

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PARKS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120088

Acting Headteacher: Miss Caroline Evans

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Jean Harding  
21378

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 November 2001

Inspection number: 195489

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant & Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	New Parks Crescent Leicester
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. John Bryant
Date of previous inspection:	8 <sup>th</sup> December 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21378	Mrs. Jean Harding	Registered inspector	Music Religious education	Results & achievements Teaching Leadership and management Special educational needs Equal opportunities
9056	Miss Val Cain	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils Partnership with parents
31334	Mrs. Barbara Atcheson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design	
30864	Mrs. Corinne Boyce	Team inspector	Mathematics History	Attitudes, values and personal development
1411	Mr. John Good	Team Inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education	Curricular opportunities
20650	Mr. Paul Knight	Team Inspector	English Geography	English as an additional language

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a school for boys and girls from 3 - 11 years of age. There are 297 pupils on roll, including 30 full-time and 34 part-time children in the nursery. The number of pupils in the school has fallen over the last few years. The school is slightly bigger than average size for primary schools. Most pupils are white. Five pupils, that is two per cent, are from Somalia and Kosovo and are at an early stage of learning English. A significant number of pupils move in and out of the school during the year. Seven pupils are looked after by people other than their own parents. Class sizes are about average.

Forty per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register; this is well above the national average. A third of them have significant difficulties, mostly with their learning, but a few have problems with their behaviour. Twelve pupils (4%) have a statement of special educational needs, which is well above the national average, but they are fully included in the curriculum and do the national tests. Over 40 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is well above average. The school is situated in an area of considerable social disadvantage. The majority of pupils' families are at the lower end of the socio-economic range. Most pupils have had pre-school educational experience, within the school's own nursery. When children start in the nursery their skills are much lower than usually expected. Attainment on entry to the reception class is lower than expected, with a significant number of children having some language delay. The school benefits from being within an Education Action Zone, which means that it has received extra money and help. Help is also provided by staff at a local Beacon school. This term the school has been led by an acting headteacher as the previous headteacher has gone to another school.

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

This is a school that is improving and effective. Recent improvements to the management, including the highly effective leadership of the acting headteacher, have produced a staff that is pulling together and is now giving pupils a satisfactory education. The teaching is satisfactory overall, but many lessons seen during the inspection were good. Standards of attainment, although still mostly below national averages and expectations, are rising in core subjects, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory from Years 1 to 6. The achievements of children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> are good. Pupils' attitudes to school are good, but their attendance levels are poor. The curriculum is unsatisfactory as it is not balanced and the taught time is too short for older pupils. Given the difficulties that have been overcome and the improvements made, and taking into account the resources available, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- All children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in learning.
- The acting headteacher provides strong leadership.
- The teaching of reading and writing at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good.
- The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, with many very good features.
- The school provides a warm and caring environment, where pupils feel safe and valued.
- The target setting for individuals and groups is helping to raise standards.

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

- The standards of attainment in most subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Pupils need to be given more effective skills in key areas of learning.
- The planning and organisation of the curriculum, especially for non-core subjects.
- Pupils' levels of attendance.
- Pupils' rights to equality of provision in the curriculum.
- The procedures for assessment, particularly in non-core subjects, and the use of the information acquired.
- The provision for pupils' cultural development.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to*

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

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*all parents and carers of children in the school.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school had a full inspection in March 1997, when it was judged to be failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. A shorter inspection in December 1999 judged it to have improved sufficiently so that it no longer required special measures. Since then it has made satisfactory improvements in most aspects that were weak, and recent improvements have been good.

Since December 1999 pupils' standards of attainment in core subjects of in English, mathematics and science have improved. Little reference was made to many subjects in the 1999 report, but evidence shows that there has been little improvement to standards in other subjects and religious education, although pupils' attainment in information and communication technology has improved a little. Attainment in some subjects, such as history, geography, art and design, and music appear to have declined. The provision for cultural development is not as sound as it used to be. This is because the school has put great emphasis on English, mathematics and science, to the detriment of other subjects. The quality of teaching has improved, especially in the Foundation Stage, but this has been patchy; improvements have been much better recently. The development of programmes of work in non-core subjects has improved, but slowly, and much change has been very recent, and so the impact on pupils' attainment in these subjects cannot yet be measured. Resources have improved, but there are still deficiencies in some areas; there are still too few books. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved a little, but opportunities are missed to add to the richness of the curriculum in this respect. A lot has been done; management difficulties have been overcome, and the current staff and managers have a good knowledge and understanding of the weaknesses of the school. Given these advantages, the school is well placed to make further improvements.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E*	E*	E	D
Mathematics	E*	E	E*	E*
Science	E*	E*	E*	E

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Over the last four years the trend in achievements in these core subjects was in line with the national trend. Standards are still low and grades in mathematics and science last year were among the lowest five per cent in the country. However, these test results hide some important factors that might explain the low grades. A big issue is the small number of pupils attaining higher grades, as a result of unsatisfactory teaching in the past. Also, a significant number of pupils in Year 6 had special educational needs or have joined the school part of the way through the key stage. The work seen during the inspection shows that, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are generally below averages and expectations, but attainment in history and music is well below that expected. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is also below that expected by the Agreed Syllabus. Attainment in physical education is as expected for pupils of the same age and in swimming it is above the expected level.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are generally below averages and expectations, but in science, information and communication technology, physical education, some aspects of music, and religious education, pupils attain at the expected level. However, their skills in speaking and listening remain well below those expected. There have been sound overall improvements in the National Curriculum tests results since 1999, but these grades are dependent on the degree of the learning difficulties of each year-group. However, the reading, spelling and science results show a good improvement, particularly in the



number of pupils getting a higher grade. In comparison with similar schools<sup>2</sup>, last year, pupils did as well in reading, lower than average in writing and better than average in mathematics.

Children in the Foundation Stage make especially good progress in their learning, but most still will not achieve the learning goals for children as they go into the main school; this is because they come into the nursery and reception classes with particularly low skills in many areas. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their learning and the rate of progress is getting faster with the better teaching. Girls do not do as well in the national tests, and in some subjects, as boys. This is known to the staff and they are trying to find out why; appropriate measures are being taken to remedy this as a result of their deliberations. Pupils who might be disadvantaged, such as those with special educational needs, and those who are looked after by people other than their natural parents, make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils whose English is still at an early stage make good progress, but there is no special provision for them. Pupils who are more able than others in the school make satisfactory progress. A major factor in low attainment is the lack of basic skills in communication, application of number and information technology. Pupils are good at working with others, and their ability to improve their own performance is getting better, but their thinking skills are hampered by a lack of vocabulary, and this affects information processing and problem solving in all subjects.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. They like school because they feel valued. The presentation of their work needs to improve. The pupils whose English is at an early stage work hard, with success.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory, with major strengths but some weaknesses. There have been few exclusions. Pupils who have behaviour problems are acquiring a more acceptable response to frustrations. Behaviour in the Foundation Stage is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory with good features. Pupils show initiative and take responsibility. They help each other.
Attendance	Well below average. Too many pupils are taken on holidays during term-time.

Pupils' sound learning is helped by their sensible attitudes. Sometimes pupils' tiredness stops them from getting the best from school.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The teaching over the recent past has been satisfactory overall, and it has been consistently good in the Foundation Stage and, owing to this, the children make good progress. The teaching during the inspection was often good, with some very good teaching observed in the Foundation Stage. The teaching of English is good; mathematics teaching is at least satisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching occurs in classes that have pupils with overt behaviour problems, or where the teacher does not possess sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is generally satisfactory, but is unsatisfactory for many staff in music, and art and design, and for some in information and communication

<sup>2</sup> 'Similar schools' are defined by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment found in schools nationally.

technology, and design and technology. Until this year the teaching in Year 6 has been inconsistent, and that has produced variations in the National Curriculum test results.

The best aspects of teaching are the management of pupils, especially those with behaviour problems, and the use of time and support staff in the nursery and reception classes. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils whose English is at an early stage of development, even though there are no special arrangements. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory overall as the individual education plans are not specific enough. The classroom assistants give satisfactory help to the teachers; but the support from nursery nurses is good in the Foundation Stage. The good rapport between staff and pupils ensures that pupils show an interest in their work. Pupils' learning overall is generally satisfactory, but could be better, as they could produce more and take more pride in the presentation of their work.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the Foundation Stage, but unsatisfactory overall for Years 1 - 6. It is broad but not balanced. The school day is too short for pupils at Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory overall, but with some strengths. Provision is good for children in the Foundation Stage. At Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' individual education plans are not good enough to ensure that they are given suitable work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Poor, as there are no specific arrangements. However, pupils are given suitable work in their classes but this is up to individual teachers, and so is inconsistent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for moral and social development is good; for spiritual development it is satisfactory, and for cultural development it is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good care and support. Staff know their pupils well and pupils feel safe and valued. The assessment of pupils is satisfactory in core subjects, but unsatisfactory in other areas.

The planning of the timetable is not good enough, and so some subjects do not have enough teaching time. Not all pupils are guaranteed equal access to an appropriate curriculum, due to the practice of withdrawing them from acts of collective worship and lessons in other subjects for extra work. The monitoring of attendance is good and should pay dividends in the future. Most parents are appreciative of the school, which provides a warm, caring community for all the family. Few parents help in the school and parents are not always provided with sufficient information, such as that in the prospectus and in the governors' reports to them. The school has set up many initiatives to help parents with their children and their own learning.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the acting headteacher is very good, and has been so since she became deputy headteacher. This is key to the good improvements now being made. She is well supported by the current subject and phase leaders.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. They are well involved and most statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of	Satisfactory with good features. Governors and managers have worked

its performance	hard and mostly know what needs to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Priorities are currently well supported by prudent financial planning. The staff, accommodation and resources are generally used well, but this could be better. Governors use the principles of best value when making decisions.

The level of staffing is sufficient. The accommodation and resources are good, although there are too few books in the new library. Many aspects of management are new, and so the impact of these cannot be measured at the present time. However, the current leadership is giving a very good steer to the direction of the school. The morale of staff and governors is good and they work well together for the benefit of pupils. An ethos of high expectations of work and behaviour has been set and this has started to affect the standards of attainment and behaviour.

## 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>• Their children like school</li><li>• They think that their children make good progress</li><li>• They think that behaviour is good</li><li>• Staff are approachable and the teaching is good</li><li>• Staff work closely with parents and give them sufficient information</li><li>• The school is well led and managed</li><li>• There is a good range of extra-curricular activities</li><li>• They feel that the school has improved a lot since the 1997 inspection.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A few wanted more homework</li><li>• A few complained about the bad language of some older pupils.</li></ul>

Few parents communicated with the inspectors, but those who did were consistent in their views. Almost all parents think highly of the school, although few get involved in day-to-day activities. Inspectors agree with most of the parents' views, although progress, behaviour and teaching are judged to be satisfactory, rather than good. The amount and range of homework is satisfactory, and the staff would give more if parents requested it and are prepared to follow it up. There is a little bad language, but this is checked and is rarely heard in lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is much lower than that expected, especially in communication, language and literacy skills; children's personal and social skills are also very limited. The assessments on entry to the reception class show that children's skills are below those of most four year olds and their language development is particularly weak; this deficit is hindering the development of other skills.
2. The 1999 inspection reported that most children's attainment on entry to the nursery was '*below average*' but by the time they were five, the children's attainment was '*in line with or close to the levels expected for their age*'. This is no longer the case. Despite the good progress that children make through the nursery and reception classes, their skills in all the areas of learning for young children are below those expected when they start in Year 1. This is because they have so much catching up to do from the age of three. Current progress in learning is good in the Foundation Stage due to the quality of the teaching and curriculum planning.
3. The previous (1999) inspection stated that pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was below average in the rest of the school (Years 1-6), but showing an upward trend. Boys achieved higher results than girls. No judgement was given about standards in most subjects, but reference was made to low standards in design and technology, and music. A Key Issue for Action was to continue the drive to raise standards.
4. The current situation shows some improvement in the two years since 1999. From a solid base at the end of the reception class, pupils mostly make the progress in learning of which they are capable, but this could be better. However, recent progress has been much faster due to the improved curriculum and the higher quality of teaching. By the time they leave the school, attainment is mostly below national averages and expectations in all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have improved since 1999, and this is demonstrated in most results of the National Curriculum tests, and when there seems to be problems, such as in the case of mathematics at Key Stage 2 in the 2001 tests, the school knows why this has happened and has put things right. The standards of speaking of pupils at Key Stage 1 are well below those expected. Standards in science, and information and communication technology are as expected at Key Stage 1 but below expectations at Key Stage 2. In history pupils' attainment is well below that expected at both key stages. Standards in physical education are as expected at both key stages, with attainment in swimming being at a high standard. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education comply with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at Key Stage 1 but not at Key Stage 2.
5. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, for the four years between 1998 and 2001, show fluctuating improvement, with significant improvements since 1999, especially in mathematics. Last year (Summer 2001) pupils' grades were well below average for reading and writing, and below average for mathematics. However, in comparison with schools that admit pupils from similar backgrounds, results were average for reading, below average for writing and above average for mathematics. From the teachers' assessments the percentage attaining the expected standard in science was average, and those attaining the higher level was below average. The assessed levels of attainment in speaking and listening were well below expectations.
6. Evidence gathered during the inspection at Key Stage 1, show that standards in most subjects are below national expectations, and sometimes well below, such as in speaking. Pupils are slowly acquiring sound literacy and numeracy skills, but cannot always use them effectively in other

- subjects. Their lack of fluency in speaking, and a restricted vocabulary are hindering all aspects of their learning. Many of the current pupils in Year 2 have had marked problems since they started school, and so the class may not achieve at the same level as last year's Year 2.
7. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment in most subjects are below averages and expectations and are well below expectations in history and music. The progress that pupils make in their learning is currently satisfactory and has improved recently. The deficiencies in their learning are caused by low skills on entry to Key Stage 2 and a restricted curriculum until last year, particularly in some non-core subjects such as history and music.
  8. The results of the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 for the last four years show consistently low grades in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools grades are below average in English, very low in mathematics and well below average in science. A major factor in these assessments is that so few pupils attained the higher grade. The trend of improvement in the National Curriculum test results is in line with national trends. When attainment is measured against performance at the end of Key Stage 1, last year's pupils from Year 6 had made very poor progress in all three subjects. Several factors account for this: the grades are affected by the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year-group; the effect of transfer in and out of the school, with many pupils joining the school during the key stage, and successful pupils going to other schools. Also, pupils do not do well in tests because they do not always understand the question, and lack a wide enough vocabulary when writing. But the key factor in the previous unsatisfactory progress in learning is the unsatisfactory quality of some teaching while they were in Years 3 - 5, and the narrow curriculum provided. This is much improved, and pupils currently in Year 6 should do much better in the tests, but the current Year 5 may not do as well as they are in a group that contains pupils with many problems that affect their learning. The pupils currently in Year 6 have made at least satisfactory, and sometimes good progress in learning in the core subjects since they left Key Stage 1 in 1998. At the end of Key Stage 1 their grades were well below average, with writing being especially poor; this improvement is demonstrated by their grades in standardised tests undertaken in Years 3, 4 and 5.
  9. The progress in learning of children in the Foundation Stage is particularly good. In the rest of the school pupils' achievements in all subjects are generally satisfactory, except in the case of the creative subjects and history across the school, and information and communication technology and religious education at Key Stage 2; this is because the curriculum for these areas has been unsatisfactory. Due to the better planning of the curriculum, progress in learning in English is good. Some of those pupils with statements of special educational needs, especially those who have known behaviour difficulties, and those whose English is at an early stage of development, make good progress in their learning. From Years 1 - 6 pupils do not make adequate use of their very basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology in other subjects, but this is improving. Areas of concern include the lack of development of pupils' key skills of learning, including their communication skills, their use of number in other subjects, and their information technology skills. Pupils' thinking skills are weak and this has a negative impact on all other work. Staff are aware of this and have started to address it. However, pupils' ability to work with others, to solve problems and improve their own performance is getting better due to their enhanced self-esteem which is the basis of the school's plan for improvement to attainment.
  10. Children in the nursery and the reception class who have special educational needs are well provided for and so make good progress towards the targets that have been set for them. At Key Stages 1 and 2 most pupils on the special educational needs register make satisfactory progress in learning, but as the targets on their individual education plans are so general, it is hard for the school to record exactly how much progress has been made. However, pupils with statements generally make good progress in specific targets. Pupils on the special educational needs register receive some good quality additional support at times, but they are often given work that is not appropriate to their needs in their own classes. This appears to be a worse situation than was presented in 1999.

