range

of quotes. The school development plan does not make clear what strategies are to be followed to achieve the identified priorities in several instances, which makes the monitoring of strategies difficult. However, there are detailed strategies for the development of numeracy and literacy strategies which make clear the action to be taken and whose responsibility it is. This is good practice and informative to those involved in monitoring.

62. In most respects the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and is making satisfactory progress against the action plan arising from the last inspection. Standards of handwriting are now at least satisfactory and there is an effective programme for teaching skills. Schemes of work are in place for all foundation subjects and they guide the work of the school, although there is still room for further development. The governors are now more involved in monitoring the curriculum although this is largely confined to the literacy strategy. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. More rigorous monitoring and evaluating of standards and provision at all levels is required to make further effective progress. Appropriate use is made of national data for target setting and the 'family' of local small schools is looking for more relevant criteria to help with target setting for so few pupils. Good use is being made of the computer to produce data for tracking individual pupils' attainment in the range of tests used. This has been a priority for school development and is meeting its targets. It is at an early stage of development because the data can only be collected as the pupils move through the age groups. Generally, sound use is made of information and communication technology to support school management. For example, all policies are held on computer so they can be easily updated.
63. There are appropriate numbers of teaching staff who are deployed effectively and form a tight and committed team. There are no support staff and this limits the work that can be undertaken with children under five. Staff are suitably experienced for the demands of the curriculum, and literacy and numeracy training is effective. There has not been enough training for the teaching of the under fives. Appraisal procedures are good and are enthusiastically welcomed by staff. Staff share appraisal with the neighbouring family of small schools and the school is into a third cycle of appraisal. The outcomes of the appraisal are used to ensure that training supports professional development and school planning.
64. The school makes good use of available grants and actively seeks additional funding. These grants are largely earmarked for specific purposes and have generally been put to good use. Funds available for literacy and information and communication technology, for example, have had a positive impact on standards. Funds for special educational needs are used effectively and closely monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the governing body.
65. The accommodation is adequate for teaching the curriculum, although there are limitations to the space available for physical education. The Key Stage 1/ reception class is small, but is not used effectively for all areas of under-five provision.
66. The financial management is efficient and both the headteacher and governors keep a close eye on the purse strings. The minor recommendations of the most recent audit have been satisfactorily met. Administrative systems are effective and there is very little interference to the smooth running of the school day. The overall costs per pupil are above the national average. However, the very good attitudes of pupils, provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and sound standards means the school gives satisfactory value for money and is an effective school.

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

67. Ensure that the curriculum and teaching for children under five provides appropriately for their personal and social and creative development by:

- improving the organisation of the classroom to provide better areas for role-play and other play activities; (paragraphs 25, 65, 69)
- planning carefully for each of these areas and allowing children access to them on a frequent and regular basis. (paragraphs 5, 40, 68, 70, 74)

Provide more opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to practise and improve their writing by:

- planning for pupils to write more frequently in other subjects and to use fewer sticking, cutting and colouring activities. (paragraphs 26, 95, 78)

Sharpen the evaluation of teaching by: (paragraphs 60, 62, 83, 90)

- observing the work of all teachers regularly with a clear focus on the impact of teaching on learning;
- giving detailed feedback of the evaluations to the teachers and agreeing areas for development;
- using the outcomes of evaluations in future school development planning.

The following, less significant weaknesses, may also be considered in development planning:

- consistent curriculum planning in the foundation subjects to ensure that particular skills are identified and progressively built upon (paragraphs 17, 38, 110)
- consistent marking to guide learning; (paragraphs 29, 81)
- setting targets in the annual reports to parents ( paragraph 55)
- providing more data for parents on their child's progress (paragraph 55)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	52	35	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– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	30
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	3

#### 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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0



## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	96.1
National comparative data	94.1

### 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.*

### 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	30
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12
Average class size	15

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

**Financial information**

Financial year	1998-9
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	£
Total income	93240
Total expenditure	94640
Expenditure per pupil	3264
Balance brought forward from previous year	2241
Balance carried forward to next year	841

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	25
Number of questionnaires returned	21

