

INSPECTION REPORT

MERIDIAN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Peacehaven

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114475

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Mills

Reporting inspector: Malcolm Childs
20142

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th March 2000

Inspection number: 105573

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Deborah Donovan
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Malcolm Childs	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Marion Saunders	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Stephen Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; History; Modern foreign language.	
Gavin Jones	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Design and technology; Physical education; Special educational needs.	
Shelagh Halley	<i>Team inspector</i>	Under fives; Information technology.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Lionel Farraway	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Music; Religious education; Equal opportunities.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Meridian is a larger than average primary school with 347 pupils on roll, 184 of whom are boys and 163 are girls. A further 18 children under five attend the reception year on a part-time basis. The school roll has been declining year on year since 1995, when there were 453 pupils on roll.

The school serves an area of mixed private and rented accommodation. Unemployment is rising and there are relatively few professional families. Only two pupils come from homes where English is an additional language.

Attainment on entry is below average, primarily because of weaknesses in basic language skills. A total of 128 pupils (36 per cent of the school roll) have some degree of special educational need, and 27 of these pupils (8 per cent of the school roll) are on the higher stages of need. Of these, one pupil is undergoing statutory assessment and four have statements of special educational need. Overall the percentage of pupils having special educational needs is well above the national average. At the time of the last statutory assessments in 1999, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was 18 per cent, which was broadly in line with the national average.

The school has set the following agreed targets for the percentages of pupils in Year 6 expected to achieve Level 4 or above in English and mathematics:

	2000	2001
English	78%	82%
Mathematics	75%	80%

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory level of education overall, but has many strengths, ranging from the good quality and range of the curriculum offered across both key stages to the above average standards being achieved across the school in art. Above average standards are also being achieved in music in Key Stage 2, and the provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school also enhances the quality of learning through very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent.

Nevertheless, attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology remains low, especially in Key Stage 1. The recent improvements in the quality of leadership and curriculum management, together with the generally satisfactory to good teaching observed (58 per cent good or better, 38 per cent satisfactory and 4 per cent unsatisfactory), indicate that the school is improving and is now much more effective than it was.

While standards in both key stages are rising, many of the improvements are still too recent to have had their full impact. Taking this into account, and the financial difficulties that are currently having to be managed because of the falling roll, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in art are well above average in both key stages.
- Standards in music are above average in Key Stage 2.
- It helps pupils to develop good attitudes and values.
- It provides a wide range of good quality learning opportunities.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- It looks after the pupils' welfare very well.
- The governing body is currently providing effective oversight of the work of the school.

What could be improved

- Though improving, standards in English and mathematics and science are lower than they should be, especially in Key Stage 1.
- The information technology curriculum lacks sufficient structure to ensure progressive development and consolidation of skills.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has successfully addressed all the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection. Standards in design and technology, music and spelling have improved and, in the case of music, are above average in Key Stage 2. Resource provision is now satisfactory in design and technology, geography and history, and is good in music.

A good whole-school assessment policy is in operation. While satisfactory overall, there are particular strengths in assessment in mathematics and special educational needs. The school is now working to improve the ways in which the good range of information available about pupils' progress and standards is used, so that more effective targets for individual improvement can be given to pupils. While there is a satisfactory marking policy, there has been less improvement in this aspect of assessment, and the quality of formal marking is variable across the school.

With the exception of the under fives and physical education, where the lack of schemes of work is adversely affecting standards, good quality schemes of work are now in place. These are primarily based on the requirements of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, on other recent national guidance, and, on the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

Set against all these positive features has been a decline in levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 1. This trend was reversed in the 1999 statutory tests and the improvement that took place then is continuing, although standards have yet to return to their level at the time of the last inspection.

Although no longer an underachieving school, the changes in management and teaching have only recently been established and have yet to prove themselves. Nevertheless, they represent a significant improvement and confirm the commitment of the school to raising standards and improving the quality of learning, and its capacity to succeed.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	D	E
mathematics	C	C	D	E
science	D	D	D	D

<i>Key</i>	
<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

Standards in English, mathematics and science in the 1999 statutory tests were below the national average and, when compared with similar schools¹, they were well below in English and mathematics. However, when the proportions of pupils attaining Level 4 and above are considered, there has been a steadily improving trend over time in all three subjects. This improvement has been broadly in line with the improving trend nationally. Using these figures, standards were close to the national average, although the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well below the national average in English, and below the national average in mathematics and science.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 declined between 1996 and 1998, with the most serious drop taking place between 1997 and 1998. The school began to address this issue through the detailed analysis of the national test results and through changes in curriculum management and staffing. Many of these changes, principally the appointment of new core subject co-ordinators, only became effective in September 1999. Although the inspection confirmed that there are still weaknesses to be addressed in the core subjects, especially in English, these must be seen within the overall judgement that the school is taking appropriate action to raise standards and improve the quality of learning.

The importance of information technology and the range of resources available have changed significantly since the school was last inspected. Nevertheless, standards have fallen and are now below average in both key stages. The school has put in place a satisfactory information technology development plan, but this will not become fully effective until equipment funded under the National Grid for Learning initiative becomes available.

