

INSPECTION REPORT

All Hallows Church of England Primary

Gedling, Nottingham

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122743

Headteacher: Mr. J. Graham

Reporting inspector: John Harris
019284

Dates of inspection: 05/03/01 – 08/03/01

Inspection number: 194642

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Voluntary Controlled |
| School category: | Primary |
| Age range of pupils: | 5-11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Priory Road Gedling Nottingham |
| Postcode: | NG4 3JZ |
| Telephone number: | 0115 9568277 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Nottinghamshire LEA |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr. R. Skellington |
| Date of previous inspection: | 28-30 April 1997 |

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| 019284 | John Harris | Registered inspector | Under Fives Maths Information and Communication Technology | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 009965 | Anne Walton | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 017557 | Sandie Sykes | Team inspector | Equal Opportunities Science Geography History Physical Education Religious Education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 027447 | John Sweet | Team inspector | English Art and Design Design and Technology Music | How well are pupils taught? How does the school care for its pupils? |

| | | | | |
|--------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------|--|
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|--------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------|--|

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

All Hallows Primary School is a voluntary controlled Church of England school catering for pupils between the ages of four and eleven. It is situated in Gedling, about four miles from the centre of Nottingham. The school was founded about a hundred years ago to serve the local area, but now also draws children from further afield. Parents are employed in a variety of manual, clerical and professional occupations, and there is a wide range of housing types in the locality. There are currently 152 pupils on roll; the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The attainment of children when they start school is typical of that found nationally. Approximately one fifth have special educational needs, which is about average, though none has a statement. There is one pupil who speaks English as an additional language.

The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a dynamic and enterprising school which has made major strides over the past few years and is now highly effective. Children have excellent attitudes to their work and achieve very well, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is largely the result of the high quality teaching which they receive. The headteacher has been the moving force behind recent improvements, and has built an energetic and expert staff team to assist him. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement, and the targets set are ambitious but realistic. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, and in many lessons is very good or excellent.
- The headteacher's outstanding leadership inspires complete confidence.
- The children are very enthusiastic, responsible and hard-working.
- There is a very good climate for learning, with a strong emphasis on achievement.
- All aspects of pupils' personal development are very effectively promoted.
- An excellent programme of additional activities extends children's learning opportunities.
- There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- The close links with parents greatly enhance children's learning.

What could be improved

- There is no aspect of the school which requires significant improvement.

The inspection team endorses the school's current improvement programme, as

outlined in the school development plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997 and a number of significant weaknesses were identified at that time. All have been put right, and many are now areas of strength. Procedures for ensuring health and safety and child protection are fully in place. The curriculum is well planned and offers a broad range of interesting and challenging learning opportunities. Work in science, art and information and communication technology has accordingly improved. So, too, has provision for children in the foundation stage. The quality of planning for development, weak in 1997, is now excellent. The headteacher leads by example, and is ably supported by the deputy head and subject co-ordinators. Thorough checks are made on how well the school is doing, and immediate action is taken where needed.

The school has undergone a radical improvement programme which has transformed its effectiveness. The effects are particularly evident in the quality of teaching, much of which is now very good, and in the standards which children are achieving.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|--|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 | |
| English | D | E | A | A | well above A average above B average C below average D well below E average |
| mathematics | C | E | B | A | |
| science | D | E | A | A | |

The most recent National Curriculum tests results for eleven-year-olds represent a significant improvement over previous years. Compared with schools which take pupils from similar backgrounds, results in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science are all well above average. National Curriculum assessment results for seven-year-olds in 2000 also surpassed earlier results, and, for writing and mathematics, were in the highest five per cent nationally. Standards have risen at a much faster rate than that seen nationally.

Current assessments of pupils' attainment indicate that improvements will be maintained over the next two years. Inspection evidence confirms that standards have

risen significantly and that, by the time pupils leave the school, are above the national average in English and mathematics. In other subjects they meet or exceed national expectations. Pupils of all abilities are achieving well and making good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Children are proud of their school and respond enthusiastically to the learning opportunities they are offered. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Children behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and sensible and work well, both on their own and in groups. |
| Personal development and relationships | Children are confident and self-reliant. They take their responsibilities very seriously. They take pleasure in helping one another. They are very sensitive to the feelings of others and show respect for different viewpoints. |
| Attendance | Attendance is close to the national average, and there is very little unauthorised absence. |

Through the school council, children take responsibility for aspects of school life, and make an important contribution to the overall strategy for improvement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Very good | Satisfactory | Very good |

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

Teaching in the school is good overall. There is some very good teaching at each stage, and in some lessons it is outstanding. Ninety-six per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory or better, and four per cent unsatisfactory. Forty-one per cent were judged to be very good or excellent. Teachers are very successful in creating and maintaining a climate for learning in their classes. They ensure that all children are involved and, in the best lessons, offer stimulating and imaginative activities which challenge children to achieve high standards. Very good support is given to children with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy but this is not at the expense of other subjects. The curriculum offers many interesting and stimulating learning opportunities, and there is an excellent range of additional activities outside the school day. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The support for pupils with special educational needs is very carefully planned and helps them to make good progress. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Excellent opportunities to acquire new vocabulary are offered through participation in a wide range of stimulating activities. Good additional support is provided from outside the school. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The provision for all aspects of pupils' personal development is very good. It is evident in all areas of the school's work. The school is very successful in promoting children's confidence and self-esteem. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Each child is valued as an individual. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good and their health, safety and welfare are given high priority. |

Children are taught to care for one another and are given good opportunities to reflect on their own learning. The quality of relationships within the school is very good. All members of the school community are highly valued and are given excellent personal support. Achievements of all kinds are recognised and celebrated.