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	24	12	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	52	36	8	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	36	12	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	64	24	0	4	8
The teaching is good.	60	28	4	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	52	16	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	20	4	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	24	68	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	36	56	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	28	8	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	44	28	8	0

## **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**

68. Children under five are taught in the mixed reception and Key Stage 1 class. At the time of the inspection there were six children in reception, three of whom attended in the mornings only. The numbers are set to increase during the next year. The admission of the youngest pupils in the year in which they have their fifth birthday is a new development following canvassing of parent's views. The need arose because neighbouring local authorities have different admission policies to those of Nottinghamshire.
69. There are some strengths to the teaching and learning of children under five, particularly in reading and writing. Overall, however, the school does not provide satisfactory opportunities for young children. The teacher has not had sufficient training to meet the particular needs of the children within the mixed age classroom. The classroom is not suitably stimulating for under fives and does not allow easy access to the range of tasks they need. This limits their achievement in selecting their own tasks and in creative and physical development. A significant part of the current problem is the difficulties encountered in teaching a literacy and numeracy hour to the Key Stage 1 pupils whilst allowing worthwhile tasks for under fives. The teacher is concerned that activities for under fives would lack challenge because there would be too little timely help by adults and good quality discussion. However, the present solution of involving children in the full literacy and numeracy sessions does not meet their needs fully and children spend too long in passive and very directed tasks. There is no additional support for under fives, but this is an area that the governors have plans to develop.
70. Children's personal and social development is satisfactory overall. The limitations are in the areas already described where they have limited opportunities to develop independence and learning through role-play. Children become restless and lose interest in activities when they spend too long in very directed activities. In some respects the warm and caring ethos of the school and the many chances to work with older pupils encourages good personal development. Children are polite and thoughtful. They are aware of others and mix well, even when they only attend part-time. On the whole they concentrate well, but the long periods of passive activity sometimes lead to restless behaviour. Children relate well to adults and are confident to express their opinions.
71. By the age of five children's achievements in language and literacy are largely typical for their age. Again the small number of children involved means there are very significant variations year on year. They make good progress in early reading skills. All children enjoy books and follow stories such as 'The Gingerbread Man' with enthusiasm. They recognise repeated phrases and join in confidently. They recognise letters and match them accurately to the sounds. Letter sound skills are taught effectively. By the age of five children are fluent and enthusiastic readers from early stages of the reading scheme. Other children tell the story from 'story books' made from family photographs. Standards of writing are appropriate. Children understand that print carries meaning and identify individual words. All children write their names and progress is sound in letter formation and writing key words. Some opportunities are missed for children to experiment with their own writing and they do not have many chances to use the role-play 'office area'. The children identify the key features of a story and put pictures in order. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. Children listen carefully to the introduction of most lessons and give opinions about objects beginning with 'r' in literacy. However, they do not have enough opportunities to explore language through role-play. Overall, the teaching of literacy is effective and a secure base is laid for later learning. Good use is made of stories and literacy generally, but too many tasks involve colouring or cutting and

sticking using pre-drawn worksheets. The teacher has a good understanding of the progress children make and record keeping is good.