¹Schools with more than 8% and less than 20% of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Standards in religious education are appropriate for the age of the pupils and the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have very positive attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. It is of a high standard in most lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils have a mature understanding of their moral and social responsibilities. They are very courteous and polite to adults.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average.

When these aspects are considered together they are strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons observed, good or better in 58 per cent and very good or better in 21 per cent, reflecting the findings of the previous report. In the early years' classes, teaching is at least satisfactory and is good in more than 40 per cent of lessons. In Key Stage 1, almost half the teaching are good or better. Teaching is best in Key Stage 2, where two thirds of the teaching are good and a quarter is very good. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 4 and 5.

Standards are improving in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. The Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well and is being taught effectively by most teachers across the school. The Literacy Strategy has been satisfactorily introduced and is being taught effectively in Key Stage 2. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of literacy in Key Stage 1.

The good quality of teachers' planning and the increasingly effective use of monitoring and assessment are both having a positive effect on the overall quality of teaching. High expectations, good subject knowledge and a commitment to raising standards are strengths evident in much of the teaching, especially in Key Stage 2.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory for the under fives.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory for the under fives.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory provision is made to support the very small number of pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall and a strength of the school. The provision for social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of all its pupils.

The school has established good links with its parents. The information which parents receive, including reports on their children's progress, is generally good and some is very good. Within the context, through their supporting work in classrooms, assistance with school journeys, trips and sporting activities, fund raising and involvement with their children's homework. On balance parental involvement is having a satisfactory impact on the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher is providing a clear sense of direction for the future development of the school. There is evidence of significant improvement in the quality of the senior management team and subject co-ordination. These changes are in the early stages of development but are already having an impact on standards and the quality of learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors make a significant contribution to the school, particularly in managing the finances and in setting appropriate targets for improvement, particularly in relation to standards and the quality of teaching.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The way in which both the school managers and the governing body monitor teaching is an example of good practice. This means that targets for improvement are based on an accurate perception of the school's current strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school is generally using its resources well, but the range and quality available have been limited by the financial difficulties currently being experienced.

There are sufficient appropriately trained and experienced teachers to teach the full curriculum effectively and the provision of learning support staff is good. The accommodation provided, including the school grounds, is good and resource provision is generally satisfactory. Resource provision for music is good.

The headteacher, the senior management team and subject co-ordinators, together with the governing body, are providing effective leadership. However, many of the positive changes only came into effect at the start of the present academic year and their full impact has yet to take effect.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact that their children like school. • The progress that their children are making. • The behaviour in school. • The ease with which the school can be approached. • The way in which children are encouraged to be mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given. • The amount of information they receive. • The way in which the school works with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection confirms the overall positive views expressed by parents. However, a number of parents expressed concerns, the most important of which were as follows:

- * Twenty-four parents were not happy with the amount of homework given, primarily because they felt that it was too much. The inspection team found homework to be well used at Key Stage 2 and satisfactorily used at Key Stage 1.
- * Thirty-two parents did not feel well informed about their child's progress. The findings of the inspection are that parents are provided with good opportunities to consult with staff at formal consultation evenings and through the Thursday after school session, when class teachers are available to see parents. Termly information about the curriculum being followed is also provided for all parents.
- * Thirty-one parents felt that the school did not work closely with parents. The inspection found that the school makes a significant effort to make parents feel welcome in the school.
- * Twenty-three parents were dissatisfied with the range of activities outside lessons, primarily parents of under fives or children in the early part of Key Stage 1. The finding of the inspection is that there are limited opportunities for extra activities outside the classroom in Key Stage 1, but that the provision is good in Key Stage 2.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements:

The foundation stage

1. Children are admitted to the reception classes in the year in which they become five. They come with a range of experience and a number have had no opportunity to attend a pre-school playgroup. Baseline assessment confirms that the majority begin school with language and literacy skills which are below average, although some have above average levels of personal and social development. Given the importance of early language skills in other areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, attainment on entry is below average. By the time they are five, children are now achieving the desirable learning outcomes in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They exceed the level of skills expected in personal and social development, but significantly do not achieve this level in language and literacy. Overall the reception year provides a secure basis upon which Key Stage 1 can continue the improvement in standards begun in 1999.

Key Stages 1 and 2

2. Pupils' performance in the statutory tests for seven year olds in reading, writing and mathematics declined between 1996 and 1998, although it was in 1998 alone that standards fell below the national average. Improvements in the management structure of the school, combined with staffing changes, led to a reversal of this trend in 1999. Here standards rose significantly in all three subjects, while remaining both below the national average and below the levels being achieved at the time of the last inspection in 1996. Standards in 1999 were also well below those being achieved by similar schools. The school has recognised that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have not been high enough and the changes recently put in place are intended to address this concern. The early indications are that they are being successful; that the improving trend begun in 1999 is continuing, and that the school will achieve its published targets for the end of the present year. Nevertheless, there is still evidence of underachievement as many of the changes were only fully established in September 1999, and it is not yet possible to observe their full impact. Standards in science are also below average but showing evidence of improvement in line with those in the other core subjects.