The school has very effective links with parents. Parents are involved in many aspects of school life, and are widely consulted. They are kept well informed about new developments and about their children's progress. Parental satisfaction with the school is very strong.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | All members of staff with management responsibilities work well together towards a common purpose. They are given a clear lead by the headteacher's personal example and vision for the future. The able deputy head gives very strong support. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors are well-organised and well-informed. They have complete trust in the headteacher but play an active part in providing a sense of direction for the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school keeps a very thorough check on how well it is doing. It makes excellent use of comparative information to help it devise more effective ways of working. This has had a decisive impact on the achievements of pupils. |
| The strategic use of resources | Financial planning is very good, and educational priorities are appropriately funded. Spending decisions are made according to the principles of best value. |

The school deploys its staff and resources very well, towards the attainment of its educational goals. All members of staff are appropriately qualified, and good use is made of their individual strengths. The use of the accommodation is kept under constant review, and improvements are constantly sought. Minor weaknesses in the quality of resources are being addressed. The strong commitment to high standards is evident in all the school's work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strong personal leadership of the headteacher. • The good quality of the teaching. • The care and consideration shown to all children. • The high expectations of work and behaviour. • The support for children's personal development. • The range of out-of-school activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no areas where parents felt that improvements are required. |

Inspection evidence fully supports the positive comments made by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards for seven-year-olds in the 2000 National Curriculum assessments were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In writing and mathematics, they were in the highest five per cent nationally. This represents a significant improvement over previous years, when results had been consistently below the national average.
2. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science, when compared with schools which take pupils from similar backgrounds. As for the seven-year-olds, the results show a strong upward trend which has been greater than the improvement seen nationally over the past few years. The school has set very ambitious targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in the 2001 and 2002 national tests for eleven-year-olds. If the targets are met, the school will have consolidated the gains made last year. This is likely to occur, as a range of measures has been designed to tackle the areas where improvement is needed. These have been identified through the school's extensive analysis of its assessment information.
3. Inspection evidence broadly reflects the national assessment results. For the oldest pupils there is a particularly high level of demand matched by a strong will, on their part, to succeed. Children's achievements are accordingly very high. This is so even in those areas which the school has itself identified as in need of improvement. There was, for example, little evidence during the inspection that there was significant underachievement among boys. Similarly, the action taken by the school to challenge the more able, particularly through the target groups, was clearly having the intended effect.
4. Children in the foundation stage are making very good progress and are on their way to reaching or exceeding the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year. They show high levels of confidence and motivation, rapidly absorbing new knowledge and extending their understanding as a result of the high quality teaching they receive.
5. In English, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is average in reading and writing, and above average in speaking and listening. Children are enthusiastic readers. They read aloud accurately, paying careful attention to punctuation, and are able to talk about what they are reading. Most pupils write in simple sentences which are correctly punctuated, and use their knowledge of sounds to spell simple words. They listen carefully to their teachers and contribute well to class and group discussions. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in all aspects of the subject. Children are committed and enthusiastic readers. They are articulate in discussion, read with

enthusiasm and write with precision.

6. In mathematics, likewise, pupils attain average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. Seven-year-olds, for example, rapidly add and subtract simple numbers in their heads and can order three digits to make the biggest or smallest number. More able pupils know when a number is a multiple of 2, 5 or 10, and can give reasons for why an answer is correct. By the time they are eleven, many children are achieving standards which are higher than those expected for their age.
7. In science, standards are average by the end of each key stage. Seven-year-olds know about physical processes such as electricity, for example. They make simple electric circuits and discuss the reasons for the bulb flickering. Eleven-year-olds investigate how sounds are conducted through materials, and the more able suggest explanations for the phenomena they observe. At all ages, children's enquiry skills are not as good as their scientific knowledge and understanding.
8. In information and communication technology (ICT) the current seven-year-olds have not reached the expected standards, because they have not had enough opportunity to learn new skills. This shortcoming is being addressed successfully, and children are now able, for example, to make effective use of a word-processor. Eleven-year-olds have had a much wider experience, and their capability is significantly higher. They are very proficient in many of the applications of ICT, and make good use of their knowledge and skills to further their learning in other subjects.
9. In other subjects of the curriculum pupils meet or exceed the standards expected for their age. In art and design, for example, children produce high quality artwork in different media such as printing, modelling, painting and weaving. They experiment with different techniques and think hard about the effect they wish to create. In history, they select and evaluate different sources of information about the topic they are studying.
10. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make particularly good progress in the foundation stage and at Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, children with special educational needs are set appropriate targets and make good progress towards them. Class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator take care to ensure that they are given work which is appropriate to them, and they are given good support, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to enable them to achieve success.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

11. Children's attitudes to the school are excellent. They are very enthusiastic and keen to learn, taking full advantage of the high quality teaching they receive. They respond to instructions promptly, and readily contribute their thoughts and ideas to class discussions. They frequently become totally absorbed in their

work, sustaining high levels of concentration for long periods of time. They are proud to belong to the school.

12. Children work well both on their own and co-operatively. The skills of working together are taught from the earliest age, and the youngest children wait their turn, listen intently to others and play happily with their classmates. Older pupils frequently work in informal groups, when they share equipment fairly and discuss their work productively with one another. They know, too, how to collaborate with others to a common end. Whenever they are offered such opportunities in lessons, they form very effective working teams, for example, when planning the design and manufacture of Easter biscuits.
13. Children greatly appreciate the excellent opportunities to take part in out-of-school activities. Some of these have been formed at their own suggestion. All are well attended, some heavily so. The French club, for example, has to be run three times a week in order to cater for the large number of children wishing to join in.
14. When they first start school children settle very quickly; thereafter they continue to grow in confidence. They are friendly and courteous and very willing to talk to adults, with whom they form very good relationships. They are kind to each other, particularly when one of them is seen to be distressed. Behaviour is very good in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Children are very clear about why they should behave well, and formulate their own rules to ensure that they can get on with their learning without distraction. When, occasionally, inappropriate behaviour does occur, children respond quickly to correction, whether by a teacher or a mid-day supervisor.
15. In the playground older children look after the younger ones, and all show respect for other members of the school community. They listen attentively to one another's viewpoints, even if someone is expressing an opinion with which they disagree. Respect is also shown for school property and display items, and children take responsibility for various aspects of school life. For example, the school council puts forward suggestions for fund raising for charities such as 'Red Nose Day', and this is supported by the school as a whole.
16. The attendance rate is around the national average and unauthorised absence is low. The school monitors attendance carefully and produces an annual review which identifies action to be taken.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. Teaching in the foundation stage and at Key Stage 2 is very good, and is a major factor in the recent improvement in standards. In the foundation stage the teaching is of a consistently high quality and is mostly very good. At Key Stage 2, teaching was

good or better in 25 out of the 29 lessons observed. More than half of these were very good or excellent. At Key Stage 1, teaching is satisfactory overall, and sometimes good or very good. Only a very small number of unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory overall with one lesson in seven unsatisfactory or poor.