72. Children achieve the desirable learning outcomes in mathematics and progress is satisfactory. They match and sort objects by a range of different categories such as shape and colour. Children make good progress in threading beads to repeat colour sequences and create their own designs and patterns. They count accurately to ten and beyond and match numbers to objects with appropriate consistency. More able children add and subtract one number from another and they show increasing accuracy in their calculations. In numeracy sessions children quickly recognise different numbers to ten and order them. They recognise circles, squares and rectangles and are able to measure using straws and cubes. Teaching is satisfactory and good use is made of practical activities. They learn to write numbers systematically and new learning is reinforced well. The teacher skilfully manages mental mathematics sessions to ensure that the children are suitably challenged whilst not overwhelmed by older pupils in Year 1 and 2. Record keeping is detailed and well maintained and this helps children to make suitable progress.
73. Knowledge and understanding of the world are in line with the expectations of the desirable learning outcomes. Progress is satisfactory but many opportunities are missed for children to explore the world more effectively and appropriately through structured role-play and the use of well-planned activities with sand, water and construction materials. Children are aware that they are part of a family and know that children grow from babies to adulthood. Good use is made of the children's personal photographic reading books to help them to understand daily life and roles in the family. They know that people's lives in the past are different from their own and they enjoy exploring historical artefacts from the 1940s. The teacher makes these objects relevant to their lives through discussion, but aspects of this particular historical study are not really appropriate to such young children. They explore scientific ideas such as light and shadows and know that shadows are formed by the sunshine. They draw maps and routes to school and these are often quite accurate and suitably coloured. Progress in using information technology is sound and children use the mouse and keyboard to control events on the screen in matching games and early writing programs. When given the opportunity, children's work in this area is too often focused on the needs of Key Stage 1 to be successful. Tasks limit the children's opportunity to explore for themselves and learn through investigation and they do not contribute sufficiently to literacy skills. Although the teacher identifies appropriate learning objectives for the reception children they are not precise enough to challenge them fully.
74. There was limited evidence of children's creative and physical development. Cutting skills are good and children draw with appropriate accuracy. There was no significant evidence of children's painting skills and very little evidence of a range of media being used. Children know a good range of songs and sing with enjoyment. Music contributes to their learning in mathematics and English. They are learning to handle instruments well. Children follow rhythms in dance work and move confidently with the older children in physical education lessons.
75. The teacher gives good support to children with special educational needs. These children are assessed accurately and progress is monitored appropriately. Activities are tailored closely to their needs. In general, record keeping procedures for key skills help promote better learning. The classroom itself imposes limitations on the teaching, but there are areas available for role-play. Children have access to jigsaws and construction activities, but not regularly. The resources are satisfactory and there is good provision for reading.

## ENGLISH

76. The cohorts of pupils in the school are very small – on average four or five in each year group. The results in percentages of the National Curriculum tests in English for seven and eleven year consequently fluctuate from year to year. The pattern of results of recent years and since the school's last inspection is an upward one in both reading and writing and the school does well in comparison with schools in similar settings. The evidence of this inspection is that standards are above average in reading in both key stages. In Key Stage 2 standards in writing are above average. In Key Stage 1 they are average. Standards in English have improved since the school was last inspected in 1996. Pupils' handwriting is much better.
77. Pupils in Key Stage 1 read well. Their attainment is at least as good as it should be at their age and often better than that. They read accurately and with fluency, using their knowledge of the words that they know by sight and making good use of their knowledge of letter sounds to work out words with which they are not familiar. Pupils understand what they are reading and can comment on the characters in stories and state their preferences about different types of reading material. One pupil, for example, preferred comics and adventure books. In Key Stage 2, there is a similar picture. Pupils' achievement is good in reading. This includes pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress towards the targets that have been set for them. Pupils enjoy books and many read with beautiful expression. They show good insights into the nature and complexity of a story's plot and comment thoughtfully on characters. One pupil, who was reading a book whose theme was bullying, explained how this related to her own understanding of the unhappiness caused by 'taking friends away'.
78. Standards in writing are better in Key Stage 2 than they are in Key Stage 1. This is because the older pupils have more chance to practise and to write for different purposes in other subjects of the National Curriculum. In Key Stage 1 pupils write neatly and spell well. They are learning that writing has different purposes. For example, they understand that they are telling a story when they write about 'The Gingerbread Man' and that their letters to a partner school in Kent have a different purpose. They can organise narrative writing into a correct sequence. Younger pupils in this key stage can write in simple sentences, spelling familiar words correctly and making sensible guesses at harder ones. Older ones spell accurately and can use joined-up handwriting. In some subjects of the National Curriculum, opportunities are missed to give pupils further practice in writing. Worksheets are used in science, for example, when the lesson presents an opportunity for pupils to use and practise the skills of writing that they have acquired in lessons in reading and writing.
79. In Key Stage 2 pupils write for a broad range of purposes, which includes stories, poems and letters, as well as factual writing. They know how to plan a story by drafting and editing prior to producing a polished version. Their writing has a real sense of purpose and older pupils are skilled at adjusting the style to capture a reader's interest. For example, as part of the work currently in hand about the Second World War pupils have written letters in the role of evacuees to their parents. One pupil started the letter starkly 'I miss you.' Pupils of different ages in the class learn well. On the same theme, pupils have written information leaflets for evacuees. A pupil in Year 3 wrote simply 'This leaflet is to tell you all about the evacuating...'; by comparison, a Year 6 pupil wrote 'Dear children everywhere, the cities of England are getting more dangerous as we speak'. Pupils with special educational needs also learn well. Two pupils seized the moment and used the computer to write a pointed description of a visiting inspector. Other subjects of the National Curriculum are used well in Key Stage 2 to extend the range of pupils' writing and to allow them to practise styles that they have learned. In religious education, for example, they have written stories about Palm Sunday, and in history they have prepared lists of information about the Titanic.