11. There are some differences in the attainment and progress of boys and girls. Girls perform significantly worse than boys in some tests and this is unusual. Staff are aware of this and have sound methods of analysing the differences; it is too soon for them to make valid judgements about why this has come about, but they have started to make changes to the teaching to see if that makes any difference. A probable factor in the difference in attainment is that boys tend to dominate class discussions, and teachers are trying to remedy this. The five pupils whose English is at an early stage are achieving well, but this is due to the efforts of their class teachers and not to any system the school has in place for their support. The achievements of pupils who are looked after by people other than their natural parents are satisfactory. No pupil has been identified as being gifted or talented, but provision is being made in case any should be in the school. Pupils of higher ability are usually sufficiently challenged, but a significant number are not working at high enough levels in the National Curriculum programmes of study. This is because there has been an ethos of under-achievement until recently and more time will be needed to bring all the pupils up to the levels of which they are capable. A significant number of pupils in Year 6 have been targeted for extra work, as the school believes they have the potential to do better. Parents are very well aware of the management difficulties that have depressed their children's achievements and know that it will take much time and better teaching to redress the deficiencies. Most parents are pleased with their child's current progress, but some are concerned that their children have not done as well as they could because of unsatisfactory provision in the past.
12. The school has set targets for overall improvement in pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests for the current year and beyond. These are based on an evaluation of what is possible, taking into account pupils' attainment on entry and the good system of tracking of attainment by staff. The targets are challenging, but realistic, and the school is likely to be fairly near to attaining its targets for 2002, as they are based on a better curriculum and more consistent teaching in Year 6 than has been the case in the past.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. This is a significant improvement since the inspection of 1997. Most pupils enjoy coming to school, show interest in their work and are keen to take part in lessons. Some pupils however, are tired when they arrive at school, and this affects their work. The majority work sensibly in pairs and groups and are mutually supportive, such as in a religious education lesson where pupils discuss what they would like to see in an ideal world, or in a physical education lesson where groups of pupils collaborate well and evaluate each other's performance. A few pupils, however, are easily distracted and not well motivated, but this is usually because of deficiencies in the curriculum.
14. Outside the classroom pupils show excitement and enthusiasm in their play. A variety of games such as hockey and football, and good management strategies by staff, for example the holding up of yellow and red cards as warnings to unacceptable behaviour, ensure that pupils do not become out of hand in the playground. A range of before and after school clubs are popular, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part enthusiastically in a University of the First Age project. These activities motivate pupils, and their work improves as a result. However, presentation of written work is variable throughout the school. Some pupils take a pride in the appearance of their work, whilst others are less careful; this is something that is weak.
15. Behaviour around school and within classes is satisfactory overall. This is a significant improvement since the inspection of 1997. A positive behaviour policy is in place, which is consistently applied by all staff. Pupils show respect for others' property whilst they are in school and pictures, artefacts and pupils' work displayed around school, are well looked after. No oppressive behaviour such as bullying or racism was witnessed during the week of the inspection. Pupils testify to the improvement in behaviour recently and are confident that any type of bullying would be dealt with promptly. Inspectors agree with this positive view. Children in the nursery are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Older pupils know that fighting and swearing is wrong and that acceptable behaviour consists of being polite and 'wearing a smiling

face'. They are clear about the need to be honest. They know that if you have done something wrong it is better to tell the truth and get it over. They know that an important element of play is to share and have a strong sense of what is fair and unfair and a desire for truth and justice. Individual education plans to help pupils with special educational needs do not always, however, contain statements and targets to help improve their behaviour. There have been three fixed-term and one permanent exclusion in the last school year, but the trend in exclusions is downwards due to better provision recently.

16. The personal development of the pupils and relationships throughout the school are satisfactory and improving. This is a happy school, where pupils feel confident to bring matters which concern them to the attention of their teachers, and know they will be treated fairly. With the help of good role models in the adults around school and carefully thought out monitoring systems, pupils are learning to respect the values and beliefs of others and to be sensitive to their feelings. For example, in a Year 5/6 class, pupils discussed racism and vivisection and showed a growing awareness of important issues which affect people's lives. Pupils feel safe and valued. Older pupils play a part in making sure that day-to-day events run smoothly. For instance, pupils in Year 6 act as peer mediators helping to resolve disputes, as lunch-time monitors in the dining room and help in the nursery, sharpening pencils and feeding the guinea pigs. They work co-operatively with one another. A good example was seen in nursery where two children took turns to work on the computer and praised each other each time a program was completed successfully. Children in the nursery take responsibility for putting away resources and help to look after the guinea pigs. Older pupils know that an important part of co-operation is listening to others. They know that everyone is responsible for their own actions. A residential visit for the older pupils in summer gives valuable opportunities for team building and sharing responsibilities. These experiences have a significant impact on pupils' personal development.
17. Pupils with special educational needs try hard with their work, and are pleased with their success. They enjoy working with the support teachers and speak highly of the special help that they are given with their literacy work by the support staff. The attitudes displayed by pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory when they are being supported in small groups. Pupils help each other and there is no stigma about having special help.
18. Levels of attendance remain well below the national average and unauthorised absence remains above the national average. This has an adverse effect on the quality of learning and attainment. The main reasons for absences are illness, holidays in term time and some condoned absence. Punctuality to school is generally good, although a small but significant number of pupils arrive late. Lessons start promptly.

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

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and there has been a good improvement recently. There has been satisfactory improvement since the inspection of 1999, and that had been a great improvement since 1997. Over the whole school teaching was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons seen, good in 42 per cent and very good in eight per cent. Six per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory, and that was because the teachers did not take into account what the pupils can and cannot do when they planned the lessons. However, from the scrutiny of work, and talking to pupils, it is clear that the teaching has not been so good in the recent past. A significant number of pupils have not had good enough teaching, especially through Key Stage 2; several classes have had inconsistent teaching and assessment over a period of time, and this has impeded their progress in learning. It will take time, and concerted input by the current sound quality of teachers, to bring all pupils up to the standard of which they are capable. This is known to the acting headteacher and she has taken steps to address it.
20. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently at least good, and often it is very good, and this is because the staff in the nursery and reception classes, know what they are doing and work



from a well-planned curriculum. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but with some strengths but also significant weaknesses, and teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory with some major strengths.

21. In the Foundation Stage there is a solid base of teamwork and a sense of belonging; all staff are well trained and work well together. This ensures that their children work well and their learning is good. Nearly half of all lessons observed in the nursery and reception classes were good, and over a quarter were very good. The planning and in-built assessments are models for the rest of the school. Staff's expectations are high and they manage the children very well. Lessons in these groups are fun and everything goes with a swing, to the great benefit of the children. Children who have problems are well managed and parents are appreciative of what is done to help them as well as their children.
22. The strengths at Key Stages 1 and 2 lie in staff's knowledge and management of their pupils. Weaker lessons occur when the planning is not detailed enough to ensure that appropriate work is given to pupils of all abilities. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is generally satisfactory, with some weaknesses in Year 2. At Key Stage 2 it is also satisfactory, with some weaknesses in Years 3 and 4, but also with many strengths, based on the new staff's knowledge and understanding of the weaknesses of the provision. The teaching of literacy skills is good at both key stages, with half of lessons observed being good, and some good work evident from the past. The current teaching of mathematics is good, but this has not been so consistent in the past, and last year there were real weaknesses in one class at the top of the school, which led to unrealistic assessments of pupils' attainment, and low grades in the National Curriculum tests.
23. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of subjects is generally satisfactory with deficiencies in music, art and design and information and communication technology. Some teachers are skilled at teaching physical education, especially at Key Stage 2. The school is benefiting from the input of visiting experts in music, and this is helping to raise standards of attainment. The teacher from the Beacon School gave a spirited session to the training choir and pupils worked hard, especially in warming up to amusing jingles. The visiting violin teacher gave a good lesson to a few pupils in Year 4 and they are making satisfactory progress in their playing, and their general musical knowledge, as a result of his sensitive teaching. Because the staff have not felt entirely confident in teaching some subjects, these subjects have been pushed aside and so pupils' attainment is not good enough. The current management is now addressing this, and much of the teaching is being improved by a better curriculum. However, the staff were required after the previous report, and as a result of government initiatives, to teach more of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and the teachers have at least satisfactory knowledge and understanding in these aspects of teaching.
24. Lesson planning is variable, and is one of the weakest aspects of the teaching. To some extent the deficiencies in planning account for pupils' lack of progress in learning in the past. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able are often given the same work as all other pupils in non-core subjects; this benefits no-one. Teachers do not always set work that is appropriate to the needs of all pupils, especially in non-core subjects. Planning is more detailed in English and mathematics.
25. Another weak aspect of teaching, tied to lesson planning, is the lack of challenge and inspiration; a significant minority of lessons are rather lack-lustre. A number of classes contain pupils with marked difficulties of behaviour and in learning, and staff often play safe and do not let themselves go in their teaching, enthusing pupils with their love of a subject and their expertise. However, when they do, as one nursery nurse did when doing drama activities with children in the Foundation Stage, the learning of pupils is especially good and, having had fun, they are very keen to learn more. Opportunities are missed to build in the 'awe and wonder' that lights up the lesson, and so pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not as well promoted as it could be. A good speaking and listening session in Year 1 had a special magic for pupils, as they put all their smiles in a box to save them. This sort of lesson not only improved pupils' listening skills, but

also their self-esteem and the supportive feeling in the group. The staff are starting to realise that, having taught the basic skills, there is now a case for doing more creative activities, which would also help pupils to learn. The best teaching often occurs when basic skills are taught through other subjects, for example when pupils' counting is reinforced through music.

26. A major strength of the teaching is the way that staff relate to pupils and insist on acceptable standards of behaviour. The atmosphere in most classes is relaxed, but productive, which ensures that pupils apply effort to their work. Most teachers manage the behaviour of those pupils who have difficulties well, but some classes, such as the current Year 2 is quite big, and the teacher and support assistant have much to do to keep things going when problems arise. This sort of problem constrains creativity, as lessons such as music can become quite fraught and pupils learn little.
27. Most teachers have a range of strategies to teach and manage their classes. There is a tendency for staff to do too much talking, and give pupils too much help, and this prevents pupils from acquiring habits of independent learning. Investigations in science and mathematics are less valuable when staff do too much as pupils do not learn to think for themselves. Lessons usually have sufficient pace, and time is not wasted. Lessons are structured and pupils know the format; they know what is expected and what they are doing. Plenary sessions to remind pupils what they have learned are valuable, and are starting to show pupils how they can improve. Pupils' learning is not always as good as the teaching they receive; this is because most are out of the habit of concentrating, and a few are too tired or distressed to listen constructively. Staff do well, under these circumstances, to understand and help their pupils. Teachers encourage and praise pupils for their efforts in class. They value pupils' contributions to lessons, so raising the self-esteem of all members of the class. This results in more effective learning.
28. Support staff are generally used effectively, and most give good help to class teachers. They are generally well trained and are properly briefed by teachers. Some have real skills in the teaching of literacy, especially to pupils who need extra help. However, at times they behave as if they are 'policewomen' and take little constructive part in the lesson. Resources are used effectively, except for information and communication technology which is generally under-used in all lessons.
29. The assessment of pupils' day-to-day work is patchy, although it is satisfactory overall. Lessons are evaluated, to see what went well, and which parts needed changing; this could improve further. Mostly pupils' previous work is properly evaluated, but at times marking is not done, or if it is, it is not constructive. Some pupils, especially those who are more able, read books that are too easy. This is due to inconsistent record-keeping of the reading.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, although having some strengths, is unsatisfactory overall as it is based on a shaky assessment of what most pupils need. Appropriate work is mostly provided in literacy sessions, and good extra help is given by the special teacher, and by support staff during withdrawal sessions, but generally these pupils are given the same work as all the others, and this does not ensure good progress. Although pupils who have learning difficulties have specific needs, these needs are not addressed in the teaching of non-core subjects, and so often the pupil cannot cope. The special educational needs co-ordinator knows this and has planned suitable training for teachers in the near future. A positive feature, however, is the careful handling by staff, of pupils with known behaviour problems. Their needs are usually well met and they make sound progress towards their targets for improved behaviour and response to difficulties. Support assistants are being given further training for their work with pupils with special educational needs; this is a very positive step.
31. Homework is satisfactory. It is set appropriately, but not always followed up in the best way. A few parents had concerns about regularity and quantity, but the school is happy to set more. Most parents are satisfied with what is given.