18. Teaching in the foundation stage, unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, has improved significantly. The learning environment for children in the Reception Year is now vibrant and exciting. Planning is very thorough, and children are offered an imaginative range of activities, some initiated by the teacher and others which they choose themselves. Through this, they are able to develop their decision-making skills and so become more confident. The teacher is highly skilled at encouraging children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Children are, for example, regularly helped to reflect on what they have achieved.
19. Much of the teaching of English and mathematics is similarly strong. In both subjects, basic skills are taught systematically, following the objectives for each year group set out in the literacy and numeracy frameworks. Lessons cover a lot of ground and children's progress is often rapid. Activities are relevant and interesting, and teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Children are, therefore, inspired to do well. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, pupils worked intently at refining their poems, and you could hear a pin drop as they read them aloud to the class.
20. There are common features of the most successful teaching throughout the school. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. They motivate pupils through their own enthusiasm and secure a strong commitment to learning. Their expectations are communicated clearly to the class. Pupils respond well to this because they know what to do and how to do it successfully. Children are kept actively involved and know that they are expected to think for themselves. Questions are skilfully used to engage and challenge pupils of all abilities. Discussions at the close of lessons are used well to reinforce and extend what has been learnt.
21. In every subject, teachers work very hard to plan stimulating lessons that meet the learning needs of a range of abilities in the class. They frequently maintain interest by varying the type of activity that children are engaged in. In a design and technology lesson at Key Stage 2, for example, the pupils examined plastic monsters with a view to making a toy to amuse a sick child. Though the pace was brisk there were also frequent opportunities to pause and reflect on progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. Where this is so, technical language is used confidently, and teachers are able to make work more demanding. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, such expertise enabled the pupils to talk confidently about co-ordinates, transformation of shapes and reflective symmetry.

22. Teachers have a secure knowledge of pupils with special educational needs, and provide tasks of the right level of difficulty. When planning lessons, teachers take account of pupils' Individual Education Plans to ensure that they can achieve success. Clear outcomes are identified for them, and dedicated learning support assistants provide effective help and encouragement. Children's achievements are given recognition in whole-class sessions.
23. Arrangements for teaching English as an additional language are also strong. Excellent opportunities to acquire new vocabulary are offered through full participation in the class programme of activities. There are regular visits from a specialist teacher to provide additional support.
24. Teachers manage pupils well and the quality of relationships creates a genuine mutual respect. They clearly enjoy one another's company. In many lessons the teacher's enthusiasm is tangible. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher read aloud from an enlarged version of an African folk tale and discussed it with the pupils. Her obvious enjoyment of the story was infectious.

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

25. A rich and stimulating curriculum is provided for all pupils. It is carefully planned to involve children and engage their interest. Regular opportunities for children to enjoy exciting experiences help to deepen and extend their learning. The school provides the appropriate statutory curriculum in full, at all stages. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very effectively and promote high standards in English and mathematics. This is a major improvement since the last inspection, when the curriculum was judged to be a significant area of weakness.
26. This improvement is especially apparent in the foundation stage, where the shortcomings were most serious. Now there is an expertly planned daily programme of purposeful activities, well supported by all the adults working there. The provision is shaped to develop children's enthusiasm for school and as independent learners. It is based on a very secure understanding of how young children learn.
27. The school has recently adopted the national guidance for schemes of work for each subject taught at Key Stages 1 and 2. Natural links between subjects are found which help children make connections between different areas of their learning. This is particularly notable at Key Stage 2 where, for example, in Years 5 and 6, a very exciting lesson combined photography and information and communication technology (ICT) with art and design. This provided a powerful stimulus to children's creativity. ICT provision has recently been considerably enhanced through the extension of the specialist accommodation. Children throughout the school are now being given good opportunities to develop their ICT capability, though more needs to be done to achieve total consistency.

28. The school takes care to ensure that all pupils have equal access to every aspect of school life. Teachers take account of recent research into how people have different learning styles and preferences. They vary their approaches in lessons to ensure that everyone is included. For the same reason, changes have recently been made to the structure of the school day. Teachers make a conscious selection of resources in order to promote positive images of people and places, and to celebrate diversity. The school provides very well for children with special educational needs. Members of staff are very aware of the individual needs of the children in their care and are skilled in supporting them in appropriate ways.
29. The school provides a wealth of high quality additional experiences. Physical and sporting activities are extensive, and include swimming for all children at Key Stage 2, dance and football clubs. Visits out of school range from work in and around the local area to residential visits out of county. A French club is offered three times a week in order to provide suitable experiences for children of different ages. The provision here is excellent. Positive experiences of French culture are skilfully combined in a friendly, social setting, fostering children's confidence to speak simple phrases, make new friends and try new things.
30. The school has good links with the local community, and volunteers who help in the school make a strong contribution to the school's provision. There are very strong links with the pre-school group, which shares staff, accommodation and activities with the school's Reception Year.
31. The school promotes children's personal development very well. Its provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates the whole curriculum and is a significant strength of the school. Assemblies and collective worship are well planned and well led, affirming the strong moral and Christian values that the school promotes in its everyday life. Children are given frequent opportunities to develop reflective thinking. For example, they listen to stories with moral dilemmas and are encouraged to speak about their own thoughts and feelings, and to respect the thoughts and feelings of others. All pupils have a weekly lesson for personal, social and health education. Children are encouraged to take appropriate responsibility through developing rules for behaviour, for example. The school council promotes the principles of good citizenship, providing opportunities to turn the children's ideas for school improvement into action.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. A central value of the school is that pupils' welfare is paramount, and it is highly successful in promoting their well-being. The headteacher and staff know all the children well. They provide very good role models through the quality of their own relationships and the concern shown for each other. Achievement is highly valued by staff and pupils alike. They are quick to congratulate one another when things go well and offer support when needed. Individual achievements are celebrated in lessons, in assemblies and in wall displays. The school

successfully integrates all pupils with special educational needs into every aspect of school life. The unsatisfactory lunchtime supervision, identified in the previous inspection, has been successfully addressed. The lunch-break has been restructured and extra supervisors have been employed and trained. During the inspection, the lunch breaks ran smoothly, pupils played happily and returned to classes ready to learn.