80. This expressive and often compelling writing and the good standards in reading are reflected in pupils' spoken English, which is good. Lively discussions feature in many lessons, both among pupils and between teachers and pupils. The range of vocabulary that pupils use is wide and includes the accurate use of words that are specific to each subject. Pupils in Key Stage 1, for example, talked in a mathematics lesson about what happens when shapes 'rotate'. Pupils in both key stages listen well to the teachers and to one another. They pick up instructions quickly and respond in an attentive way to what is said in discussions. Many pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy and participate well in social conversations. Topics of lengthy conversations across the dinner table are varied and add greatly to the pupils' understanding of how to speak and listen in this informal context.
81. The quality of teaching in English is good. Some of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good. The school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy and, having largely overcome the complexities of using it with classes in which the age range is wide; now uses it imaginatively and effectively. Its subtle and carefully considered implementation is a significant reason for the improving standards in reading and writing. Individual lessons are carefully planned and each has a clear sense of purpose. Where the teaching is very good, imaginative approaches capture pupils' interest and attention and establish a sense of anticipation about what will come next. All the elements of the National Literacy Strategy are linked seamlessly to give the lessons momentum and to help pupils to understand what they are expected to learn. For example, one lesson started in the library, where the pupils listened to a recording of Chamberlain's announcement of the outbreak of war and watched images on a computer screen of Britain in 1939. The teacher's strategy proved very effective when the pupils went on to study a Louis MacNeice journal about reactions to the radio broadcast. Older pupils were able to spot and explain how MacNeice used emotive language and onomatopoeia to create an effect, while younger ones explained their reasons for thinking that the writer had also experienced an earlier war. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, were stretched by the teacher's skill in targeting questions to pupils of different ages and abilities. Subsequently, the teacher's high expectations were reflected in the quality of pupils' writing. 'When war was declared, I was anxious in the night.' one pupil wrote. Where the teaching is good, lessons are similarly well-planned and organised and the tasks given to pupils are appropriate to what is planned for their learning. Teaching takes full account of different ages and abilities, but lacks the inspirational qualities to excite the pupils. The marking of pupils' work is variable in quality and rarely shows how pupils' might improve their work. Some pupils work slowly and, despite efforts to do so, teachers have not been wholly successful in speeding them up.
82. Pupils are keen to do well in English. They try hard to improve their reading, often engaging the help of their parents at home. Their written work reflects a sense of pride and is presented neatly. Pupils in both classes enjoy the literacy hours and show good levels of concentration both when they are studying texts and words and when they are working at tasks. Their positive attitudes augment the quality of the teaching and result in them achieving well.
83. The school has added to its stock of books and, most recently, to the number and quality of its computers. The latter are in frequent use and add a further dimension to pupils' skills in writing. They are put to good use to help pupils' who have special educational needs to write with greater confidence. This investment, which has been made with the help of governors and parents, represents best value for the pupils. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor teaching and learning in English. Much depends on an informal approach, which does not currently include a sufficiently rigorous system to check the effectiveness of teachers' planning or to scrutinise samples of pupils' work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Standards of achievement are broadly in line with the results achieved nationally and there has been a trend of improvement since the last inspection. Although the small numbers of pupils cannot be easily compared with national averages, it is evident that a significant number of pupils achieve above expected levels where they show the potential. In both key stages pupils are making satisfactory progress overall and they work at appropriate levels. The pace of learning is better in the lessons in Key Stage 2, reflecting the higher quality of teaching. Pupils have particular strengths in using their mathematics in practical ways and they explain their ideas effectively. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils learn multiplication tables and other basic number facts well, but they are sometimes slow to recognise the correct mental strategy to use and so solve the problem.
85. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils recognise numbers to 20 and beyond. They are competent in a sound range of written sums including horizontal and vertical addition and subtraction progressing to two digits appropriately. They successfully tackle simple written problems such as 'Find out how many buttons the four clowns wear.' They use a sound range of mathematical language when discussing their work. They use 'sets of' and 'groups of' in their multiplication. There are some variations in the neatness and accuracy with which pupils set out their work and this is not always picked up in the marking. Pupils' understanding of shape and measure develops effectively and they use both standard and non-standard measures. They recognise a good range of two and three-dimensional shapes and describe pentagons, cuboids and cones accurately. Pupils' understanding of data-handling is sound and is used effectively in other subjects such as science and history.
86. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have made satisfactory and often good progress, building on their earlier learning. They continue to improve their capacity for mental arithmetic and by the end of the key stage are fluent in tables to 12 and in division and number bonds. They benefit from regular homework and clear targets for learning in this area. There is a good element of problem solving to the teaching, which encourages pupils to think, although they do not always do this as effectively as one would expect. They explore numbers through this approach. For example, from the fact that 02.02.2000 is the first even numbered date for some considerable time they worked back to discover the last time this happened. They use a good range of methods to support their calculations. Much of the problem-solving is based on real situations such as shopping. They have a secure understanding of decimals and add and subtract to two decimal places. They convert fractions to decimals and can add and multiply using a common denominator. Understanding of shape is good. They accurately describe angles as acute or obtuse and measure with reasonable accuracy using a protractor. Overall, pupils work within the right levels for their overall ability in all areas. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology to present data from their own research. For example, they produce graphs and charts relating to personal weights and measures and ask sensible questions using the information presented. Throughout the key stage they present their work neatly and set out their working out carefully.
87. Through both key stages progress is at least satisfactory and often good at Key Stage 2. Pupils build sequentially on their earlier learning and reinforce their knowledge and understanding through relevant practise in other subjects. In design and technology and science pupils use a good range of measuring equipment and use the correct terminology. They make reasonable attempts at estimating distances, weights and amounts although confidence varies. Pupils with special educational needs make suitable progress towards their learning targets and are helped and encouraged by the way the groups work together to solve problems. Work is well matched to their needs by the teacher's careful planning and good use of assessment procedures.