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

32. The structure of the school day results in the teaching and learning time for pupils at Key Stage 2 being below the 23.5 hours recommended. Overall, the quality and range of the learning opportunities on offer to the pupils are unsatisfactory. The school provides a sufficiently broad curriculum to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education; but the curriculum is not balanced. There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and this enables them to make good progress in the acquisition of skills. There are satisfactory arrangements for the transfer of pupils from the reception class into Year 1.
33. Since the 1997 inspection report the school has sensibly focused upon improving pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, this has resulted in insufficient time being allocated for promoting their artistic, cultural, and intellectual development. The percentage of curriculum time allocated to art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, and music is too low. The planning of the class timetables does not allow pupils to have a continuous educational experience in art, design and technology, geography and history. As a result of this unsatisfactory provision, pupils achieve below average standards in these subjects. The school has made insufficient progress in developing these non-core subjects since the 1999 inspection report.
34. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been sensibly introduced. They have had a positive impact on the curriculum and upon pupils' learning, particularly in literacy. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are improving but they are given insufficient opportunities to utilise them in other subjects. Scrutiny of pupils' previous work gives evidence that demands upon their writing skills is minimal in the majority of subjects. There were few examples of numeracy skills being used to enhance learning in design and technology, geography, and science. The need to develop literacy and numeracy across the curriculum has been recognised in the current school improvement plan.
35. The school has good facilities for teaching information and communication technology. At the time of the 1999 inspection report the school had made a good start in using these facilities to develop pupils' skills in this important area of study. Although there is satisfactory use of the computer suite there is insufficient use of the computers in classrooms. These computers are not being used effectively to support pupils' learning across the subjects of the curriculum. Information and communication technology is not being developed sufficiently as a cross-curricular tool.
36. The quality of the planning of the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection but there are still weaknesses. Plans for the term identify the topics to be studied, but there is insufficient detail to ensure that pupils are building upon previous knowledge and experiences. Occasionally different year-groups study the same topic at the same time, and teachers' daily plans do not show tasks at different levels. For example during the inspection pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 were all studying electrical circuits with minimal additional challenge for older pupils. This is because staff are trying to compensate for the deficiencies in the planning and teaching of the past.
37. The governors have adopted a satisfactory curriculum statement. They are kept well informed of curriculum developments by reports from the acting headteacher. The majority of subject policies have been rewritten since September 2001. However, they have not yet been approved by the governing body, although there are plans to do this. At the present time, there is no policy to guide staff's work with pupils whose English is at an early stage of development, and this is a weakness. The policy for personal, social and health education is being revised, but there are appropriate policies to help staff in their teaching of sex education and for the education about drugs misuse.
38. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has some strengths, in terms of extra help, but it is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but this progress is inhibited by the curriculum provided. The curriculum is not always suitably

adapted for their specific needs. Also, they are withdrawn from lessons, in order to be given extra help with basic skills, and although this is understandable, it compromises their entitlement to a full and balanced curriculum; this is unsatisfactory. These pupils are withdrawn from lessons at a regular time each week and this results in them missing out on important classroom teaching and learning. During the inspection lessons were frequently disrupted by pupils either leaving to attend support sessions or returning from them. In many lessons, pupils receiving support missed the whole of the introduction to the lesson or the whole of the practical component. Insufficient information and communication technology is used to enhance the provision for pupils whose special educational needs might benefit from a different approach. The practice of keeping some pupils with special educational needs out of acts of collective worship in order to do extra work also is against statutory requirements.

39. The range of extra-curricular activities is good overall. There are few sporting activities but there is an extensive range of activities organised through the additional funding resulting from the school's inclusion in the Educational Action Zone. Some activities are organised for pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have opportunities to further their knowledge and understanding by participating in academic, sport, recreation, music, and art activities after school. They rotate around the activities after six weeks. Good use is made of visits to extend the curriculum but there is little use of visitors. The residential visit to Derbyshire for Year 5/6 pupils makes an important contribution to their personal, social, and physical development. The commitment to introduce swimming for pupils in Year 2 is a good extension of the physical educational programme for these pupils.
40. Community links overall, although generally satisfactory, remain under-developed. The link worker, paid for with Education Action Zone funds, is involved in a variety of sound initiatives to encourage parents to support their children in their learning. But uptake is limited, for example, only two parents and four pupils in Year 2 were observed in the Family Reading Group held every Thursday. As highlighted before, although there is widespread use of the school by the community, this is not supporting attainment and progress of pupils to any large degree. Links with outside agencies and the local community are few and there are no inter-school activities to support pupils' learning, enjoyment and interest. Pupils go on some educational visits such as the theatre, Church, zoo, museums and local walks, but these are limited. Very few visitors come to school to speak to the children about their experiences to support topic work. There are sound links with the secondary schools and a comprehensive programme is in place to ensure a smooth transition for pupils in Year 6 to their next school. Valuable links have been established with the Beacon School, and this is raising standards, especially in music.
41. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. This is the same as reported in the last inspection. The contribution of religious education is key to pupils' development of thinking about the meaning of life, and in this, the school has made sound improvements. However, the school is not active in planning and evaluating its provision for pupils' spiritual development or considering those subject areas including music, art and literature that might contribute. Acts of collective worship, although fulfilling statutory requirements lack a sense of occasion. Pupils come into assembly in their coats, ready for playtime. There are no visual foci such as candles, flowers or pictures. Children enter in an orderly manner but music is not often played to establish a more spiritual atmosphere, whereas music is played daily in the main corridor. A Key Stage 1 assembly seen during the inspection lacked any recognition of a supreme being, however in a Key Stage 2 hymn practice pupils were asked to think about the words of the songs. There was however no pause for reflection. A wall display shows that pupils in Year 2 have given some thought to their own special place and this is linked to pictures of Muslim, Christian and Hindu special places. Opportunities are missed throughout the curriculum to develop pupils' spiritual side.
42. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. This is an improvement on the previous report. Rules for walking in the corridor are displayed in the corridor and the school rules and those for the classroom, and playground are conspicuously displayed in classrooms. There are also merit charts, systems and procedures for noting and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for poor

behaviour. These provide a strong structure to support the pupils' moral development and as a result, pupils have a clear idea of the difference between right and wrong. Clear rules, negotiated and shared in each class, together with reminders posted around the corridors, set out expectations for pupils and staff. Teachers make enormous efforts to teach pupils to be courteous and responsible, and charts, stickers, certificates and cups acknowledge pupils' achievements. These contribute to a happy atmosphere, in which pupils' successes are recognised and which reinforces positive behaviour. The personal, social and health education curriculum also makes a good contribution to pupils' learning about behaviour and living and working with others. The school's provision for moral development is having a significant impact on pupils' progress in learning.

43. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Displays in the corridor show that pupils have made a study of the qualities of friendship and considered the implications of belonging to a family. Adults in the school provide good role models and as a result pupils are courteous and show respect for each other and the teachers. They hold doors open for adults and children alike and are friendly and open. They take an active part in the running of the school and whilst there is no School Council, the pupils' suggestions box has given them an opportunity to voice opinions and have them acted upon. Pupils have requested playground equipment and it has been provided, a Breakfast Club which is thriving, uniform, football and after school clubs all of which have been made available. Older pupils look after younger pupils. The 'Teddy Bear People' take younger pupils to the playground after lunch, looking after them if they fall over or are upset and teaching them playground games. Older pupils act as monitors at lunchtime helping younger pupils to understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They help in fund raising activities such as Children in Need. Although standards of achievement for girls is lower than standards of achievement for boys there is nothing in the schools provision which discriminates against girls. The school is actively investigating the difference in achievement.
44. The provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. This appears to be a decline since the previous inspection. The options for pupils to experience and enjoy art, music, dance and drama at school are limited. Not enough use is made of the opportunities which the locality offers such as visits to art galleries. There is no active approach to promote the cultural traditions of the schools locality or the cultural and ethnic diversity of the society in which they live. Parts of the curriculum provide a cultural perspective but there are too few planned opportunities, such as the nursery assembly for Diwali, that draw upon the traditions of pupils' own culture or those of other cultures.

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

45. The quality of pastoral care provided by the school is good and shows a marked improvement since the 1997 inspection; little was said about care in 1999, only that this aspect had made good improvements. The current staff are caring and committed, know their pupils well and make them feel valued. Parents confirm that their children like school. A group of pupils in Year 6 interviewed were very clear and positive about whom they would approach if they had problems. All felt safe and happy and said that staff were kind, fair, yet firm when necessary. The school is a welcoming place and this is due to the quality of leadership.
46. The monitoring of attendance is now good and effective systems are in place both to identify problems and to ensure that good attendance is rewarded and celebrated. Registrations take place twice daily before both morning and afternoon sessions. These are prompt and efficient and now comply with requirements. Absences are checked weekly to identify any patterns and to involve parents. The acting headteacher, secretary and education welfare officer clearly work closely together to ensure that concerns are followed up quickly, with home visits made if necessary. The majority of parents inform the school of absences. However, a small but significant minority do not, and unauthorised absence is still above the national average. Good attendance is celebrated in assembly with a class attendance championship trophy to be won each

week. The introduction of more clubs, organised games at lunchtime and the Breakfast Club are arranged to raise attendance levels by making pupils want to come to school. Punctuality to school is generally good, however, a small but significant number of pupils frequently arrive late. This is noted in the "late book" and letters are sent to parents. The "Breakfast Club" is a very successful recent initiative. About fifty pupils, of all ages, happily chat and have a nourishing breakfast together. This has resulted in an improvement in punctuality. During these sessions good relationships prevail and pupils are clearly happy.

47. The monitoring of behaviour is good, a considerable improvement since the 1997 inspection. There is a clear policy and agreed class rules known both to pupils and to parents. Staff are now consistent in their approach and greatly respected. Parents are happy that the school does all it can to resolve behaviour problems quickly. Dinner-time support staff successfully re-enforce standards and organise playground games. Parents and pupils agree that there has been considerable improvement in the standards of behaviour. Pupils confirm that incidents are rare and that there are only a few pupils who present challenging behaviour. Pupils value the counselling and peer mediator system and that staff help them find a solution with opportunities to "calm down" in a quiet place. Pupils are fully aware of the sanction, that is the yellow and red card systems. Pupils in Year 6 stated that the acting headteacher talks about friendship in assemblies and that "*everyone makes a big effort*". All pupils value the awards such as certificates given out in the "Good News Assemblies" and the recording of their names in the "Golden Book".
48. Effective informal monitoring of pupils' personal development takes place; staff know their pupils very well. Pupils' medical needs are satisfactorily met; there are sufficient trained first aiders. The site is clean and generally well maintained, and recent decoration and refurbishment has established a welcoming learning environment. Presently no regular checks are undertaken on electrical appliances, and this is unsatisfactory. Regular fire drills take place. Arrangements for Child Protection are satisfactory; there is a policy and staff are vigilant. However, not all staff have received appropriate training, due to staff turnover, and the school is aware of this. Good use is made of outside professional agencies should the need arise.
49. Staff are all aware of special educational needs issues, and know which pupils are on the special educational needs register. However, the assessment of pupils with special educational needs, with learning difficulties, is unsatisfactory and so their individual education plans are too general to be of much use to teachers when planning the lessons. Although the special educational needs co-ordinator knows what she is doing, most staff require more training in the production and use of individual education plans. A sound feature is the assessment of pupils with known communication and behaviour difficulties, and the support given by visiting professionals in this field. But still a significant number of pupils do not have specific, measurable targets in the planning to improve their behaviour, and this is a weakness.
50. Assessment of children's attainment in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Ongoing records are kept and records summing up children's achievements are produced at key points. Children are assessed as they join the nursery and again when they start the reception year. They are then assessed, but using a different system, at the end of their time in reception. This way of assessment, although giving staff a clear idea of what children know, understand and can do, does not allow them to compare progress over time with accuracy.
51. There are very good procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. A series of standardised tests are used to measure pupils' individual performances in these subjects. The results are carefully analysed to work out pupils' current levels of attainment and set targets for the end of the year. The procedures are already having a positive affect upon standards in these subjects, particularly English. The assessment co-ordinator has good knowledge of the assessments. She introduced the system to the school and is currently working with the science co-ordinator to extend the system to include science. Assessment in other subjects is less secure because there is no formal system. All teachers do keep records of

pupils' attainments but the quality and effectiveness of these are variable and unsatisfactory overall. Staff are aware that they need to work on this aspect, once the new curriculum policies have been tried.

52. Teachers know their pupils well and have good knowledge of their individual strengths and weaknesses. However, in planning tasks and activities too little attention is paid to extending the learning of higher-attaining pupils. Short-term plans give insufficient detail of the tasks for different ability groups and how previous assessment is influencing current planning. This issue was raised in the previous inspection report and still requires further development.
53. The guidance given to individual pupils about their academic progress and personal development is variable. Although teachers and their helpers encourage pupils to try hard and do their best, many pupils are unsure what they need to do in order to improve the standard of their work.
54. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics, and science have done some very effective work to analyse pupils' performances in the external test at the end of Year 6. They have identified areas of strength and weakness and are adapting the curriculum programmes to accommodate the findings. One important outcome is the need to prepare pupils better for the tests. Working in conjunction with the acting headteacher, the co-ordinators have produced targets for their subjects for the next four years' tests. These challenging targets are based on their current knowledge of pupils in the classes in Years 3 - 6 and are firmly focused upon improving standards.

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

55. Parents, both at the meeting and in response to questionnaires, are very supportive of the school and its work. Parents particularly praised the fact that their children like school, the approachability of staff and good leadership. The inspection team agrees with these views. The partnership with parents appears to be about the same as was reported two years ago, although there are several new initiatives, which are too new to be able to judge their effectiveness.
56. Information is conveyed to parents in a variety of ways, with parents at the meeting with inspectors feeling that they are now more fully involved. Newsletters are sent out monthly, or as appropriate; these are of good quality and detail events. Other letters sent provide parents with necessary information in a clear, appropriate and encouraging style. Termly sheets advise parents of the relevant programmes of study for their children. In addition there are two parents' evenings in the autumn and spring terms and a report discussion evening in the summer term when targets are discussed. Annual reports to parents are now satisfactory and comply with requirements. However, they do not consistently identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses or methods for improvement. Reports are frequently descriptive and do not always set targets for future development.
57. Links with parents are overall satisfactory and are still developing. The link worker is actively involved in home visits and a variety of initiatives, for example, the Family Reading Group, the Mother and Toddler Group, and the group that is helping parents work with their own children; but few parents take up these opportunities. The majority of parents have signed the home/school agreement, and this is starting to have an impact on rising standards. Several parents attend class assemblies and Harvest Festival; class productions are very well supported. Recently a parents' suggestion box has been introduced to seek news for improvement and some have been taken up, for example, extra clubs for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school is actively seeking new ways to involve parents, and so raise the quality of education for their children.
58. Parental involvement in the work of the school is limited, very few parents help in school and there are few parent visitors to talk to pupils recounting their experiences; this, particularly, is depriving pupils of knowledge of their own local culture. Some parents regularly hear their children read at home, but many are not as involved. Response to questionnaires indicate that many parents do not

know whether their children get the right amount of work to do at home. The lack of parental involvement has a negative effect on pupils' views on the importance of learning and improvement.

59. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in their child's education. The special educational needs co-ordinator has set up a system to ensure that they are appropriately consulted. However, not all take up the offers of attending meetings. New arrangements for staff to meet pupils have been set up for next term, in order to involve parents more.
60. Fundraising by both the Parent/Teacher Association and a long standing fundraising group, has enabled the purchase of extra useful resources, for example, playground equipment. In addition, pupils have benefited by the subsidising of trips to ensure full participation. As a result pupils at parks Primary have access to experiences which have been beneficial.

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

61. The inspection report of 1999 stated that the school had made good progress in issues concerned with leadership and management, but many initiatives and staff were very new and had not had time to affect standards significantly. Since then there have been changes to teachers and senior management and it is clear that, also some sound changes were made, much was left to drift and many aspects of teaching and management were not good enough to ensure a better education for all pupils. The deficiencies of the school are essentially due to lack of rigour between January 2000 and last year. The leadership and management are much better now. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory, with areas of real strength.
62. The leadership of the current acting headteacher is very good. Over the time that she was deputy headteacher, and this term since she has been acting headteacher, she has put in place many important features that are improving the school. She possesses the leadership qualities necessary for a changing school, and her input has been a key factor in much of the sound change now being implemented. She is turning the school round, and pointing it in the right direction. She has the confidence of everyone interviewed; all paid tribute to her hard work and her success in raising morale and producing a potentially successful team, some of whom are inexperienced and new. The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the future that is shared by governors and staff. They all have a good idea of what needs to be put right and have worked hard to give pupils a better education. The strategy is right, and long-term aims are well thought out and resourced. An important feature is that the acting headteacher has not compromised the style and culture of the school, which is one of care and support, in the drive to raise standards. The school managers have started from the premise that all pupils must feel secure and valued, and that standards rise when staff and pupils work hard. This is a long-term strategy, and it is starting to work. Staff have learned to tolerate difficulty, and the ambiguity which arises when there is an emphasis on raising standards of attainment in core subjects, when they know that other subjects and aspects of the school are also important.
63. The trouble is that there is so much to do that many management changes have had to be made at once and so, being so new, management in most areas can only be judged as satisfactory at the moment. Some management decisions are not always well thought through and, being inexperienced, the senior management team does not know how many essential elements and requirements are not in place. For instance some barriers to change have not been considered. These include the out-of-date administration structures such as an unsatisfactory timetable, and the short length of the school day for older pupils. Staff, such as the special educational needs support teacher, are not always deployed effectively, and the use of the accommodation could be better planned in some respects. However, with the will and understanding demonstrated, there is sound potential for further improvements.



64. Much of the management has not been effective over the last two years, but those now in post, and those who have had responsibility for subjects and aspects since 1999 are managing their areas well. The officers of the local education authority have given good support to the management during an extended period of change. The current phase leaders give good support to the acting headteacher. Many subject co-ordinators are new in post, but most have grasped the nettle and have produced satisfactory, and some good, action plans to improve their subjects. Most have good knowledge and understanding of their curriculum areas and what is needed to improve them; an example is the music co-ordinator who is a specialist in her field. The subject policies are nearly all new, and have yet to be agreed by the governing body; this is because the current staff realised that the old ones were not effective in raising standards. Subject co-ordinators have undertaken some checking of provision in their areas, but little monitoring of the teaching has yet been done except by the acting headteacher and by the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. This is a weakness that has been identified and there are active plans for more monitoring. There is no co-ordinator for planning the overall curriculum; this is a weakness that has affected standards of attainment in non-core subjects. However, assessment and target setting are now much better co-ordinated, and this is starting to have a good effect on pupils' achievements.
65. The school aspires to give all pupils an equal opportunity to the right education for their needs. In many ways there is good social inclusion. There are no nasty racial or gender under-tones and staff and pupils are aware that this is important. A senior member of staff has recently been appointed to check on pupils who may be gifted or talented, but no one individual specially monitors the progress of pupils who are looked after by people other than their own parents. However, equal opportunities are not guaranteed as there are some deficiencies in curriculum planning and assessment, which prevents pupils from receiving the very best that the school could offer. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, although they are doing well, have no special provision. The practice of withdrawal of pupils from acts of collective worship and other lessons to have extra work in basic skills, although praiseworthy in some respects, means that these pupils miss out on other important areas of school life.
66. The school is fortunate to have a special educational needs co-ordinator who is organised, so that she keeps a careful eye on all that happens for pupils with special educational needs. She has done much since her appointment two years ago, when the special educational needs register was incomplete or unreliable. She has worked well with outside agencies to identify pupils and to give them that which they most need. She has ensured that nine pupils who needed statements of special educational needs were provided with them, and has undertaken some training for staff. She is aware of the deficiencies in the provision, however, and knows that the individual education plans are not good enough, and that teachers need more training. As she is also the Foundation Stage and the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, she has a heavy management load, and this is constraining the work she does with pupils with special educational needs. This is a weakness in management which should be addressed. However, her management of the Foundation Stage is good and has produced a team that is raising children's achievement in a marked way.
67. The teaching staff do not have enough expertise in devising individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. They have had effective training in managing the behaviour of pupils who exhibit anti-social behaviour, and this is good. The ten support assistants have had training in special educational needs using funds from the Education Action Zone, and this is starting to have a positive effect on their own practices. Two of the support assistants are funded by the local education authority, the rest are paid out of the school budget, which demonstrates the concern the management feels about pupils who might have difficulties. Lunch-time supervisors have also had training in special educational needs, and this has a positive effect on their work with pupils.
68. The input of the governing body is satisfactory, with many areas of strength, including the knowledge and involvement of the chair and vice-chair, who give up a lot of time for the benefit of pupils. There are too few governors at present, and some of those need further training to ensure

that they know all that is required of them. Most statutory requirements are met, but governors were not aware that there are deficiencies in the school prospectus and their annual report to parents. Neither have they agreed a policy on restraint of pupils, although this is now being addressed. Mostly governors know well what is going on, but they were unaware that pupils were withdrawn from the collective act of worship. Until this term the governing body was not actively involved in key areas of the curriculum. There is a newly appointed curriculum governor, but no committee to oversee this important area. On the whole, governors know well the strengths of the school and have recognised most weaknesses.

69. The school has appropriate aims, and priorities for development are currently simple and phased. The governors and acting headteacher know that everything cannot be put right at once. The previous school improvement plan was unworkable and could not support the educational priorities needed by the school to drive up standards. The new plan is properly costed and has a realistic number of achievable targets. The governors keep a good overview of the work towards current targets. However, the plan is new and the school has yet to receive the full benefits.
70. The governors are aware of the financial procedures and they ensure that the targets in new school improvement plan, re-written by the acting headteacher in the summer holiday, (and so in the middle of the current financial year), can be addressed. There were significant sums of money spent from the school budget, before the appointment of the acting headteacher, which had not been identified or planned. Controls on spending were weak. The carry forward to the next financial year was unclear. Procedures for monitoring were also weak; for instance no annual check, by the governors or a delegated person, was made on assets. The school inventory was ineffective as a record of all items worth £50 or more. A new inventory is nearing completion. However there has been a significant improvement this term in the governors' statutory duties, and the monitoring of spending and management. The carry forward is at a satisfactory level, given the small percentage of money over which the governors have any discretion. Although they are not familiar with the terms, governors use the principles of best value when making decisions on spending and staffing.
71. The school receives a number of additional grants to support school improvements including funds from the Educational Action Zone (EAZ), and special educational needs budget. Money from the EAZ is correctly spent on short-term improvements for supporting pupils, as there is a limit in time for the availability of this fund. The entire additional grant for special needs pays for the support required for these pupils. It also pays for the additional training required by the classroom ancillary staff, who provide good levels of support. There are two private funds available, one directly under the control of the governors. Until recently this fund had not been correctly audited. A group which once had a direct link with the school but is now independent, manages the other fund. The requirements of the latest audit report of the school's finances and procedures have been met with the exception of the assets register, which is in the process of implementation.
72. There are a generous number of teachers and support staff to teach the pupils. These are supported by an equally generous budget, although proportionately less is spent on teachers than is spent in most schools. Many of the teaching staff are relatively new to the school and are in the process of establishing themselves. The acting headteacher and core subject co-ordinators have successfully established a pattern of monitoring, with developmental feedback. But, most of the procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards in teaching and their subsequent effectiveness are new. Only by the end of this school year will there be enough evidence to make a secure judgement on how well this has been done. However a good beginning has been made in evaluating teaching and learning through "the peer partnership programme". These procedures are having a positive impact on standards in core subjects, and an analysis of assessments indicates that there is an overall improvement in attainment when measured against tests at the end of each key stage.
73. There is an appropriate policy in place for teachers' appraisal and the acting headteacher sets targets with the teachers, based on a satisfactory Performance Management policy. These

targets are correctly based upon pupils' progress, management issues and the school improvement plan. The acting headteacher will appraise all the teachers; no other teachers have been formally trained to carry out this task. This is a weakness and too onerous a duty for one person. An external adviser and the chair of governors have appropriately set targets for the performance management of the acting headteacher. The acting headteacher is on an appropriate course for preparation for headship. The school is working towards 'Investors in People' status, and looks outwards for help in all areas of staff training and development. The school makes good use of the Leicester generic policy for the induction of new teachers. These teachers receive the appropriate training funded by the local education authority. The governors have appointed the acting headteacher to be the mentor for newly appointed teachers; this is a position she effectively held as deputy headteacher. Given the far-sighted views, and the ethos of support, the school is suitable for the training of new teachers.

74. The school makes satisfactory use of the new technology both for the management and administration of the school. The administration is efficient, although more is spent on administration staff than is spent in many schools. The local authority provides a well-known programme for the budget and financial procedures and the school makes effective use of this system. The school follows the correct procedures for storing data and conforms to the legal requirements for data protection.
75. The standard of accommodation is now good; a considerable improvement since the 1997 inspection. The site is clean and generally well maintained, much redecoration and refurbishment has taken place. The school is aware of the urgent need to complete the redecoration of some indoor toilets that are shabby and unhygienic. Two health and safety hazards have been identified by the school for repair, and these are being addressed. Overall, there is sufficient space for the number of pupils on roll. The two playground areas have been much improved with markings for games, seating areas and a "Trim Trail". There is a large playing field. This accommodation has a satisfactory impact on pupils' attainment.
76. The accommodation in the nursery remains good and includes a secure play area for the children in the Foundation Stage. The newly constructed foyer is useful and welcoming, with parents receiving information quickly from the full-time receptionist. The two large halls are effectively used for assemblies, physical education, musical and dramatic productions, Breakfast Club and lunchtimes. In addition there is a medical room, cooking area, community room and several rooms for withdrawal groups. Resources are safely stored. The information and communication technology suite is well used, but the newly built library is not yet fully open. Classrooms and corridors are enhanced by many sound quality displays celebrating pupils' work.
77. Overall, the learning resources in the school are now satisfactory in terms of quality, quantity and range for most subjects. However, in art and design the quality, range and use are poor and in history barely adequate with few artefacts. In science and design and technology, there are insufficient resources for practical activities. Resources for children in the Foundation Stage are good, and also for the teaching of information and communication technology. The new library, whilst bright and welcoming is not yet fully equipped, and only pupils in Year 6 use it. There are too few books in the school.
78. The school has made satisfactory improvements over the last two years. Current improvements are faster and are having a good effect. A number of features account for this:
- Staff and governors know that there are things that should be better, and there is an ethos of shared responsibility in attaining these goals.
  - Pupils are now getting a satisfactory standard of education, and parents and the community are much happier with the school.
  - Standards in the core subjects are rising and pupils have good attitudes to work.
  - Parents, themselves, are being helped with their education and parenting skills.
  - An environment which is more conducive to learning has been set.
  - The school is using extra money appropriately for long-term projects that are planned to involve parents further, and to raise pupils' attainment.

79. Given all this, and taking into account the fact that this school spends more on its pupils than most schools, this school gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue the sound improvements already made, the governors and staff should now:

- (1) Raise pupils' standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
  - ensuring that there are sufficient books;
  - providing further training for staff so that their skills continue to improve;
  - planning for the teaching of key skills of learning, especially speaking;
  - planning appropriate opportunities within all lessons to use key skills;
  - insisting on better presentation of pupils' work.