33. The procedures for promoting the safety of pupils have improved since the last inspection when they were in need of review. There are now regular safety checks, and the school responds quickly to any concerns identified. The new perimeter fencing provides a more secure environment. The school encourages pupils to raise issues concerning their own welfare and safety through the school council. It has also recently surveyed the pupils' opinions in a questionnaire. These initiatives give children confidence in taking more responsibility for their own welfare, as well as reinforcing the strong sense of community and concern for one another.
34. Child protection procedures, which were not fully implemented at the time of the last inspection, are now in place. Members of staff have been trained and are aware of their responsibilities. The anti-bullying strategies adopted by the school work well, and no oppressive behaviour was witnessed during the inspection. Parents report that any incidents that might occur are dealt with promptly and effectively.
35. There are comprehensive systems to keep a check on children's progress, including those with special educational needs. Detailed records are kept and used to chart academic progress, personal development, behaviour and attendance. Children have individual target books, which are used to discuss progress with them, and they are set their own challenges in discussion with their teachers. Very effective use is made of information from tests and pupils' work, to make sure that lesson objectives are well matched to children's current levels of knowledge and understanding.
36. The school is constantly seeking ways to adapt its structures and methods to support pupils' well-being and progress. There has, for example, been much recent discussion on how the school can promote boys' achievement, which has been a weakness in the past, and on how to ensure that more able pupils are adequately challenged. The adjustments in the school's approach which have resulted have been highly effective in strengthening motivation and, therefore, attainment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Parents express very great satisfaction with the school. They experience it as a friendly, caring community where children are encouraged to work hard and behave well, and where they are helped to grow in responsibility. Parents appreciate the overall high quality of teaching and the high standard of leadership provided by the headteacher. They like the easy access to the school

and the teachers, and the wide range of out-of-school activities in which some of them are actively involved. Parents generally feel that the arrangements for homework work well and contribute to children's learning.

38. Parents with children new to the school are impressed by how well the children settle down. They value the way in which children are prepared for school and the quality of the information provided in advance. Similarly, good arrangements are made for the transfer of children to their secondary schools.
39. The school offers many opportunities for parents to make contact both formally and informally and they receive useful and interesting information, frequently in the form of newsletters. The school also produces reports and reviews which deal with issues of current concern as well as the usual annual reports. Parents are kept very well informed about the school's activities.
40. A considerable number of parents are involved in school life in a variety of ways. Some help in the classroom, others with outdoor activities, visits, fund raising and links with the community. Where appropriate, the school provides training. This involvement enriches school life and enhances children's learning.
41. The school has good links with the local community, including the Church and other schools in the area. The Parent Teacher Association raises funds for the school and organises social events. The public is also welcomed to a number of annual events run by the school. A chosen charity receives support every year. Sports fixtures, visits locally and visitors to the school are also part of school life. The newsletter is widely distributed in the community.
42. Partnership with parents and the community is very effective and a strength of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher had been in post for two weeks only. There were significant weaknesses in the management structures, which he was in the very early stages of addressing. Since then the school has undergone a radical improvement programme which has transformed its effectiveness. All members of staff with management responsibilities now work well together towards a common purpose. The school's current success is a tribute to the commitment and hard work of the whole staff team.
44. The school has developed comprehensive procedures for checking how well it is doing. These include questionnaires to survey the opinions of parents and children. A notable feature is the way that all members of the school community are involved in the search for further improvements. Governors and parents, for example, are aware of the school's drive to raise the achievement of boys and know some of the ways it is trying to do so. Pupils, too, through the school council, contribute their ideas. The pursuit of excellence informs all aspects of the school's work, and has resulted in an outstanding climate for learning.

45. The headteacher is an inspirational leader. He sets a very strong personal example, and his influence pervades the school. He has a clear vision for the future, and motivates everyone to work towards it. Successes, both great and small, are celebrated and no opportunity is missed to reinforce the school's aims and values. The current year, for example, has been designated the school's 'Year of Achievement'. Parents, governors and staff are in no doubt about the headteacher's central role in turning round the school's fortunes. One parent commented that "when he promises something, you know it will happen".
46. Teaching and support staff are well qualified, and good use is made of their individual strengths. Regular discussions are held with them in order to identify training needs, and very good opportunities are created for them to further their professional development. The roles of subject co-ordinators are clearly defined, and targets are set and regularly reviewed. Time is made available for members of the teaching staff to take stock of those areas for which they have responsibility. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, though new to the post, is knowledgeable and committed, and offers good support to her colleagues. The able deputy head contributes to the senior management team with energy and flair.
47. The funding available to the school is properly directed towards its educational priorities. Effective use is made of specific grants for their designated purposes, and good use is made of support staff to provide extra help for pupils. The day-to-day administration of the school is very efficient, and financial planning is strong. The planned surplus is reasonable, and is allocated for appropriate contingency purposes. The sizeable carry-forward in the budgets for previous years has now been spent on projects which will benefit current pupils, for example the new ICT suite. This is an outstanding resource which is having a clear impact on the achievements of the children. There are a few inadequacies in the school's resources, notably the poor quality of reading books for children to borrow in all but the foundation stage. Spending decisions are made according to the principles of best value, for instance, with regard to the recent computer leasing arrangements. The school offers good value for money.
48. The governors, described as "well-intentioned" in the last inspection report, now play an active part in shaping the overall direction of the school. The headteacher keeps them very well informed, particularly through the detailed reports that he provides, and they discuss all aspects of the school's performance in their regular meetings. They have a thorough knowledge of the school's development priorities, and work well with the headteacher to ensure they are pursued with vigour.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. No major areas of weakness were identified. The inspection team endorses the school's current improvement programme, as outlined in the school development plan. The following minor areas arising from the inspection should be considered:

- extending the quality and range of books available for children to borrow;
- improving children's skills of scientific enquiry;
- consolidating recent gains in developing younger children's capability in information and communication technology;
- providing better outdoor resources for children's physical development in the foundation stage.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 52 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 17 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 12% | 29% | 35% | 21% | 4% | | |

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) | | 152 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | | 24 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR - Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | | 31 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 3 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 1 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.5 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|------|
| School data | 0.13 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2000 | | | 15 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 100 (69) | 100 (73) | 100 (77) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 85 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 100 (73) | 100 (81) | 100 (77) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 88 (86) | 88 (87) |

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

Where there are less than ten boys or ten girls taking Standard Assessment tests, the Department for Education and Employment recognises that the confidentiality of individual pupils' attainments may be breached by publication of their results separately.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2000 | 11 | 14 | 25 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|-------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| | Girls | 13 | 14 | 14 |
| | Total | 24 | 25 | 25 |

| | | | | |
|---|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 96 (59) | 100 (55) | 100 (55) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | | | 11 |
| | Girls | | | 14 |
| | Total | 17 | 21 | 25 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 68 (64) | 84 (68) | 100 (73) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 80 (75) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | |
| Black – African heritage | |
| Black – other | |
| Indian | |
| Pakistani | |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | 1 |
| White | 147 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 4 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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) | 7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21.4 |
| Average class size | 21.8 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Financial information