88. In both key stages pupils attitudes are very good. They are clear about what is expected of them and settle quickly to tasks. A real strength of their attitudes to learning is the excellent way pupils of different ages work and plan together. They share their own strengths and knowledge. This is managed well by teaching staff, who match pupils well for their mutual benefit. Pupils' enthusiasm for practical tasks is very evident. Their behaviour is very good in all lessons.
89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers are planning effectively using the National Numeracy Strategy guidance and they have effectively married the needs of teaching to a wide age and ability range. The pace of numeracy lessons is good and effective use is made of initial mental work often matched closely to the follow-up activities. For example, in Key Stage 2 pupils were challenged to work on quite advanced mental calculations through discussing the degrees in a circle and those of different angles. Good use is made of games and techniques such as 'I spy' for three- dimensional shapes at Key Stage 1. The mental numeracy session is normally at the end of the lesson. These activities are appropriate, but as a result lessons do not always have a plenary session at the end of the lesson to draw together new learning or consolidate ideas. Increasingly good use is made of information and communication technology in data-handling and learning basic skills. Work is appropriately marked overall, but neatness and accuracy are not always focused on enough in Key Stage 1.
90. Assessment procedures are good and are used effectively. They are based on a published system supplemented by the school's own good practice. The outcomes of the assessments are effectively used to target individual weaknesses and areas for development within the groups or class as a whole. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enriched by the good practical approach. The strong links made with other subjects help the pupils to learn in a meaningful and interesting way and allow them to consolidate their ideas. The monitoring of teaching and learning tends to be informal and does not have a significant impact on raising standards.