And also raise pupils' attainment in design and technology, information and communication technology, art and design, music, history, geography, and religious education by:

- developing schemes of work to ensure that pupils acquire skills and understanding in a coherent way;
- establishing appropriate assessment procedures so that staff and parents are clear about what each pupil knows, understands and can do;
- improving teachers' own knowledge and understanding of the subjects.  
*(paragraphs: 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 11. 28. 34. 35. 100. 101. 108. 109. 122. 124. 127. 128. 131. 134. 139. 152. 154. 158. 161. 162. 170. 172. 173)*

- (2) Improve the planning and organisation of the curriculum by:
  - establishing procedures so that there is an effective overview of the whole curriculum;
  - increasing the teaching time each week for pupils at Key Stage 2;
  - planning the timetable for each class so that all subjects have an appropriate length of time allocated;
  - increasing the amount of teaching time for non-core subjects;
  - adapting the newly acquired programmes in most subjects so that there are carefully planned schemes of work, starting at the correct level for the understanding of pupils.  
*(paragraphs: 6. 7. 13. 23. 33. 35. 36. 127. 131. 133. 135. 137. 138. 140. 141. 145. 162. 174)*

- (3) Improve the rates of attendance and reduce unauthorised absence, by continuing to implement the thorough systems already in place.  
*(paragraphs: 18)*

- (4) Ensure that all pupils have equal access to a full curriculum appropriate to their needs by:
  - stopping the practice of allowing pupils to miss acts of collective worship and some lessons to have extra help in other areas;
  - consistently providing more challenging work for more able pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2;
  - devising workable individual education plans which will help teachers give all pupils with special educational needs suitable work for their needs;
  - devising a policy, management practices and assessment procedures for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English;
  - finding out why girls are not doing as well as boys, and as well as they could.  
*(paragraphs: 10. 11. 30. 38. 65. 66. 67. 103. 119. 135)*

- (5) Improve the assessment of pupils' skills especially in non-core subjects by:
  - planning how to do this;
  - having assessed, using the information gained to plan further suitable teaching.  
*(paragraphs: 29. 51. 52. 135. 162)*

- (6) Improve the provision for pupils' cultural development by:
- improving the curriculum for art and design, drama and music;
  - improving teachers' skills in teaching the performing arts, such as music and dance;
  - promoting this area within other subjects, such as history and literacy;
  - increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own, local heritage by inviting people from the community;
  - increasing visits to local places of worship;
  - inviting professionals in all the creative and performing arts to play to and teach pupils in school.
- (paragraphs: 44. 130. 146. 161. 162. 173)*

In addition to the Key Issues mentioned above, governors should ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

*(paragraph: 68)*

The staff and governors are aware of most of these Key Issues and have already made plans to address them. They were not aware of the unsatisfactory state of their provision for pupils' cultural development, but accept that this is the case.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	89

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	27	28	4	0	0
Percentage	0	8	42	44	6	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

### *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)	47	297
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11	105

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	109

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.8
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 (Year 2)***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	18	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	12
	Girls	14	14	17
	Total	23	23	29
at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (53)	72 (53)	91 (56)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	14	16	18
	Total	23	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (51)	84 (56)	94 (44)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	29	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	7	11
	Girls	14	4	13
	Total	23	11	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (28)	26 (47)	56 (53)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	9	10
	Girls	16	13	13
	Total	22	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (22)	51 (41)	53 (50)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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



**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	168
Any other minority ethnic group	14

*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	3	1
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)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	26

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	225

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	726703
Total expenditure	712510
Expenditure per pupil	2474
Balance brought forward from previous year	4345
Balance carried forward to next year	18538

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	297
Number of questionnaires returned	39

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	41	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	38	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	54	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	31	10	10	26
The teaching is good.	61	33	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	49	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	28	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	28	3	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	46	46	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	41	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	54	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	31	5	0	13

## **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**

80. At the time of inspection there were 16 children in the reception class, and 30 full time children in the nursery. Fourteen of these children will join reception in the coming January. There are 34 part time children who start in the nursery after their third birthday. Twenty-two out of the 45 children who are full time in the Foundation Stage have their birthdays in the summer; this means that this particular cohort is very young. A good induction programme enables parents, children and staff to get to know each other well and children know what they can expect when they get to school. Children join in activities happily as a result of the support and confidence gained from the staff in the nursery and reception class. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that usually expected in all six areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. When they start in the nursery many children come to school with dummies in their mouths and are unable to speak other than in single words. Their knowledge and understanding of the outside world is very limited, many have not been to the seaside or even to the library on the corner of the street. Their physical development varies in that they can climb trees but find difficulty in controlled movements. When children enter the nursery, many have not used paint. A suitable test of skills is used when children start in the nursery, but when children leave the reception class they are assessed against the small steps of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and so progress is not directly comparable. This is a weakness. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage with some very good teaching in both the reception class and nursery.
81. The well-planned curriculum in the Foundation Stage is carefully constructed from the stepping stones for the early learning goals for young children. Lessons take into account the prior learning of the children. In the nursery and reception class the knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage by both the teacher and nursery nurses shines through and, as a result, children make good progress throughout these classes. Despite this good progress, attainment in relation to the early learning goals is likely to be below that expected at the end of the Foundation Stage because the children start from such a very low base. The previous inspection report stated that children's attainment was in line with the levels expected for their age, when they started in Year 1.

#### ***Personal, social and emotional development***

82. As a result of the good teaching children make good progress, and enter Key Stage 1 with attainment which is as expected in this area of development. Children enter the nursery with a range of personal, social and emotional development, but mostly well below expectations. In the Foundation Stage children feel valued as a result of the high quality of the support that they receive from the staff, who play with them and encourage their language and communication skills. For example, two nursery children on the computer were able to click the mouse but did not have the reading skills to read the directions, so a nursery nurse came over to support them. Children respond well to tidying up and taking the register to the office on the way to the hall. They feel safe and secure in their environment and this gives them a positive disposition for learning. Some are able to sustain interest in an activity for a long time. For example, a group of girls in the nursery spend the last part of their mathematics period absorbed in rolling spheres out of play dough. Other children are not yet at a stage where they are able to stay at any given activity for more than a few minutes, but this is improving. Most children form good relationships with adults and peers, although some are reluctant to talk to visitors. Children learn to play co-operatively and to take turns. A good example was seen in nursery, where two girls took turns to work on the computer and praised each other each time a program was completed successfully. All children who attend full time show a high level of independence with regard to getting dressed independently. This is a result of the good foundations laid down when the children first come into the nursery. The children treat each other with respect. They also show care for living things as

they handle the guinea pig with sensitivity. Children demonstrate pride in their own achievement, one boy in reception shouted out with pure joy when he was able to print his work in the computer suite.

## ***Communication, language and literacy***

83. Children enter the school with very low attainment in communication, language and literacy. Their speaking and listening skills are poor, and as a result their progress in the acquisition of language skills is slow. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage supports their development but most of the children enter Key Stage 1 below the expected level of attainment as a result of starting from such a low base. The Oracy Project, started in the nursery last year, encourages children to write in role-play situations and alongside the teacher. This has improved children's writing. The whole teaching area for the Foundation Stage is extremely well planned to promote the children's communication and language skills. For example, there is a telephone kiosk with a telephone book, which is very well used. Children look up numbers in the directory and dial the number. A reception child talked quietly on the telephone whilst a nursery child sang a song. There is a tape recorder with headphones, and this encourages talk. One full time nursery child was able to follow the story in the book provided, whilst another listened to the tape whilst 'reading' the telephone directory. Each area of the classroom is clearly designated and labelled with bright signs. The role-play corner is set up as the 'House of the Three Bears' and has a shopping list, as does each area in the room. These well-planned activities promote communication well.
84. Children have a limited vocabulary and many do not speak in whole sentences; for example when the reception class teacher asked what the dog was doing in the story book a boy answered 'woof woof'. When the teacher reads a story the children sit engrossed in it and are able to sustain their listening skills. The pencil control of most children is poor and the children are given interesting opportunities to make marks and pretend to write. Two girls concentrated well as they 'wrote' covering the paper in marks, in the 'library' role-play area.
85. The planning in the reception class is appropriate for the ages and interests of the children, and encourages them to enjoy reading a shared text with lively expression. Children are able to identify with the feelings of fear in the story of the gingerbread man. Children are able to read some single word flash cards and identify the initial letter sounds 'c', 'h', and 'f'. They can point out capital letters and can recognise the fact that some capital letters are missing on a sheet of names. In all lessons children with special educational needs were all included with extra help, and a few make especially good progress in learning. As a result of the good teaching in the Foundation Stage, children make good progress however it is unlikely that the majority of the children will achieve the expected levels in this area of learning by the time they enter Key Stage 1, because they start at the school with such a low level of attainment.

## ***Mathematical development***

86. Children enter the nursery with very low mathematical skills and understanding, but good teaching enables children to make good progress. In all lessons children with special educational needs are included with extra help. An example of good practice is when the nursery nurse settled the children down after the previous activity by skilful use of number action songs. Her enthusiastic attitude engendered a good learning atmosphere in which children really enjoyed learning about 2-D and 3-D shapes. She gave them confidence so that even the most shy was able to whisper his response. This learning is consolidated and extended through games and activities, giving children opportunities to practice their mathematical skills and knowledge. For example children carefully build towers with cuboids, following the picture on a construction card. One boy was able to copy the right shapes when threading beads following a pattern and is able to recognise that that, although they were the right shape, they were not the right colour. When questioned, he answered giving one-word answers, 'yellow, yellow, yellow'. Children also use an appropriate program on the computer, which supports their learning and they are able to click on the correct shape.
87. Another example of good teaching was when the teacher took the reception children on a 'shape walk' round the school. At first the children were unsure about where to look for shapes, but by the end of the walk they were so enthusiastic they could stop finding and correctly identifying

shapes. They recognised the tubular climbing frames as cylinders and a cuboid support for the physical education apparatus. At the end of the walk the plenary was used effectively to give each child the opportunity to contribute. This gave such confidence to the children that even the very quietest contributed, not only answering the question but adding, '*and there's another cuboid!*' All the reception children know the names 2-D shapes and their properties and the majority know the names and properties of 3-D shapes. Their attainment in number however is not so advanced. Children need to count on fingers, matching one-to-one when using number fans for numbers 1-10. Some say that they cannot find the number held up by the teacher whilst others are still not yet able to match one-to-one accurately. Adult support is used very effectively to enhance good learning for all the children and the display in the classroom reflects a high mathematical profile. Good teaching ensures that children make good progress but because of very low attainment on entry the majority of children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time that they enter Key Stage 1.

### ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

88. Children start school with very limited experiences of the world outside their home environment. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Staff plan many activities to extend the children's knowledge and understanding. Children are encouraged to investigate different materials using all their senses, and select tools and techniques to shape and assemble models. In all lessons children with special educational needs are included with extra help. The three-year-old children are filled with enthusiasm and become totally involved in making porridge with a nursery nurse, and sustain concentration, chatting to the nursery nurse as the porridge is made. In discussion most children can remember what they had for breakfast and give one-word answers. The nursery nurse tells the children about the need for health and safety and the use of tools and hygiene in cooking. The children are able to recognise three different cereals and know which box they came from. They state their preferences but make no observations. This first hand exploration of cereals helped these young children to refine their skills of observation.
89. Children in the reception class respond with enthusiasm and concentration to the teachers appropriately planned activities in the computer suite. They are able to use the program 'Dazzle' to colour and draw lines and can bin what they do not require. They are able to operate a CD-ROM in order to listen to the story of the three bears and to click the mouse on the appropriate character. When using the 'Teddy Bear' program they can click and drag items to clothe the teddy bear and move objects across the screen. All the children were totally engrossed in this lesson and showed a great deal of independence in their ability to operate the programs.
90. Nursery children receive positive encouragement to try out new ideas by the provision of activities. These give children the opportunity to use their initiative. For example re-arranging the construction blocks so that they make a stable tower. Both boys and girls are encouraged to use the construction equipment and role-play areas. Girls sustained more concentration, but both boys and girls are able to apply previous learning from a construction activity to a mathematics lesson. Effective use is made of outdoors and children in the Foundation Stage are taken on an autumn walk to give them real experiences of the outside world. A nursery nurse made effective use of an opportunity in music to extend the children's learning when putting the instruments away. She asked the children to place them in the box according to the material from which they were made. Children make good progress but because they enter the school with a very low level of attainment, the majority of children are unlikely to achieve the expected level of learning in this area by the time that they enter Key Stage 1.

### ***Physical development***

91. Pupils make good progress in learning and as a result of good teaching in the nursery and reception class, they are in line to meet the early learning goals by the time that they enter Key Stage 1. Children are well supported as they learn to move with confidence, in safety, as they

climb over the outdoor apparatus, designed to provide for imaginative play as well as physical development. The secure outdoor area is accessible from the nursery.

92. Children are beginning to move with control, they handle bricks well, although their use of scissors and pencils is less skilful. Large outdoor toys provide the children with opportunities to pedal and steer and work in co-operation with one another. In a formal lesson that had high expectations, nursery children performed well. They used imagination when finding ways of travelling across the bench and on to the mat in the hall. Most children dressed themselves carefully but a few needed encouragement. A pupil with marked behaviour problems worked well with this group and the three children with special educational needs were all included with extra help. In a reception class lesson in the hall the teacher encouraged children to have the confidence to stand on one leg. At the beginning of the lesson the children stayed in a close group in the middle of the hall, but the teacher gave them the confidence to explore and make good use of the space around them. The children were able to transfer their movements on the floor to the apparatus with a high level of control and co-ordination finishing each sequence with a well executed jump or roll. Both boys and girls were chosen to demonstrate. Initially three girls chose not to participate but the sensitive support of the nursery nurse enabled all children to participate by the end of the lesson. Children work quietly and with application and are willing to try. There are many opportunities in both the nursery and the reception class for children to improve their manipulative skills; for example, they learn to use scissors, to paste, and to use bricks to build models.

### *Creative development*

93. Good teaching means that children make good progress from a low base and the majority are likely to achieve the level expected for this area of learning. In music children in the reception class are given the opportunity to choose an appropriate musical instrument to represent a character in the story of 'Goldilocks'. All of the children are able to use the appropriate names for the instruments. The nursery nurse asked the children to listen to two chime bars and suggest which is more appropriate for mummy bear and which is more appropriate for baby bear. The children are given the opportunity to explore both high and low sounds, loud and soft sounds. All of the children with the exception of one boy are able to clap patterns. They are all able to sing the songs and follow the movements. One girl watched the other children before joining in. All the children were able to moderate their voices appropriately to represent daddy, mummy and baby bear. The nursery nurse guided and extended the children's learning so that they were able to discern different sounds and use the correct terminology for the instruments.
94. In a good drama lesson on 'The Three Little Pigs', children responded enthusiastically to the very good role modelling of the nursery nurse. There was much gusto and controlled shouting as the children 'huffed and puffed'. The children were able to be sensible and calm down properly. Staff and children worked well together and the children benefited from the good modelling of behaviour and manners by the staff. One child who has significant special educational needs was effectively included and children with behavioural problems were well managed. One child was rewarded because he was able to shout and then stop when required. Children with special educational needs are supported appropriately so that they have full access to all activities. Good use of praise enables the children to concentrate well.
95. Although the co-ordinator has only been in the Foundation Stage for one year she has managed to raise standards and increase the rate of progress in learning by radically changing the planning and assessment to be in line with the Early Learning Goals. The co-ordinator has introduced the Oracy Project and increased emphasis on communication, language and literacy at all levels. Her action plan is well structured and includes professional development opportunities for all staff. This year £1,000 from a trust and from the parents' association has been spent on outdoor toys, and this is proving beneficial in raising attainment. Children's learning is monitored and evaluated against the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum. All staff are responsible for a group of children. They assess this group three times a week; anything significant is referred to the co-ordinator. An appropriate scheme of work for teaching letter sounds has been used in the



nursery this year. There is no formal recording in the Foundation Stage and as a result there are no records kept of children's work other than a photographs taken on special occasions. Staff's relationships with parents and carers are good, and parents are encouraged to come into the classroom at the beginning and end of each day. The parent link worker, who is also the senior midday supervisor, carries out home visits, which everyone finds useful. On entry to Key Stage 1 the children receive a visit from their new teacher and attend Key Stage 1 assemblies. The Foundation Stage has moved a long way in one year, and is providing a much better education for the children than it did two years ago.