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Financial year | 1999/ 2000 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 322152 |
| Total expenditure | 317954 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 64 |

| | |
|--|-------|
| Expenditure per pupil | 2134 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 40914 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 45112 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|--|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Total number of education support staff | |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | |
|--------------------------------|--|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 204 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 68 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 81 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 75 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 69 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 46 | 47 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 81 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 66 | 26 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 90 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 90 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 79 | 19 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 99 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 79 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 81 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 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

50. Children are first admitted to the school at the beginning of the term before their fifth birthday. Prior to this, they have the opportunity to attend for two half-days a week as a member of the pre-school group. This is integrated with the Reception class, and gives children an excellent opportunity to become familiar with their new surroundings and its routines. They are therefore able to start as full-time pupils feeling confident and secure.
51. At the time of the last inspection there were major weaknesses with the provision for children in the Reception Year. Now the provision is very good. The Foundation Unit is a vibrant and exciting learning environment. A wide range of imaginative and stimulating activities is offered, mostly supported by good resources. Planning and assessment procedures are very thorough. The quality of teaching is consistently high, and some is outstanding. As a result, children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. Most children's attainment is likely to reach or go beyond the early learning goals in all six areas of the curriculum for the foundation stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. There is a very strong emphasis on the importance of children making decisions for themselves, in order to promote their growing independence. Children play very well together and have excellent relationships with the adults they work with. They talk about their feelings, review their work and show appreciation of the efforts of others. They confidently select their own activities and concentrate hard on those initiated by adults. They show great interest in all the work they are doing. They help to look after the classroom environment and take pride in tidying away after themselves. They show keen awareness of the needs of others, for example, in knowing how to take turns, to share equipment fairly and to offer help when needed.

Communication, language and literacy

53. Great value is attached to talk, with the result that children want to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings. The teacher is highly skilled at encouraging this, both through her own example and through the rich possibilities of the learning environment. Children love to listen to stories, joining in with the bits they know or predicting what might happen next. They know the sounds that letters make, and can identify a sound at the beginning and at the end of a word. They can tell whether a particular event comes at the beginning, middle or end of a familiar story. They are beginning to write successfully (captions and labels, for

example), forming letters correctly and showing good pencil control.

Mathematical development

54. The teacher is adept at helping children explore mathematical ideas in their work and play. This includes encouraging them to describe how they do things, as well as simply giving the correct answers to questions. Children have a good understanding of a range of mathematical concepts. For example, they described the pattern that bricks made in a wall, and talked about the sizes, shapes and positions of the objects they were playing with. They can count to ten, and sometimes beyond, and recognise numerals on rulers, tape measures and number cards. They can arrange things in pairs and are developing an understanding of odd and even numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

55. Children have a very good range of opportunities to find out about the world around them. They try out new ideas, talk about their likes and dislikes, and record what they have found out through writing, pictures, maps and models. They make effective use of simple computer programs. They show great interest in new experiences, asking how things work and showing one another how to do things. They explore and describe the properties of different materials, for example when making a house for the three little pigs. When watching a visiting bricklayer build a wall, they asked lots of questions and incorporated what they had found out in their subsequent play.

Physical development

56. There are well planned opportunities for promoting children's physical development, both through a daily outdoor session and through a weekly lesson in the school hall. Children showed good co-ordination and awareness of space, for example, when retelling the story of 'Peter and the Wolf' through dance. They have a good awareness of the importance of safety, behaving well when engaged in physical activity both inside and out, and responding well to instructions. Resources for this area are mainly adequate, though there is a need for a wider range of outdoor play equipment.

Creative development

57. The learning environment provides a very strong stimulus for children's creativity. Originality and expressiveness are highly valued. Children learn to observe closely and explore what happens when they mix colours while painting, for example, self-portraits or frost patterns. They work with a wide range of media, for instance using collage materials to invent new hairstyles, clay to make dens or crayon to make brick rubbings. They learn how to develop a story by playing parts such as estate agents or house hunters in the role-play area. They enjoy singing familiar songs and learning new ones. They listen intently to different kinds of music and respond to it in dance.

ENGLISH

58. The results of the national tests in 2000 show a dramatic increase in standards for both seven and eleven year olds over the previous year. All of the seven-year-olds met the standard expected and many exceeded it. At Key Stage 2, 96 per cent of the pupils met the standard set for eleven-year-olds and many did considerably better, particularly in reading. These results compare very favourably with those achieved by similar schools across the country. It represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below the national average. Factors which account for this improvement include enthusiastic teaching, a very good climate for learning and the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
59. Work seen during the inspection indicates that seven-year-olds are attaining standards that are at least average, and often better. Children's achievements in the seven to eleven age group are good and, by the time they are eleven, pupils achieve standards which are above average. The school has set itself challenging targets for the children in the national tests in 2001 and is on course to meet them.
60. In speaking and listening, standards are high throughout the school. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and contribute well to class and group discussions. This is because teachers manage their pupils very well and take care to involve them in lessons. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, lower attaining pupils were given the time and encouragement to make a significant contribution to a class discussion about a story. By the time pupils are eleven, many talk confidently about a range of topics. In a design and technology lesson in the Year 4 and 5 class, for example, pupils collaborated extremely well in their design teams, listening carefully and building on one another's contributions. Year 5 and 6 pupils, likewise, were very articulate when describing their responses to three poems chosen to illustrate the use of figurative language. Drama is also used very effectively to support the development of speaking and listening skills at Key Stage 2.
61. In reading, standards reached by seven-year-olds are at least average. When reading in a literacy lesson, pupils are able to follow a text and understand its meaning. They read enthusiastically and accurately. They pay attention to the punctuation, and are able to talk about what they are reading. This is because the teachers demonstrate how to read expressively and present reading as a worthwhile, but enjoyable activity. Pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction books in their literacy lessons. However, many of the books available to them for independent reading, drawn from a reading scheme, are too limited in scope. They do not present pupils with sufficient challenge or include the work of important authors. Most pupils are well supported at home, but better use could

be made of reading diaries to further the dialogue between teachers and parents.