## **SCIENCE**

91. Standards are in line with the national average by the end of both key stages. Learning and progress are at least satisfactory and good in lessons in Key Stage 2. As with mathematics, a strength of pupils' achievement is in the practical investigative approach of the pupils and their enthusiasm. The broad and balanced curriculum gives pupils a good breadth of knowledge on which to draw. Overall standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
92. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' understanding of physical processes is satisfactory. They understand that vibrations cause sound and describe different sounds through a good vocabulary. They sort objects by their magnetic properties and whether they float or sink. They grow plants from seeds and understand the different conditions needed for growth. They make some well-observed drawings of the plants. They label parts of an insect appropriately. Pupils understand the relationships between mothers and babies and follow simple timelines of growth. Overall, they have a good range of scientific knowledge and practise different recording systems. However, they often make simple drawings rather than use their writing skills.
93. Pupils progress well through Key Stage 2. By the end of the key stage they have a good understanding of fair testing and describe the way in which they need to check the calibration carefully when measuring mass. They test materials for their stretching properties and can explain in great detail why they think one elastic band is likely to stretch better than another. Their reasoning has a good scientific basis. They devise their own experiments to measure the up thrust of water and confidently do so. They make good progress in their understanding of electricity and draw accurate diagrams. Pupils'

experiments with air resistance involve making complex paper aircraft. Recording skills are good involving increasingly detailed graphs and charts and well-written descriptions of their experiments. Pupils use a good vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs make suitable progress and receive good support from work specifically targeted for them. More able pupils benefit from the open-ended nature of many tasks, which allows them to investigate and record in their own way.

94. The attitudes of all pupils are very good. They are keen to investigate and take a pride in their work. Their behaviour is consistently very good and pupils are kind and thoughtful to each other. They use resources extremely well and often select their own equipment.
95. Teaching is satisfactory at Key stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Work is matched well to the needs of different age groups in both key stage and planning identifies different learning objectives. The teachers ask probing questions which make the pupils think and search for answers. The pupils are given a good framework for planning and recording their experiments. In the best lessons in Key Stage 2, the teacher expects the pupils to use writing accurately and to observe results carefully. This results in carefully drawn diagrams and an increasing awareness of the need for accuracy. The pace of working is quite relaxed, but still has a sense of urgency. In this ethos the pupils feel confident to experiment without fear of failure. A good range of resources is used well in both key stages. Pupils use computers effectively to produce graphs and charts and to write up their results.
96. The subject is very well planned. The co-ordinator has worked with other neighbouring small schools to organise a scheme matched to the needs of the school. Assessment and recording procedures are built in and are used well. They give a very accurate picture of pupils' attainment across the range of scientific experiences and match achievement closely to National Curriculum expectations. The standards in the subject have been monitored but little formal monitoring of teaching and planning has yet taken place. The governors have been closely involved in the development of the subject and have ensured best value in the scheme and teaching practices introduced but they do not monitor the impact of the new work. Resources are of good quality and are matched closely to the scheme of work.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

97. Standards in information technology are above average in both key stages. This is an improvement since the school was last inspected and reflects the school's keen interest in raising standards. Some parents expressed concerns about their children's attainment in this subject, but the pupils are getting on well now that the school is paying closer attention to information technology. Throughout the school pupils are able to use computers efficiently to word-process their work. The use of information and communication technology is a significant strength in helping pupils with special educational needs to achieve well. It motivates them strongly to write and spell correctly and allows them to play a full part in lessons and learn at the same rate as other pupils. Teachers are familiar with the curriculum for information technology and their levels of knowledge about how it can be taught well are good. The school has a clear policy to guide its work.
98. Pupils use the computer's keyboard comfortably for word-processing and for using programs to handle data. They are familiar with a wide range of commands and use them quickly and efficiently to open, save and close files. Older pupils can use drop-down menus to locate features that they wish to use. They understand that the computer can be used as an efficient tool to handle data and provide information. Pupils in Key Stage 2 visited a neighbouring graveyard; on their return to school, they worked as a class to arrange the data that they had collected about birth and death dates from the

gravestones. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are learning about the usefulness of computers; they plan to send messages to their friends in a Kent school using e-mail. Pupils throughout the school take a keen interest in information technology and look forward to opportunities to use the school's equipment. They work with patience and care.