## ENGLISH

96. Standards of attainment in English, overall, are below average by the end of both key stages. This is the same situation as was reported in the 1999 inspection. However, the results of the National Curriculum tests show that there has been a steady and measurable improvement at both key stages, in reading and writing since 1999, although pupils' speaking skills are still low, and this affects many aspects of attainment. Other inspection evidence confirms that standards are rising and pupils have made satisfactory progress over time; currently, pupils' progress in learning is good. In comparison with similar schools pupils' writing is still below average, but it is average in reading at Key Stage 1. Pupils' listening skills are improving well at both key stages. When taking into consideration the very low base on entry to the nursery, there has been a clear improvement until the pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. However, this improvement has not been consistent over time, due to the inconsistent teaching, especially through Key Stage 2. The teaching and curriculum are now better and so the rate of improvement is faster. Most pupils of all abilities achieve well in comparison with their prior attainment.
97. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils have made at least satisfactory progress in speaking and listening since leaving the reception class where standards are much below expectations. The pupils' attentive listening was a feature of many lessons observed, although those with known behaviour difficulties find it hard to sit and listen, even for a few minutes. Pupils at Key Stage 1, though, are still hampered by their speaking which is well below the level generally expected. Overall, standards in speaking and listening remain below those usually expected for pupils of eleven by the end of Key Stage 2 but a few pupils, of all abilities, have made good progress. This is most noticeable in group activities and practical lessons such as mathematics and science. The teachers work hard to provide opportunities for language development by displaying all the relevant language work in the curriculum subjects on the classroom walls and in discussions such as the "Big Book" activity in the national literacy strategy. Pupils' knowledge of the technical language of subjects is, therefore, generally satisfactory. Pupils show curiosity, and ask lots of questions, although these are often just three-word phrases. By the end of Key Stage 2 few pupils have an adequate general vocabulary to express themselves clearly, and this is affecting not only their attainment in English, but in many subjects.
98. Standards of attainment in reading at the end of both key stages is also below average, but pupils are currently making good progress in learning. At both key stages, but especially at Key Stage 1, more able pupils show confidence in trying out new words, with multiple sounds, and are usually successful. There are a small number of good readers in each year-group and they read with confidence and understanding. A minority of pupils at Key Stage 1 confidently build such words as "con-grat-u-lations". Most read regularly at home and have a range of suitable books to read, but a significant number of parents do not hear their children read. A few pupils belong to their local library, and this is helpful in teaching them about books. In discussion with the majority of pupils it was noted that they did not keep an accurate list of books or bring their home /school reading record. At both key stages very few pupils had satisfactory levels of comprehension of texts that they read, and this is affecting all their work. This deficit particularly affects their attainment in tests. Pupils said that they like reading, especially stories. A few chose to read poems to the inspectors, and enjoyed the humour; but few can discuss the content of the fiction books. Most pupils at Key Stage 2 lack confidence when reading aloud and when trying to sound new words. The school is working hard to correct this deficiency by encouraging "family reading groups" in school, "additional literacy support" and the employment of a teacher to support literacy amongst pupils with special educational needs. All these procedures are having a slow but sustainable impact on improving standards.
99. Standards of attainment in writing are below average at both key stages. This deficiency is most clearly to be seen in the low level of written work in exercise books and in displays across most subjects. Only a small percentage of pupils write sentences by the end of Key Stage 1. A small percentage of the most able pupils is attaining at the required level and a few should achieve a

higher grade in the National Curriculum tests next summer. This is because a significant number of the pupils in the Year 2 class have difficulties with their learning and there is a smaller group than usual of average attaining pupils. The majority of pupils have great difficulty in writing; these pupils find the construction of letters and simple words difficult. Bearing in mind the low level of attainment on entry, many are making good progress by the end of Key Stage 1, and pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 2, considering how low their skills were when they were in Key Stage 1. Spelling and punctuation are improving, albeit slowly.

100. Progress in learning in English overall, through Key Stage 2, is satisfactory. However, progress is good in Years 5 and 6 as pupils improve their speaking, listening and reading skills. They are also provided with more options and opportunities to develop cross-curricular skills in writing as their vocabularies slowly improve. Pupils begin to take pride in their work and presentation improves, which is not always apparent in Years 3 and 4. Some of the non-core subjects are insufficiently used to develop writing skills, and many opportunities to develop vocabulary and writing for a variety of purposes are lost. Word-processing is not used sufficiently to draft and re-draft work.
101. Pupils' attitudes to English lessons are good, and they enjoy the literature that they study. Their behaviour in lessons is also good; they know the structure of the literacy hour, and settle down well to work. These good outcomes are the result of careful planning and teaching which is highly structured. The teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and good overall at Key Stage 2, although it varies between very good and unsatisfactory. The improved quality of teaching is the main reason why standards are rising. Planning is good in most lessons though sometimes there is not appropriate work for the most able pupils. Teachers explain well what to do and how it is to be done. For instance, a number of lessons using adverbs and adverbial phrases were suitably explained on the interactive white board. In other lessons the pupils held cards with the key words printed on them and positioned themselves in grammatical order. The teachers show good class management skills and the pupils concentrate and try hard. In a Year 1 class the teacher made effective use of a glove puppet to create a good rapport with the pupils. The support staff work hard and there is a good dialogue with the class teacher. Although pupils do use word-processing, there is little evidence of information and communication technology in many literacy lessons and this is a weakness. The plenary session, at the end of the lesson, is usually effective and has a good impact on learning, but in one or two observations observed, the lesson over-ran and there was insufficient time to discuss what had been learnt, and this is a weakness. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, the short-comings in the teaching are due to a lack of rigour in the planning with a limited range of strategies used, and so the quality of the work, and the presentation of the lesson immediately declined. The school is making good use of the local education authority literacy consultant to iron out variations in the teaching.
102. The provision for pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition has to be judged as poor, as there is no specific arrangement for the teaching of these pupils and the assessment of their progress. However, pupils' basic spoken English is satisfactory and they are making good progress in all aspects of English. The acting headteacher is aware of the weakness in the provision and has recently received guidance from the local education authority in order to put in place more rigorous arrangements to ensure that this good progress continues.
103. The additional literacy support provides good opportunities for pupils with low attainments, and they are, therefore making good progress in learning. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, but could be even better if the targets for reading and writing, on their individual education plans, were more specific. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the extra work given to them by the support teacher, but they often miss the same lesson every week to do this work, and this is a weakness.
104. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and provides her colleagues with effective support. Though teaching a Year 6 class she has experience of the younger pupils and this has a positive impact when giving advice. The impact of monitoring by her, and the headteacher is

- good, and teaching is improving as a result. The National Literacy Strategy guidance is used and is effective. The policy document for English is in the process of revision but is structurally sound. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for staff guidance to develop speaking and listening skills, and that there are missed opportunities in speaking and listening. The school has recognised that there is a need to provide a structure and the co-ordinator is producing a scheme for debating, presentations and role-play. The lack of drama, and visits to the theatre, and from theatre groups, means that opportunities are missed to develop pupils' cultural understanding.
105. Assessment is good for reading and writing, but unsatisfactory for speaking and listening. The use of assessment information to set more relevant work for pupils is improving, and aspects are good. The co-ordinator and the acting headteacher have analysed test results, over the past few years, and together they are starting to implement issues to do with gender imbalance, setting challenging targets to raise standards and to make effective use of funds from the Education Action Zone. The setting of targets for individual pupils in English is also having a good effect on attainment in reading and writing and progress in learning.
106. The library is new. It is elegant and well fitted, but there are too few books. Currently it is not used effectively and a number of pupils stated that they would welcome the opportunity to study in the library. Selected pupils in Year 6 use it at dinner-time for extra work, which they enjoy. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop this valuable resource and effective plans are in hand. Resources, other than in the library, are good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

107. The results of national assessments for 2001 show that, by the end of both key stages, the majority of pupils attain standards that are below the national average. This picture is supported by inspection evidence, which also shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress as they move through the school. There has been no improvement in attainment in the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 since the inspection of 1999, and this is due to the unsatisfactory teaching last year. The school has set realistic but challenging targets for 2002, based on assessment information gained throughout the school and is working hard to raise standards. Boys continue to outperform girls at both key stages. No clear reasons are evident and the school is analysing data and teaching and learning strategies to account for this discrepancy. Pupils with special educational needs, who are well supported by learning assistants, make satisfactory progress. The introduction of the 'Booster' and 'Springboard' government initiative for pupils, who have difficulties with mathematics, is helping to improve standards and these pupils are making satisfactory progress. In some classes, however, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and therefore do not make enough progress.
108. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. Sound teaching is improving pupils' numeracy skills, particularly their mental recall of number facts. Teachers share learning objectives with the pupils and start lessons briskly, encouraging pupils to be alert and interested. The school has abandoned setting in Years 5 and 6 recently, on the advice of the local education authority numeracy consultant, but it is too early to assess the impact of this on the subject. Mathematics is sometimes used across the curriculum, for example using graphs in science. Information and communication technology is sometimes used to make graphs, pie charts and equivalence tables to explore, for example, the frequency of different colours in a sweets tube. However, apart from data handling, the use of information and communication technology to support mathematics is not fully developed.
109. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are able to develop simple strategies for solving mathematical problems and check their results to see whether they are sensible. Pupils in Year 2 investigate the frequency of colours in a sweets tube, while in the Year 5/6 classes, pupils investigate number sequences in times tables and find missing numbers in number puzzles. Pupils are learning to justify their answers and strategies with careful questioning by teachers, although some pupils' speaking and listening skills are not well developed and can inhibit their explanations.

From the scrutiny of work in books and discussions with pupils, there is too little emphasis on investigations outside a commercial scheme of work, and on applying mathematics to real life situations. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has an action plan to address this issue.

110. At both key stages pupils are developing satisfactory computational skills. For example, in Year 1 pupils make totals to ten from pairs of numbers and can read and write numbers to one hundred. In Year 2 the majority of pupils recognise odd and even numbers to twenty and can add and subtract to twenty. In Year 3 pupils are beginning to understand multiplication and division as inverse operations and read and write numbers to one thousand. Pupils in Year 4 work on addition and subtraction problems using a number line and multiply and divide by a single digit. In Year 5 pupils begin to understand the relationship between decimals and fractions and add and subtract to one thousand. Pupils in Year 6 work on decimals to two places and some pupils solve simple problems involving ratio and proportion. Overall, by the end of both key stages pupils are beginning to develop basic numeracy skills and to extend their understanding of appropriate mathematical concepts.
111. In learning about shape, space and measures pupils in Year 1 learn, for example, to identify cubes, cuboids and cylinders as well as squares, rectangles and circles. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the properties of 2-Dimensional and 3-Dimensional shapes such as semi-circles, hexagons, pyramids and cones. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 begin to convert units of measure, such as centimetres to metres and grams to kilograms and pupils in Year 5 and 6 are learning to calculate the area of regular shapes such as rectangles and squares. Some higher attaining pupils calculate the area of an irregular shape. Pupils in Year 6 can convert time using the twelve and twenty-four hour clock
112. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 collect data to use in bar charts to identify, for example, the frequency of different colours in a sweets tube. In a Year 4/5 class, pupils collected data on birthdays from a class survey and recorded their findings on bar graphs using different scales. Others in the class used a computer program to represent and interpret their findings as bar line graphs and pie charts on the computer. Pupils in Year 5/6 use and understand Venn diagrams to interpret data collected in class. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand the terms mode and mean and to use them to describe data.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is sound at Key Stage 1 and ranges from satisfactory to very good at Key Stage 2 but there are some inconsistencies in practice between classes and year-groups. Teachers plan their work co-operatively according to the National Numeracy Strategy and parallel classes cover the same range of work. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils, build effectively on previous learning and provide interesting and challenging activities. In less effective lessons but which were judged satisfactory overall, the tasks presented are the same for all pupils and the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. On some occasions they work a year below the programme of study, such as in Year 6, where higher attaining pupils were only just being introduced to square numbers. Homework is set regularly throughout the school to provide practice in basic skills and challenges to pupils. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are committed to raising standards throughout the school. They use learning assistants well, usually to support the lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. In lessons throughout the school, some pupils are withdrawn from mathematics for extra support, but make up the work missed later. Teachers mark work regularly and encourage pupils to try hard. However, marking in books does not always provide enough comments to help pupils to improve their performance. There are no targets set for individual pupils either weekly or termly to encourage them to do their best. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress is satisfactory at present and improving, and information is being used well to inform future planning.
114. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are enthusiastic about their work and appear to enjoy their lessons. Teachers make enormous efforts to develop positive relationships with pupils and consequently the response of pupils to lessons is good. Lessons are suitably managed and the majority of pupils are able to work quietly and sustain concentration with only a minor element of

restlessness in a few lessons. Pupils co-operate well with each other on tasks. They listen to each other and their teacher. They are encouraged to justify and explain their answers and find their contributions valued by adults, who work with them. This makes a significant contribution to the satisfactory progress pupils make. Presentation in books is variable. Some pupils take pride and present their work neatly, others are less careful and do not always use rulers or clear and systematic methods of setting down their work. All teachers make attractive numeracy displays in their classrooms with mathematical symbols and vocabulary clearly available to inform pupils.

115. The subject is led by a newly appointed co-ordinator, who is enthusiastic. She has a clear view of the subject and its future development. She has begun to monitor the teaching and learning with lesson observations and work scrutiny but this is still at an early stage and the impact on standards is not yet evident. She has made a careful analysis of national test results in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject including gender issues and has set realistic and manageable targets for improvement. The school's resources for mathematics are satisfactory overall and efficiently used. Specific government grants, such as for the Booster and Springboard classes are used well and small groups of lower attaining pupils are effectively targeted for additional support.