62. By the time they are eleven, many pupils are committed and enthusiastic readers. They read very expressively, using a range of strategies to make sense of the text. They talk lucidly about the plot and the characters in stories and are able to find information efficiently by scanning a text to locate key words. These standards are achieved because the teachers have high expectations of the pupils as readers and constantly promote the pleasures and usefulness of reading. However, as for the younger children, standards could be even higher if the pupils had access to a better range of literature, including poetry, for independent reading.
63. In writing, standards for the seven-year-olds are at least average. Most pupils are able to write in simple, correctly punctuated sentences. They know how to spell many common words and use their knowledge of sounds to help them when they don't. They are often inspired to write at length in response to stories they have studied, such as 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Adventure'. These stories have a clear structure, good storylines and well-developed characters, and provide a good model for them.
64. By the age of eleven standards in writing are high. Most pupils make use of paragraphs to structure their writing. They employ different types of sentence to good effect, whether to develop characters or to move the plot along. Overall, children in the seven to eleven age group achieve well. Standards of spelling are good. Finished work is well presented, though there are inconsistencies in the extent to which children join their handwriting. Pupils write in a variety of ways for different purposes. For the oldest children during the current year, this has included play-scripts, arguments, poetry, stories and instructions. More able pupils write witty story openings in a range of styles. Their work is grammatically correct and figurative language is used effectively to engage the reader.
65. Children write in other subjects to record their thoughts, and to good effect in religious education, for example, to write Bible stories from different points of view. The school recognises that it could make better use of opportunities to write for a purpose in other subjects, and to reinforce the writing of different text types taught in literacy lessons.
66. The quality of teaching for the five to seven-year-olds is satisfactory with some good or very good features. For the seven to eleven-year-olds it is very good overall and, in a number of lessons, outstanding. This represents a major improvement since the last inspection, particularly for the older children. For all pupils, careful planning and good subject knowledge ensure that basic skills are thoroughly taught and learned.
67. For the younger age group, teaching is often enthusiastic. Expressive reading aloud, for example, inspires pupils to listen carefully, to ask and answer

questions, and to want to read well themselves. The pace of lessons is often good and the activities interesting. Where this is so children are keen to do well and make good progress. Regular use is made of homework to extend pupils' ability to spell and to practice reading. For the older pupils, teachers make use of their subject expertise to plan interesting lessons, and to challenge children through the questions they ask. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher made very clear her expectations and led a lively session focusing on the features of an instructional text. Children showed great enjoyment in learning about the use of imperative verbs.

68. Overall, there are no significant weaknesses in teaching, but better use could be made of guided reading and writing to reinforce the skills and knowledge that pupils need to read and write independently. Also, while there is a good range of books for use in literacy lessons, there are not enough of sufficient quality for pupils to borrow for independent reading. The library is attractive and well maintained, but, likewise, the book stock needs reviewing to ensure that it supports the teaching of all aspects of the National Curriculum. In addition, access is presently difficult for the younger pupils.

MATHEMATICS

69. In the national assessments in 2000 all seven-year-olds gained the level expected nationally, and over half did better. All eleven-year-olds likewise met the expected standard, though the proportion which reached levels higher than that was smaller than in similar schools across the country. These results were a marked improvement on previous years, when they were generally below average. Standards have therefore improved at a faster rate than that seen nationally. This is largely the result of the far-reaching changes in the way that mathematics is now taught, in accordance with the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy.
70. Work seen during the inspection indicates that children in the five-to-seven age group are achieving at least as well as one would expect. Pupils in the present Year 2 class, for example, reliably add and subtract simple numbers in their heads, and can order three digits to make the biggest or smallest number. Most know when a number is a multiple of 2, 5 or 10, and the more able can give reasons why an answer is correct. Pupils in the seven-to-eleven age group are achieving well, and, by the time they leave the school, their mathematical work reaches a high standard. For example, they recognise equivalent fractions, and know which of two fractions is smaller or greater than the other. They use and interpret co-ordinates in all four quadrants. They can find all the different nets for a cube or a cuboid. More able pupils can sketch the nets of more complex 3D shapes after examining them closely. The school has set ambitious targets for children taking the national tests in 2001 and inspection evidence confirms that it is likely to meet them.
71. Children show a high level of interest in their mathematics lessons, and work with concentration and commitment. They are very keen to contribute their ideas to

discussion, or share their ways of working things out. Where the level of challenge is high, they strive to give their very best and show evident pride in what they are capable of doing. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported throughout the school. They are given work of the right level of difficulty and make very good progress in consolidating their understanding and gaining new knowledge.

72. For the five to seven-year-olds, the teaching of mathematics is always satisfactory and sometimes good. For the seven to eleven-year-olds it is mostly very good, and in some lessons, outstanding. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, and both staff and pupils are enthusiastic about its benefits. Lessons are very carefully planned. Most teachers share with children what they want them to learn during the lesson, and some discuss with them how they can be successful. Teachers' own subject knowledge is generally secure, though it is much better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. This enables them to design interesting activities which capture the children's interest. For example, in a lesson in the Year 3 and 4 class the teacher used the children to make a human block graph, providing them with a memorable experience to help them understand the concept.
73. In the best lessons, particularly those for the oldest pupils, there is a strong emphasis on developing children's capacity to explore mathematical ideas in depth. Interesting problems are posed which motivate all children and which encourage the most able to extend their mathematical understanding. High expectations are sustained through perceptive and thought-provoking questions which require children to explain and justify their thinking. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on co-ordinates, pupils were invited to investigate different ways to transform a shape by reflecting it in a different quadrant. Pupils rose to the challenge and were able to predict where a mirror would need to be placed in order to give the results shown.
74. Pupils are often given good opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in other curriculum subjects - measuring temperatures, for example, or collecting data for displaying in charts and graphs. In some classes information and communication technology is also used well to support learning in mathematics. The oldest children, for example, make effective use of a data-handling program, selecting bar charts, pie charts and line graphs to present information in the most appropriate way.
75. The development of mathematics in the school, including the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, has been very ably led by the knowledgeable and energetic co-ordinator. Significant changes have been made within a short period of time and a strong personal example has been set. The work of teachers is kept under review, and helpful advice is offered to enable them to make improvements. This has had a direct and immediate effect on raising standards. The shortcomings identified during the last inspection, particularly with regard to challenging more able pupils and providing better opportunities to use and apply knowledge, are now areas of strength.