99. The standards of many pupils are enhanced by their use of computers at home. The oldest pupils in the school can speak with authority of their awareness of a computer's uses. They know that websites on the Internet can be visited for information and that messages can be left for stars of television programmes. They are familiar with the internet's facility for shopping and how digital television can also be used for this purpose. One pupil uses e-mail to keep in touch with a parent working away from home.
100. A weekly computer club which develops pupils' skills further enhances the school's provision. The resources for the subject are up to date and in good supply. The governors have worked closely with the school, with parents and with the local community to ensure that the school is properly equipped and well-placed to provide an effective curriculum and achieve good standards. The school's policy for teaching information technology is recent. Its clarity is enhanced by a detailed action plan, which describes its planned implementation. There has already been a positive impact on the way the subject is taught and on the standards achieved by the pupils.

## **ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Standards in art and in design and technology by the end of both key stages are typical for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. The range of work displayed around the school is varied but, apart from pencil drawings of the school by pupils in Key Stage 2, there are few examples of drawings and paintings from observation.
102. The work displayed shows that pupils' attainment in both key stages is typical of pupils of their age. In Key Stage 2, pupils' self-portraits are carefully drafted and they succeed in showing the emotions that they are intended to illustrate. The drawings of the school building are carefully observed and show a reasonable level of skill. Pupils know some techniques for printing. Some string pictures have been assembled with care and imagination and the resulting prints are accurate and show pupils' ability to handle paint successfully. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have designed book covers. These are designed well and show that the pupils understand the principles of using art as a form of communication. Pupils' work in clay is of a good quality.
103. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have learned about the artist Mondrian and used a computer to make pictures in his style. The resulting pictures are accurate representations of the artist's style.
104. Pupils enjoy art and their work reflects their interest, and the pride and care with which they tackle their work.
105. Since the last inspection, the school has written policies for art and for design and technology. These provide a good overview of the principles which underpin the teaching of each subject. Schemes of work add helpful detail of the content of the curricula for each key stage to assist teachers to plan work for their classes. They do not show, however, how pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are to be built on sequentially.

## **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

106. The cycle of topics covered by the school means that there has been no significant element of geography in the work so far, but on the evidence of discussion with pupils and some scrutiny of pupils' work, standards are typical for their age. Standards of history are above those normally seen in both key stages. This is because of the

emphasis given to history and the good use of local first hand evidence. In geography pupils also benefit from good use of the local environment. Overall, pupils have access to the full history and geography curriculum; although mapping skills are not developed enough. Standards and provision have been maintained since the last inspection.

107. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a good understanding of events from their recent past and key events from fifty years ago. They enjoy stories of key historical characters such as Guy Fawkes. They are developing a sound concept of time and change. Pupils understand that the items brought in by relatives and local people for the school's studies of the 1940s are real objects that were once used. They record their thoughts and ideas in pictures and writing. A good contribution was made to the development of literacy when pupils wrote to a local paper for assistance with the topic. The result was overwhelming and the pupils benefited from the first-hand experience of listening to recollections of evacuation. This particular topic promoted high standards in understanding in Key Stage 2. Pupils have a good knowledge of primary and secondary sources of information. They empathise closely with the life of others and express this clearly in letters they write in the role of evacuees. They are developing a good sense of chronology and relate this to local buildings. A key strength of their learning is the first-hand experiences. For example, they are discovering more about the local community and census through a study of the local graveyard using computers. The school makes good use of other resources such as the school's logbook dating back to the start of the century.
108. In geography pupils make appropriate maps of the route from home to school in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, they identify signs and symbols from ordnance surveys and use two-digit co-ordinates to plan routes. They have a good knowledge of land use and farming in the neighbourhood and how this has changed over time. In studies of transport pupils appreciate how geography governs the way in which people move and how this affects the way they live. They study contrasting areas often through residential visits when numbers allow. These have been as far afield as France!
109. No teaching was seen in geography. Limited observations indicate that teaching in history is good. The quality of teachers' questioning is good in both key stages and makes pupils think for themselves. Good use is made of local resources. A wide range of recording processes develops pupils' interest and satisfaction and pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject.
110. The curricular plans ensure that pupils cover a broad and appropriate range of topics over their time in school and work in lessons is generally suitably matched to levels of attainment. However, plans do not contain enough detail to ensure that pupils' skills in the subjects are developed year on year. Resources are at least satisfactory. There is a good range of books in the school library and good use is made of data from the computer and Internet.