## **SCIENCE**

116. Teacher assessments for 2000 showed that by the end of Year 2 pupils achieved standards that were well below national average. However, the results for 2001 show that there had been a significant improvement with standards being close to the national average, and well above those for pupils in similar schools. Currently standards of attainment are in line with national expectations and this represents good improvement by the school since the previous inspection report.
117. Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 are below average, but they are improving each year. The results for 2001 show that over the last four years the percentage of pupils achieving the required grade has doubled. However, there has been little improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher grade and this is a major factor in the school's performance being below average, even when compared with pupils in similar schools. Statistical evidence shows over the last three-year period boys have achieved higher standards in the tests at the end of Year 6 than girls, and the school is investigating this.
118. The evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils in Year 2 are making satisfactory progress and are achieving standards that are broadly in line with the national average. Although pupils in Year 6 are also making satisfactory progress they started from a less secure baseline and standards overall are still below average. During lesson observation and work scrutiny, there were no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. However, boys do try to dominate practical work, and question and answer sessions, and teachers are experimenting with strategies to counteract this.
119. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all class activities and the quality of the support they are given enables them to make satisfactory progress in their studies. However, these pupils are frequently withdrawn from lessons to receive additional language support. Since this takes place at the same time each week, these pupils do not have equality of access to curriculum. Higher-attaining pupils receive less favourable support and they are given insufficient opportunities to achieve to their full potential. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are making good progress in developing the appropriate language and terminology.
120. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and this shows a good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and lessons are well planned. Pupils are keen to be involved but occasionally their enthusiasm results in noise levels becoming too high. Teachers work hard to maintain a disciplined environment in which all pupils have an

equal opportunity to learn. In Year 1 pupils are investigating light and dark; they know that light comes from a number of sources and can name some of them. Pupils in Year 2 are playing with electrical circuits and finding out what makes the bulb glow. The majority of them can name the individual parts of the circuit and understand the importance of the battery. They are beginning to record their findings in simple ways and many of them are starting to use the appropriate language and terminology. Conversation with a group of pupils in Year 2 two days after the lesson, gave evidence that they had a good understanding of the scientific content of the lesson. They could draw simple circuit diagrams and from illustrations could explain why some circuits would not light the bulb.

121. Teaching in Years 3 - 6 ranges from unsatisfactory to good, but is satisfactory overall. Pupils have positive attitudes to science. When teaching is good, it is the result of the teacher's meticulous preparation for the lesson and enthusiasm for the subject. One teacher made skilful use of a question and answer session to check for pupils' previous understanding before extending their learning. Pupils in this Year 5/6 class achieved average standards in understanding that air resistance slows down moving objects and that it acts in the opposite direction to the weight falling. They had good attitudes and were keen to do well for their teacher. The quality of some teaching in Year 3 /4 is unsatisfactory. In one lesson, insufficient preparation for the lesson resulted in some visual aids failing to work and much of the available time was not used effectively in allowing pupils to learn. There were too few resource materials and pupils had to work in such large groups that the majority of them took no part in assembling the circuits and switches.
122. Throughout the school, there is a tendency for teachers to dominate lessons and give pupils insufficient opportunity to investigate and experiment without already having been told the outcome. This is particularly true for higher-attaining pupils who are given too little freedom to be responsible for their own learning. Work scrutiny shows that all pupils complete the same tasks and it is not until they are in the Year 5/6 classes that they are encouraged to write their own accounts of experimental work. The presentation of written work is unsatisfactory in many classes and is an area for improvement.
123. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership for the subject. Assessment procedures are improving and there are plans to extend the very successful system already operating in English and mathematics to science. The co-ordinator's monitoring of last year's Year 6 test papers identified weaknesses in pupils' ability to understand written questions, and poor understanding of the subject specific terminology. As a result of this monitoring, each classroom now has a word bank displayed prominently of the key scientific words associated with the current module of work. Conversation with pupils gave evidence that this initiative is already improving standards.
124. Classroom observation and scrutiny of pupils' previous work did not reveal any evidence of the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. Insufficient use is made of this important cross-curricular tool in the teaching of science. Pupils, other than those in the Year 5/6 classes, are given limited opportunities to use their acquired literacy and numeracy skills. The subject provides little for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
125. The school has insufficient resource materials in order for all pupils to participate satisfactorily in practical activities. Pupils have to work in groups that are too large and there is an insufficient emphasis upon developing experimental and investigative science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

126. The 1999 inspection gave no judgement on standards of attainment in art and design, but in 1997 standards were in line with national expectations at Key Stage 1 and below expectations at Key Stage 2. Standards have declined at Key Stage 1 since then, due to the unsatisfactory nature of the curriculum.

127. Art and design was not timetabled for the period of the inspection as the school studies the non-core subjects in discrete blocks, so it was not possible to see any lessons. The school does not have a policy of keeping pupils' work. There were some sketchbooks from pupils at Key Stage 2 and a few paintings. The Year 6 sketchbooks showed some line drawings of movement, which were poor in quality. There were some pictures to show how the work had progressed. These pictures were similar; they all had a chalk football net as background with tracings of moving figures pasted over the top. There was no evidence of creativity, or investigation of different methods and materials. Portraits in a wall display by Year 6 were drawn in pencil and coloured in pencil crayon before being cut out and placed on a black background; this had been extended by cutting out silhouettes. The standard was below that expected for pupils in Year 6. Two further pieces of work that were found showed that pupils had experimented with doing portraits in the style of Picasso. There was no evidence of pupils using different techniques or a range of materials. The poor work seen and the lack of evidence in all aspects of art and design indicate that standards of attainment are at least below those expected, due to the restricted curriculum.
128. A discussion with pupils in Year 6 revealed that they found it hard to remember a piece of work that they had done of which they were proud. One pupil remembered painting a duck that the teacher had drawn when he was in the nursery whilst another remembered making a volcano for geography. They said that they did not use their sketchbooks regularly. They could not remember using materials such as clay or textiles. They said that they had not been to an art gallery but were allowed to use a computer program if they had finished their work. They could not remember the names of famous artists at first, giving Shakespeare as an example. Later in the discussion one pupil remembered Paul Klee but could not remember what his work was like. Their knowledge of colour mixing was poor. They thought that red and green made blue and that mixing blue and green made purple. They could not remember looking at art from other countries.
129. Art displays in the school show that the new co-ordinator is beginning to raise the profile of the subject. There are examples of good quality batik, embroidery, pastel drawings, pottery, and wooden and bronze sculptures all by artists and craftspeople, but they are not named. Pictures of work by different artists line the corridor walls and have interactive questions in order to engage the pupils.
130. The art and design co-ordinator has been in post for just under a year. He has formulated an action plan for the subject, which includes the improvement of resources and monitoring the teaching and learning of art and design. But it does not include the success criteria to ensure the raising of standards. As yet the co-ordinator has carried out no monitoring of the teaching and learning in the subject in order to raise standards. There are no planned procedures for assessment and pupils do not have portfolios of work that could be used to measure progress. The subject makes a poor contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

131. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils achieve standards in design and technology that are below those expected for their age. However, this is due mainly to a lack of curricular provision rather than pupils' ability to achieve the required standard. Insufficient curriculum time is allocated to the subject and this results in pupils receiving an unsatisfactory learning experience. They have access to a limited range of tools and materials and do not experience their full curriculum entitlement. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. These findings are similar to those reported in the 1997 inspection report. The school has made unsatisfactory progress in developing design and technology.
132. Teachers work hard within the constraints of the timetable to provide the pupils with interesting tasks and challenges. They have satisfactory subject knowledge, which enables them to give clear explanations to their pupils. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages.



Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this leads to a positive working environment being immediately established at the start of lessons. The majority of pupils have good attitudes and they settle down to work quickly. They enjoy the lessons and give good support to one another when working in pairs or small groups. They share equipment sensibly and observe all safety regulations fully.

133. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about their previous experiences, but these conversations give evidence of the limited range of materials and tools they have used as they progress through the school. They have very little experience of the tools necessary to cut and shape wood or other stiff materials. Likewise, they have limited knowledge of the methods and substances that can be used to join materials and components in a permanent way. Their current work on a project to design and make a slipper shows that although they have made satisfactory progress in developing practical skills, those for designing and evaluating are weak.
134. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making satisfactory progress in developing the skills required to cut and join. In Year 1, pupils are looking at pop-up books and collecting ideas to design and make a pop-up Christmas card. The majority of them are able to cut around a previously drawn shape and use crayons, pastels and paint to decorate their design. Pupils in Year 2 are investigating winding mechanisms and are working towards a model of Incy Wincy Spider climbing a spout. In order to develop ideas and skills they have used construction kits to make models with interlocking cogwheels and winding mechanisms. The classroom display includes cardboard box models with winding mechanisms made out of dowel rod, cotton reels, and string. The higher-attaining pupils are able to explain how they work and why they do not work very well. Although some models are of an average standard, achievement is below average for the majority of pupils. Development of practical skills is satisfactory but there is an insufficient focus upon designing and evaluating. Pupils on the special educational needs register are fully integrated into all classroom activities. They are well supported and this enables them to make satisfactory progress in their studies. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are also making satisfactory progress in developing skills and gaining knowledge.
135. Teachers know their pupils well but there are no agreed procedures for assessing pupils' levels of attainment and monitoring their progress across the school. End of year reports are informative but do not give a clear indication of what standard a pupil has achieved. The school has adopted national guidelines to support teachers' termly planning. These are being sensibly introduced but at present time, they are insufficiently adapted to the individual needs of the school. In addition, where different year groups are studying the same topic plans do not adequately show that the tasks will be at a higher level for the older pupils. Although the quality of teachers' planning has improved since the previous inspection, there are still weaknesses. Lesson planning contains insufficient details of tasks that extend the learning of higher-attaining pupils and enable them to achieve to their full potential. Pupils' numeracy skills are insufficiently used within the subject.
136. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are able to attend an after-school cookery club. They attend for six sessions before moving on to another activity. During the inspection, two adults were supervising ten Year 5 pupils. The pupils worked in pairs to prepare different ingredients to make a pizza. Some of them used the sharp knives skilfully to slice tomatoes, peppers, ham, and mushrooms, whilst two of them grated cheese. This is an important facility because it gives pupils additional opportunities to develop important life-skills. The learning was fun and pupils and adults made this an enjoyable occasion.
137. The co-ordinator gives a satisfactory lead to the subject. She is aware of the need to increase the time allocated for teaching the subject in order to provide pupils with a broader curriculum experience. She has an allocation of non-contact time in which to observe colleagues in their classrooms and monitor levels of attainment across the school. This is a new development and has been in place for too short a time to judge how effectively it is being used. Resource levels are unsatisfactory even to deliver the current narrow curriculum programme. In order to raise standards pupils need to have access to a wider range of tools, materials, and equipment.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

138. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are below those expected nationally. This is due mainly to the very small amount of time given to geography on the timetable and the pupils' weak skills in literacy. At the inspection in December 1999 there was no mention of standards in geography. No lessons were timetabled at Key Stage 1 during the inspection but at Key Stage 2 there were two lessons observed and pupils interviewed.
139. There was a display of work displayed in the corridor by pupils in Year 2, titled "Our Local Area." This was the only evidence available. The display contained a range of activities including appropriately drawn maps of the local area drawn by the pupils, envelopes with their address and post code written by the pupils and some computer generated pictures of their homes using the art program "Dazzle". Supporting the pupils' work were a number of relevant aerial photographs of New Parks and the city of Leicester. The envelopes represented the only written work in the display and emphasised pupils' limited literacy skills.
140. Two lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, both were satisfactory and the pupils in a year 5/6 class enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the amenities, which they would choose in a tourist resort. In the limited time available they made satisfactory progress in the group activities but written evidence in their books is limited and of an unsatisfactory standard. The main weakness is the limit on time for teaching the essential skills and the generally weak standard of written work. There are a number of displays available to emphasise the topics studied, in particular their work on Jamaica as a contrasting locality. There are some interesting examples of pupils work involving mathematics in the graphs and information technology in the traffic census. The written explanations were limited or in some cases non-existent. The level of attainment is below the national expectation. The Year 4/5 class is involved with the environment and study the importance of re-cycling waste. In the group activity they worked well together and came to some interesting conclusions, but the written work was limited and below standard.
141. The standard of teaching is satisfactory overall, and pupils make satisfactory progress in learning in the limited time available, but over time pupils have made unsatisfactory progress, due to the unsatisfactory curriculum. Pupils who were interviewed all stated that they enjoyed geography and though they were selected from the most able group showed good retentive memories. Teachers' planning and their management of pupils are good, but teaching the skills progressively is difficult in the short time available. The senior management has recognised that geography should have higher priority on the school improvement plan to improve teachers' knowledge, as it has been neglected in recent years.
142. The co-ordinator is one of the most experienced teachers in the school and recognises that there is an urgent need to raise the profile of geography. There are some organised visits particularly when pupils are investigating rivers. The co-ordinator recognises that the new government recommended guidelines do not represent a scheme of work and modifications have been made to ensure that the units of study are used correctly.

## **HISTORY**

143. Attainment in history is well below expectations at the end of both key stages. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and these judgements are based on evidence from the lesson seen, teachers' planning, the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Progress in learning throughout both key stages is unsatisfactory for all groups of pupils, including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. No judgement was made about history in 1999.

144. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have only a sketchy understanding of chronology, when for example in a Year 2 class, the teacher discusses with pupils where to place Louis Braille on a time-line. Discussions with pupils reveal poor historical skills and they are unable to identify differences between the past and present. They are unable to explain how they can find out about the past through sources of evidence and show limited knowledge and understanding of significant men and women and past events from history. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show poor chronological understanding and cannot place important people and events into correct periods of time. They believe the Ancient Egyptians lived after the Roman invasion of Britain, and have little concept of BC and AD. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the features of different periods in history is limited and they are unable to explain the terms "invade" and "settle" in the context of Roman Britain. They do not recognise the word "archaeology" when discussing historical evidence, but know that information from secondary sources can be found in books and by using information and communication technology. They remember visits to museums in terms of the activities provided, but are unable to connect these activities to the experiences of people in the past. For example, they can remember going down a mine in a museum, but find difficulty relating the experience to the lives of Victorian working children.
145. The quality of teaching and learning in history is unsatisfactory. Teachers' planning is inadequate and the only evidence is the National Curriculum study units and government guide-lines for medium term planning, which have not been customised to suit the needs of the school. There is insufficient evidence to judge teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Assessment is unsatisfactory. There is no systematic whole-school approach to the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress so that teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils can and cannot do. The time allocation to the subject is below that recommended, and if this important issue is addressed the profile of history within the school will be raised and pupils' historical knowledge and skills will improve.
146. Discussions with pupils reveal an interest in the past and an eagerness to learn more. They enjoy out of school visits and value the opportunities it gives them to learn about the social conditions of past periods of history. Pupils in Year1 visit Belgrave Hall, Leicester for the study of Victorians, those in Year 3/4 visit New Walk Museum and Jewry Wall Museum for the Ancient Egyptians and Romans and pupils in Years 5/6 visit the Black Country Museum to look at Victorians. Used wisely and in conjunction with a rigorous programme of study, these visits can enhance pupils' learning opportunities. The resources for history are satisfactory. The school does not belong to a museum loan scheme but borrows history topic books from the local education authority's school project library. The subject makes an unsatisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development. The co-ordinator is well aware of the shortcomings in the provision because English and mathematics have been the priority in recent years. She is eager to improve standards throughout the school. Attainment can only be raised by a reassessment of the time allocation both weekly, and between each history module, and with dynamic teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

147. No overall judgement was made about information and communication technology in 1999, although the new computer suite had just started to be used. There have been some improvements to pupils' standards since then, although these still are not enough. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have made satisfactory progress from their earlier skill levels and overall standards of attainment in information and communication technology are in line with the expected level for their age. Progress in learning has been too slow through Key Stage 2 and by the end of the key stage a large proportion of pupils have not reached the expected level of knowledge and skill. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress in their early years but are below the expected level by the end of Year 6. There is little discernable difference in the performance of boys and girls. The reason for the low standards is that information and communication technology has not been taught sufficiently, or in enough depth in the recent past; the curriculum is much better now.