SCIENCE

76. Results for the national test for eleven-year-olds show that standards in science have improved significantly over the last four years, and markedly so in 2000. The latest results show that a very high proportion of pupils achieved well above average. This compares very well with other schools which take their pupils from similar backgrounds. Inspection evidence indicates that current pupils' knowledge and understanding are better than their skills of scientific enquiry, and that standards overall are about average at the end of each key stage.
77. At Key Stage 1, children begin to develop their understanding of physical processes. Using the worksheets provided, they carry out careful observations and record their findings. Year 2 children, for example, were able to make simple electric circuits and most could suggest reasons why a bulb might flicker. Some could demonstrate how a switch could be used to break a circuit. At Key Stage 2, younger children made careful observations of plants, and were able to understand the key functions of roots. Older children experimented with string telephones to find out whether wool or string is a better conductor of sound. Most were able to explain why sounds can be heard through materials. Some children were able to say why they thought string to be a better conductor than wool explaining that, "When the material is thinner and more flexible, the vibrations are stronger but the wool absorbs the sounds so it doesn't vibrate as much".
78. Children are successfully introduced to all aspects of the subject, and those with special educational needs make very good progress. All children develop a firm knowledge of the science topics being studied, and are aware that the scientific method involves the collection and interpretation of evidence. At Key Stage 1, there are too few opportunities for children to make their own suggestions about how to collect information in order to answer scientific questions. At Key Stage 2, children's enthusiasm to experiment sometimes overtakes their awareness of the need to approach their investigations methodically.
79. Teaching in the sample of lessons observed varied in quality from good to unsatisfactory. Overall, the teaching gives the pupils a secure knowledge and understanding of science. Teachers are clear about what they want children to learn and this is explained carefully at the beginning of the lesson. This helps ensure that children know how to go about the task and work hard to achieve it.
80. Children have high expectations of science lessons, confident that they will enjoy themselves. They are keen to develop their scientific knowledge and skills,

particularly at Key Stage 2. They collaborate very well when working in groups, sharing ideas and using resources sensibly. They make very effective use of reference books and the Internet to research, for example, different kinds of habitats.

81. Science was identified as an area of weakness in the school's last inspection. Effective co-ordination has enabled significant improvements to be made, particularly in children's knowledge of their science topics. A clear curriculum structure supports teaching and learning in every year group, and there are very good links to other areas of learning, particularly information and communication technology. The available resources are adequate, and there is a well-considered improvement plan to shape future developments.

ART AND DESIGN

82. Standards in art and design have risen significantly since the last inspection, when they were found to be below average and pupils' progress slow. Evidence from this inspection indicates that by the time they are eleven, pupils have made good progress and are attaining standards which are better than normally seen. Children's artwork on display around the school is of high quality and is further evidence of the good teaching seen in lessons. There are good examples of printing, modelling, painting and weaving. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of techniques and gain inspiration from the work of artists and craft workers from different times and cultures. The 'pop art' on display in the main building is just one example. Pupils were able to explain in detail how these pictures were produced, by enlarging an image and choosing four pastel colours to complete the effect. Art is also used effectively to enhance work in other curriculum areas, such as religious education. The colourful Diwali display, which incorporates masks and Diwali cards, is a good example seen during the inspection.
83. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was always good and, in one lesson, excellent. This again represents a substantial improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. They present pupils with a wide range of challenging tasks that are well matched to pupils of all abilities, including those who are talented and those with special educational needs. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of their own artwork and to comment constructively on one another's.
84. Pupils enjoy their art lessons. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to look at leaves very carefully in order to draw them accurately. Pupils were fascinated by this activity, and their concentration was intense. In a lesson in the Year 4 and 5 class, children explored colour effects, using paint and masking tape. A clear introduction from the teacher meant that pupils knew exactly what to do. They worked enthusiastically and produced striking and attractive designs. In a lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils skilfully used a range of materials and processes to produce their own artefact based on a

photographic image of All Hallows Church. A notable feature of this lesson was the outstanding quality of the photographs taken by a Year 6 pupil which served as a stimulus for the designs.

85. The subject co-ordinator for art and design provides effective leadership in the subject and ensures that schemes of work are implemented successfully. Resources, judged to be a weakness in the previous inspection, are now being built up gradually. There are plans for further spending in this area in the near future.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. During the inspection it was only possible to observe a small number of lessons. However, teachers' planning documents and some examples of pupils' work indicate that standards are at least similar to those expected nationally. This represents a significant gain since the last inspection, when children's achievements at the age of eleven were below average. This improvement is the result of the good or very good teaching which pupils now receive.
87. Lessons are clearly structured, and children are engaged in discussion through skilful questioning. Many teachers have a strong expertise, and this enables them to present a range of interesting design challenges. For example, pupils made careful drawings and diagrams of what would eventually become pneumatic toys. They approached the task eagerly and made confident use of the right technical terms. In another lesson pupils collaborated very well in design teams to plan how to make Easter biscuits. The teacher related the activity to the real world of work, including briefs, design teams and deadlines. This strategy strongly appealed to the children, who responded very well to knowing how their work in school relates to the wider world.

GEOGRAPHY

88. Only one geography lesson was observed during the week of the inspection, so it is not possible to make overall judgements about standards or how well the subject is taught. Examples of children's work in their folders and on display, however, suggest that good use is often made of the natural links between subjects to give interest and point to the learning. For example, younger children had engaged in a detailed study of Africa, focusing on the richness and diversity of its customs, its music and its language. Older pupils had analysed the causes of floods by writing investigative newspaper reports.
89. Displays around the school present a range of information about people and places from around the world. The school has recently adopted the national guidance for planning geography lessons. An improvement plan is in place to guide the next steps.