## **MUSIC**

111. On the evidence of the one lesson observed in Key Stage 1 and a whole-school singing session, standards by the end of both key stages are typical for this age and teaching is sound. Pupils make suitable progress and instrumental work is good. Standards have been maintained, and the quality of planning improved, since the last inspection. In Key Stage 1 pupils sing a good range of songs. They sing tunefully and with clear diction. They maintain a rhythm well and keep the beat with different percussion instruments. They are developing a good awareness of the dynamics of a song describing the loudness and softness appropriately. They follow picture notation accurately. A good pace to the lesson observed, and the teacher's good musical knowledge motivates the pupils. The pupils enjoy their work and behave well. Through Key Stage 2 pupils

become increasingly tuneful and confident as performers. Many pupils are able recorder players and accompany the school in singing sessions and assemblies. The teacher provides a good role model. Pupils sing a good range of songs from traditional folk tunes to World War II songs. They learn to appreciate many more styles as part of their assemblies. A governor makes a good contribution to music with specialist skills and assisting with planning and teaching. The attitudes of the pupils are very positive. They throw themselves into the spirit of the lively and sentimental World War II songs following the lead of the headteacher.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

112. By the end of each key stage, standards in physical education are typical of those usually seen among seven and eleven year olds. They are high in swimming. While the school has ample space for games outside, the facilities inside the school are poor. The school does not have a hall; the Key Stage 2 classroom serves for lessons in dance and gymnastics. Although the school uses timetabling efficiently and effectively to minimise the time spent on moving furniture to allow lessons to take place, the pupils are constrained by the lack of space.
113. In dance, the pupils in the Key Stage 1 class are able to follow rhythms well, and the movement of some higher attaining pupils is precise and detailed. They show good balance and a reasonable ability to express their ideas in movement. Some pupils enhance the quality of their work by adding facial expressions to show mood. They understand the need to work safely within the restricted space. Pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve good standards in swimming. Almost all can swim a minimum of ten metres and many much further.
114. The pupils enjoy physical education. Key Stage 2 pupils anticipate their swimming lessons eagerly, while the younger pupils are attentive to the teacher's instructions and learn well.
115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned carefully and the work chosen is appropriately challenging. The good relationships between teachers and pupils, which are a feature of the school, ensure that lessons are successful and move at a reasonable pace. Teachers pay close attention to pupils' safety in lessons.
116. Within the constraints of the space available the school provides a balanced curriculum for its pupils, enhanced by opportunities for all pupils to swim each week and by opportunities for older pupils to pursue adventurous activities on a visit out of school each summer.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

117. The standards achieved by pupils in both key stages in religious education are generally typical of pupils of their ages and in line with those set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus.
118. Pupils are familiar with a range of Bible stories and they know about important events in the calendars of Christianity and other major religions of the world. They understand that celebration is a central feature of religion, and that different celebrations have common features, such as the use of light and the eating of special meals.
119. The school adopts a thematic approach to teaching religious education. This works successfully and helps pupils to understand features that are common to different religions. The school's celebrations at Christmas, for example, included not only songs about the Christian festival, but also songs and stories from Judaism and Sikhism. Pupils learned the story of Rama and Sita, and performed a dramatised version for their

parents. Pupils' understanding of the Sikh religion was further enhanced by a visit to a Sikh temple. Pupils take part in Christian festivals in churches in the two local villages. This enhances their understanding of the significance of religion within their local community. Prayer is a feature of daily life in school, in assembly and at lunchtime and adds a spiritual dimension to religious education.

120. No lessons were observed on this inspection, but the school's plans for the subject are carefully considered and pupils' work is varied and interesting. Their written work, some of which is written on the computer, is neatly illustrated and shows that the teaching which led up to it succeeded in its purpose.