148. In Year 1 pupils are able to use 'Text ease'. They are able to choose which font they want to use and to alter the colour of the font. They can add shadow and a third-dimension to the text. They have had some practice in presenting data in pictograms using data collected from the class. They are able to click and drag labels in work that they have been doing on light sources for science. The higher achieving pupils are able to also type in some of their own words and move them round the screen. They have also found and printed pictures for 'night and day' in science. In Year 2 pupils have used the poems that they have done in English to practice their word processing skills, changing the font, its colour and its size. In geography they have used the program 'Dazzle' to draw pictures of what they pass on their journeys to home and to school. They are able to fill in blocks of colour and spray paint to good effect. They use CD-ROMS to find out information using the menu. Most pupils have computers at home and this gives them confidence.
149. The majority of pupils are operating at a standard of attainment that is below that expected for their age. By Year 6 pupils have competent skills in word-processing. They have had some experience of using information and communication technology for data handling and display, but few opportunities to create sequences of instructions to control events or to use simulations to explore alternative actions and consider 'what if' questions to make choices. The school has a staff-training programme to give them the knowledge and confidence to teach these areas, as their knowledge and understanding are not as good as they should be.
150. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 found that the first time that they attempted to cut and paste the majority of them were unable to remember the steps needed to execute the piece of work. In Years 4 and 5 pupils use information and communication technology to change, modify and correct their work. The higher achieving pupils are able to use 'tools' to change font with ease but other pupils are unable to highlight or use 'tools'. All pupils can load and save their work but few pupils can change the font style. Pupils in Year 5 can use a mouse to select a program, enter and amend data on a spreadsheet, altering the column widths to accommodate longer words. They can save data and retrieve previously stored data but they too are working at a lower standard than would be expected for their age. A few pupils are more competent; they use two hands on the keyboard, work quickly, and can total columns using short cuts and take action to stay within the budget.
151. Pupils in Year 6 know that the microchip is used in some everyday items. Those pupils who have computers at home use e-mail although not at school as the school does not have this facility. They mainly use their computers for games, e-mail and surfing the net although one pupil had used a spreadsheet program for his mathematics homework. They have used information and communication technology in mathematics for calculations and word processing in religious education. They have used some art software in art and design, and design and technology, and used a commercial CD-ROM to find out information for geography and history.
152. All pupils seen working on computers enjoyed it and most worked with sustained concentration. Pupils respond very positively to friendly enthusiastic teaching styles and in these lessons pupils maintain good attitudes and behaviour throughout. On the whole pupils work well in pairs, sharing responsibility for entering data and give good support to one another. However, this is not always so and in one lesson where higher achieving pupils supported those of lower achievement, the higher achieving pupils were doing all of the work. This left a significant minority who used the time inappropriately until corrected by the teacher. Staff are aware of the importance of information and communication technology skills and are working conscientiously to develop their confidence, skills and knowledge. Although teachers use information and communication technology in a cross-curricular way this is generally carried out in the computer suite despite the fact that all classrooms have at least one networked computer. Very little use of the computer as part of lessons in the classroom was seen on inspection.
153. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, but the standards attained by pupils suggest that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teaching in lessons seen in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory with some good

teaching. Where the teaching is good, staff have good subject knowledge and understanding which enables them to improve the pupils learning. Effective use is made of the plenary session to reinforce and evaluate the progress made over the lesson. Clear planning ensures that all of the time available is used positively. The establishment of a good learning environment enables pupils to develop skills and gain knowledge and understanding.

154. Resources for information and communication technology have improved considerably with the addition of an interactive whiteboard. The computer suite enables all pupils to have regular opportunities to develop and practice their information and communication technology skills. However, the planning of other lessons provides too few opportunities for pupils to use and develop information and communication technology skills. For example computers in classrooms were underused in literacy and numeracy where pupils could have developed their subject learning and computer skills at the same time.
155. The co-ordinator has only been in post since September. There is an appropriate action plan for the subject, but it does not include assessment. The co-ordinator has a firm grasp of what standards are like at both key stages. It is anticipated that the use of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning will enable her to promote the best practice which will lead to increased standards. The co-ordinator is compiling a useful portfolio of work from her class to use as a model for teachers to assess against national standards.

## MUSIC

156. The 1997 inspection found that standards of attainment were below expectations at both key stages and that pupils' progress in learning was unsatisfactory. Singing was unsatisfactory and pupils' musical knowledge was limited by the curriculum. The 1999 report stated that standards of attainment still needed to be raised. Currently pupils' achievements are still unsatisfactory at both key stages due to the limited nature of the curriculum, the unsatisfactory teaching and the low profile the subject has had since 1997. Standards in music are well below those expected by the end of Key Stage 2. So there has been no improvement in the subject in four and a half years.
157. However, the current provision is changing, and the future looks brighter. A new co-ordinator has been appointed who has specialist skills and who knows what needs doing. There is input to the teaching by outside professionals and by a teacher at a "Beacon school", and so pupils have started to make progress in their learning.
158. From the class lessons observed pupils' attainment is at least below that expected, and it is well below in singing at Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment varies at Key Stage 1, depending on the teachers' expertise and the behaviour problems in the class. In the limited range of performance that was observed, including singing and playing untuned percussion instruments, pupils' standards of attainment were mostly below those expected. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 are essentially doing the same work on composition, as they have done so little in the past. Pupils have little knowledge and understanding of notation, even whether a written note is higher or lower than the next one. Pupils' skill and understanding are well below those expected for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are dissatisfied with their performance, but do not know how to improve it.
159. Pupils at Key Stage 2 were also heard singing altogether under the direction of the visiting "Beacon school" singing teacher. They sang much better as a result of her spirited delivery, the sense of fun engendered, and firm control of the large group of pupils. It was clear, in this session, that pupils enjoy singing when the conditions are right. This teacher is a real asset for Parks School, but opportunities are being missed for staff to learn from her; it is the staff as well as the pupils that should benefit from her expertise.
160. Sixteen pupils of all abilities, in Year 4, are given the chance to learn a musical instrument free of charge, with money from the Education Action Zone and Arts in Education. The pupils who played the cornets and violins clearly enjoyed these lessons. The new violinists had made good

progress in a few weeks, due to the lively, expert teaching of the visiting tutor. One young cornet player was extremely enthusiastic, and had clearly done some constructive practice, which is leading to good progress in the production of his notes. These lessons demonstrate what can be done with skilled input.

161. The subject suffers as a result of having had too low a profile in the school. Many opportunities are missed to develop pupils' musical knowledge and understanding and to use music in other subjects. Currently pupils have too few opportunities to listen to and appraise different sorts of music, although the music playing in the central corridor is raising interest and establishes a calm environment. Pupils know very little about music in general, even modern popular music. There are few resources available to help them learn about music from non-Western cultures. Information and communication technology is insufficiently used, even for pupils to record their own performance and compositions. There are many opportunities missed to use the subject to enhance pupils' cultural development.
162. The teaching has been unsatisfactory over time, but that seen during the inspection was generally satisfactory. Too little time is given to the formal teaching of the subject, and many teachers lack the skill and the training to deliver the subject in the most effective way. Most teachers do not know how little pupils' know, understand and can do, compared with pupils of the same age. The knowledgeable co-ordinator is aware of this and has appropriate plans to liven up the subject. She has devised a new policy and is adapting schemes of work based on an appropriate scheme from the local education authority and a government approved scheme.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

163. By the end of each key stage the majority of pupils achieve the expected standards for their age. However, in all classes some pupils attain standards that are above average, particularly older pupils in swimming. All pupils are included in lessons. Those with special educational needs or who might find the language hard to understand are well supported and this enables them to make satisfactory progress in developing skills and gaining knowledge. These findings reflect those of the previous inspection reports.
164. Pupils in Year 1 are investigating how to move in a variety of ways whilst changing speed and direction. They are keen to be involved and try hard to respond quickly to instructions. The majority of them are able to adopt tall shapes and crouched shapes and perform forward rolls. Pupils in Year 2 are developing hand and eye co-ordination and the skills necessary to catch and throw a beanbag. They work enthusiastically in pairs and give good support to one another. The quality of teaching in both observed lessons was satisfactory. Teachers focus upon developing pupils' physical skills and improving their control of body movements. Lessons are fun and almost all pupils respond positively to the encouraging and supportive teaching styles adopted by their teachers. A weakness in both lessons was that too much time was devoted to giving instructions and this reduced the time available for pupils to be physical active.
165. Older pupils in the Year 5/6 classes are expected to sustain periods of vigorous activity in their warm-up sessions. In developing basic effective hockey skills, they observe all safety rules, use space effectively, and take care to avoid other pupils. There is good development of skills necessary to be an effective member of a small team. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory and it was good overall. Lessons are well planned and teachers make good use of the available time. They have friendly, supportive, and encouraging teaching styles that result in pupils having good attitudes and co-operating fully.
166. Lesson observation during the inspection showed that at boys in Key Stage 2 often try to dominate the practical sessions and take the leading roles. Teachers are aware of the need to encourage girls to become more involved in the activities and are taking steps to ensure that they have equal opportunities to participate fully in all activities and improve their physical skills. A good feature of

many lessons is the opportunity pupils are given to comment on their own and other pupils' performances. They give considerable thought for others pupils' feelings and this results in observations being positive and constructive. Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

167. Swimming is included in the timetable for all pupils in Year 2 to 6. Pupils in the Year 5/6 and Year 2 classes attend for eight weeks, and those in the Year 3, 3/4 and 4/5 for 15 weeks. The high mobility of pupils on the school roll means that some pupils do not experience the whole programme of instruction. However, standards are good. Of the 39 pupils in last year's Year 6 group three-quarters of them could swim 25 metres, and approximately a half could swim much longer distances.
168. Pupils are able to play organised games at lunchtime. During the inspection, these included tennis, hockey, and football. There is an extra-curricular football club but this is the only sporting activity that is organised outside normal school hours. In responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few parents expressed concerns about the range of extra-curricular sporting activities. The inspection teams view is that the range and number of extra-curricular sporting activities are below average for this size and type of school.
169. The co-ordinator gives a satisfactory lead to the subject. She monitors teachers' planning to ensure that the agreed curriculum programme is being followed and gives help and advice to her colleagues. She knows that dance needs to be improved. The school has a satisfactory range of resource materials to support teaching and learning. Accommodation is good and all areas are used well.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

170. Pupils have knowledge and understanding in line with that expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1, but by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have not learned enough and they have insufficient knowledge; this is because they have not had consistent teaching over the last two years. There was no overt reference to pupils' standards in religious education in the 1999 report, but in 1997 it was stated that pupils' attainment was in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Therefore, it would appear that standards have declined in the last four and a half years. In 1997 it seems as if pupils were taught lots of facts about religions, but they did not understand religious concepts. The school accepted this, and staff have made an effort to ensure that there is a truly spiritual element in religious education lessons. The opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, in current lessons, is satisfactory, although still more could be made. However, the present curriculum has so much in it that older pupils are confused, and so their knowledge and understanding of different world faiths is below that expected.
171. Pupils in Year 2 show a real interest in the subject. They are able to discuss, in very simple terms, why homes are important and special. They display a real sense of belonging, which has been fostered by the school. They know the names of the places of worship of Christians, Muslims and Hindus. Their thinking and their knowledge of the special places of different faiths show sensitive teaching in the past. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can explore the importance of personal feelings, when considering the rules set by different communities and by different faiths. One class group were extremely well behaved and showed excellent attitudes to their learning due to the well planned and appropriate teaching in the lesson. This sort of lesson, and the positive response, does much to promote pupils' social and cultural development. However, the low level of work in pupils' books, and their total confusion about the basic concepts of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, shows that little has been done in the past.
172. Pupils in Year 6 find it hard to talk about the key aspects of the Christian religion, Jesus' life and, especially his death. They do not know that Muslims pray to Allah, and cannot state the beliefs of Hindus. They confuse religious and cultural festivals, and do not know what Diwali is, even

though there is a large display in a prominent place in the school. They cannot talk about the special practices of each religion, but they do know that many people find religion a central part of their lives. Unlike the pupils in Year 2, they do not know the names of the places of worship of the major religious faiths.

173. There was very little work to look at, and that seen was mostly all the same for all pupils in the class, including those with special educational needs and the more able. The teaching seen during the inspection was often good, but, over time, it has been unsatisfactory as it has been based on an unsatisfactory curriculum and too little notice was taken of pupils' misunderstanding. Teachers took too few opportunities to enhance pupils' literacy skills by providing work that would enable them to write their views and to improve their writing about sensitive issues. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are well supported, but opportunities are missed to use their different experiences of life to add to the richness of religious education lessons.
174. The new policy and framework for the teaching for religious education is satisfactory; three major world religions are to be studied, with reference to others as appropriate. However, staff have been free to interpret this as they choose, and so seven religions have been taught and older pupils have muddled them up. This wide curriculum, combined with low teaching time, which is significantly less for pupils in Key Stage 2 than that set out in the Agreed Syllabus, means that older pupils do not have a clear idea about the basic ideas of Christianity, let alone the major faiths selected, which are Islam and Hinduism as well as Christianity.
175. The subject has had too little emphasis in the overall curriculum until recently. There has been no assessment to inform new teachers of what pupils know and understand. There was no resource list, few visits to places of worship, no staff training and no monitoring of teaching. The new co-ordinator is aware of the deficiencies in the planning and teaching, and has appropriate plans to remedy these. The leadership of the subject has been unsatisfactory over time, but is satisfactory now.