HISTORY

90. Two history lessons, both at Key Stage 2, were observed and examples of children's work were examined. These indicate that children are generally achieving well.
91. Children develop a good knowledge of the topics they are studying. For example, in Years 4 and 5, many know details about the Greek wars against the Persians and aspects of the Greeks' way of life. The oldest children understand the impact of the railways on the Victorians' way of life at all levels of society. They are able to empathise with the views held by different people, conveying an understanding of how the railways affected people's daily lives and their livelihoods. They can sift through various sources of information, selecting and combining them to shape and support their views.
92. Lessons are well prepared. Teachers are clear about the purpose of the activities, and this is explained carefully to the children. Some teaching is very good, encouraging creative responses and making the very best use of links with other areas of learning. In the Year 5 and 6 class, for example, the Internet is very well used both to provide motivation and as a source of information, and speaking and listening skills are strongly promoted through informal role-play.
93. Children are enthusiastic and energetic in lessons. They are attentive and keen to ask as well as answer questions. They collaborate successfully in their groups and are very productive in their own individual work also. Children in Years 5 and 6 show sufficient depth of knowledge to adopt historical roles with confidence. For example, as a Victorian canal boat owner or farrier they expressed sincere concern for their families if the railway were to cause the decline of the narrow boat and the use of horses. The 'hotel owner', on the other hand declared: "I don't want the railway bringing all the riffraff along, spoiling my high standards".
94. The subject co-ordinator is new to her role this year. However, curriculum plans are already in place and a clear view is held of future steps for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

95. At the time of the inspection rapid developments were taking place in the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT). The school had recently acquired a suite of 16 up-to-date computers which are networked and housed in a purpose-built area. It allows whole classes to be taught together,

and enables all pupils at both key stages to have a regular weekly lesson. Already this arrangement is having a decisive impact on children's achievements.

96. Very good use is being made of this facility. The teaching of ICT is now at least satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers explain procedures clearly and demonstrate new skills in ways that can be readily understood. Children, therefore, know exactly what to do and are given good opportunities for practice and experimentation. At Key Stage 2, where teachers' ICT capability is more advanced, the teaching is better than for the younger children. There is a high level of enquiry and pupils are encouraged through sensitive questioning to find their own effective solutions to the tasks they are set.
97. The standards reached by pupils are variable. Seven-year-olds have until recently had too few opportunities to use computers to have acquired sufficient mastery. There are, therefore, significant gaps in their knowledge and skills which are only now being filled. On the other hand, the achievements of the eleven-year-olds show the requisite level of skill in a range of applications. For example, they make very effective use of a desktop publishing program to present their ideas in interesting and creative ways.
98. The school uses ICT very effectively to enhance learning in other subjects, at least in the older classes. For example, pupils find information about the Victorians through the Internet. They word-process their poems and letters, carefully choosing the font and text size to give the effect they want. They use a digital camera to capture images for use in art and design lessons.
99. Pupils are very keen to use ICT in their work. They have a good understanding of how they can enhance the quality of what they do. They collaborate effectively, showing one another how to create different effects, or helping their partners to overcome problems and difficulties.
100. When the school was last inspected in 1997, ICT was an area of weakness. While much more needs to be done to consolidate recent gains, this is no longer the case. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has irrepressible enthusiasm for the possibilities which ICT affords. He has been very influential in shaping the direction which the school has taken, and in raising the general level of confidence and expertise. His support for his colleagues is excellent, whether through providing training, giving advice on planning, or diagnosing and solving problems. A very ambitious action plan has been formulated to ensure that standards in the subject continue to improve.

MUSIC

101. Both seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds meet the expected standards in music. Younger children sing tunefully and most can keep a steady pulse. They

handle instruments with care, and can play loudly and softly when directed by the teacher. Able pupils can do more; one, for example, led the singing of an African chant, using her hands to indicate changes in pitch. This enabled others to join in and follow the melody. Older children listen carefully to music of different kinds and are able to differentiate between various instruments. The more able can play an instrument whilst singing. In the oldest class, pupils sing tunefully and rhythmically while indicating changes in pitch with their hands. They can distinguish between higher and lower notes even when they are quite close in pitch.

102. In the main, pupils respond to music lessons with enthusiasm, and enjoy both singing and playing. They behave well and are keen to take part in the different activities.
103. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often good; this is better than at the time of the last inspection. Lessons are interesting and well structured. This ensures that children successfully build up their skills from one lesson to the next. Teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate different techniques. In one lesson, for example, a pupil was invited to show how to discern when notes are higher or lower. Children with special educational needs are well supported, sometimes by a teacher assistant.
104. The music curriculum of the school is enriched by the extra activities that take place at lunchtimes or after school. Pupils have the opportunities to sing in a choir or learn the recorder. During the inspection, the small recorder group was supplemented by a number of instrumental players which added variety and an extra stimulus to the lesson. The choir was enthusiastically led and children responded well to the teacher's advice and praise. They sang a difficult song well. Music is also used to good effect in assemblies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. It was only possible to see one physical education (PE) lesson during the week of the inspection. However, the subject co-ordinator was interviewed and the school's planning documents and photographs of children at work were examined.
106. The school provides a broad range of physical and sporting activities to all children and covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. There is a well organised programme in which children are introduced to a range of activities that include dance, games and gymnastics at Key Stage 1 and 2. For one term during the year, children at Key Stage 2 have a weekly swimming lesson. Specialist coaches of cricket, athletics and football have worked with staff and children recently. A good choice of lunchtime and after school clubs further extends children's opportunities for physical and sporting experiences, and a number of children have enjoyed a residential visit to the Kingswood Centre in Norfolk.

107. The school has adequate resources and makes the best use of them. Good use is also made of the expertise of the staff team. Lessons are very well planned and show that teachers expect children to achieve well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. One lesson was seen at each key stage. In addition, examples of children's work and the school's planning documents were examined. The evidence shows that the expectations, as outlined in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education (RE), are being met.
109. The school's provision for RE is good; it makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Children's work in RE is prominent in displays around the school, both in classrooms and in shared areas. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, enabling them to teach with confidence. The planning of lessons is very thorough and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are fully met.
110. Positive images of major world religions are represented throughout the school, confirming the respect this Christian foundation school has for the beliefs of others. Very effective links are made with other subjects. For example, in art and design, children have painted pictures in the style of Michelangelo, giving them a good opportunity to show their understanding of stories from the Old Testament.
111. By the age of seven, children show understanding of the central messages in some of the parables of Jesus. They listen attentively to a story well told, and discuss, for example, the emotions felt by the various characters. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, children recognised and empathised with the jealousy of the prodigal son's brothers, and related their feelings to their own experiences. Children make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding as they grow older. This is shown, for example, in the confidence with which Year 3 and 4 children recalled details about aspects of Hindu worship and its festivals. Children also convey understanding about religious symbols, and are able to relate this to their own experience.
112. The school's policy is effective and resources are adequate. The new subject co-ordinator for RE has a clear view of what further improvements the school could make to its provision, and a plan is in place to ensure these refinements are achieved.