3. The standards achieved by the 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science in the 1999 statutory tests were close to the national average. However, when these results are compared with the results of similar schools, they were well below average in English and mathematics, and below average in science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well below the national average in English, and below the national average in mathematics and science. Although standards in mathematics declined slightly between 1998 and 1999, the trend for all three subjects over time has been improvement at a rate similar to improvement nationally. There is more consistently good or very good teaching in Key Stage 2 and this is having a positive impact on standards, with the school on course to achieve its target for the year 2000. There is no evidence of underachievement on the part of the majority of pupils, although the school has recognised the need to refine its target-setting

procedures so that individual pupils, especially the small number of higher attaining pupils, may be given more effective objectives for improvement. The school is also developing a policy for the more able in order to meet their needs more effectively. There was a 12 per cent difference in the proportion of boys and girls achieving Level 4 in English in the 1999 national tests. The school has analysed the reasons for this difference and is currently refining its monitoring and assessment procedures for individual pupils in order to provide more effective targets for individual improvement. In the lessons observed during the inspection work in English, mathematics and science, was being undertaken equally well by boys and girls.

4. There are weaknesses in the way reading is taught in Key Stage 1 which have an adverse effect on the quality of learning. Principally, the school is still relying on a collection of children's fiction without the support of a reading scheme. Although the books available have been graded into an appropriate sequence, a significant number of pupils are frustrated in their efforts to improve because the books that they are given to read are too difficult for them. This leads to a lower level of interest in books than that usually found in pupils of this age. These weaknesses have been identified by the school and the teaching of reading is currently being given priority for staff in-service training. Nevertheless, the indications are that the quality of learning is now satisfactory across Key Stage 1. However, the quality of learning in reading is good in Key Stage 2 and, by the age of eleven, most pupils read longer texts for themselves at the expected level with sustained concentration. Most have favourite authors, although their ability to discuss them and the books that they write is limited by less well-developed skills in speaking and listening.

5. Below average literacy skills at the start of Key Stage 1 are evident in the limited quality and range of writing observed. However, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are writing with some degree of control and for a variety of purposes, such as stories, personal journals and descriptions. Although some pupils are writing extended stories by the age of seven, showing good understanding of the way in which a story should be written, they generally have a limited range of vocabulary for their age. Overall the quality of learning in writing in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory. To some extent this is because targets in literacy lessons do not always prepare pupils well enough for the writing tasks that follow.

6. The slow start made in literacy affects the quality of learning in the early part of Key Stage 2, although by the end of the key stage most pupils write successfully for an increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences. An especially positive feature is the way in which the close focus on good literature in the literacy hour is leading to an improvement to pupils' vocabulary and so to the quality of their perception and thought. Overall, the quality of learning between Year 3 and Year 6 is good. Nevertheless, some lack of pace in lessons is affecting standards adversely, and much of the writing observed was brief.

7. Because of the high proportion of curriculum time given to English, there is less opportunity to use literacy skills in other subjects. Nevertheless, in the majority of mathematics lessons observed there were effective opportunities for discussion, the reading of mathematical texts and the use of appropriate mathematical vocabulary, all contributing to the further development of literacy. Similar opportunities are provided in science and other subjects. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3 children gave their answers in complete sentences, using such language, as 'Five add five has the same value as 10.'

8. The quality of learning in numeracy is satisfactory across Key Stage 1 and good overall across Key Stage 2. Effective monitoring of teaching, good in-service training and very good curriculum planning are the key elements in the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. The effective use of mental and other oral activities in numeracy lessons in most classes is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Across both key stages the Numeracy Strategy is beginning to prove effective in sharpening pupils' recall of number facts and in developing their skills of mental calculation. Pupils have a good range of reliable methods to carry out calculations in their heads and, where appropriate, using pencil and paper. While mathematics is used across the curriculum in such subjects as science, design and technology and geography, the limited time spent on these subjects restricts such opportunities.

9. In science pupils presently in Year 2 are on course to achieve Level 2 or above in the end of year National Curriculum tests and assessments. However, the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 3 increasing as plans to refine the introduction of the schools innovative approach to investigative science become fully in place. At Key Stage 2 this emphasis on investigative science has been successful in addressing the issue of underachievement of higher attaining pupils. As a result standards are gradually rising as the quality of learning improves.

10. Standards in information technology have declined since the last inspection, when the school was a centre of excellence, and are below average for the ages of seven and eleven. This is primarily because the quality of learning has been adversely affected by the loss of much teacher expertise in the recent staff changes. In addition, the newly appointed co-ordinator is not yet familiar with all the resources available. New equipment to be provided under the National Grid for Learning initiative has yet to arrive. Nevertheless, pupils in Key Stage 1 have opportunities to use a word processor and a range of mathematical programs. They use computers to produce simple graphs, of the results, for example, of a survey of how they travel to school. These basic skills are extended in Key Stage 2, although the quality of learning remains unsatisfactory. By the end of the key stage most pupils can write text directly on to the computer, use simple data- handling programs and program a simple robotic device. However, they are generally unable to load programs or print their work without assistance.

11. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages and the quality of learning is satisfactory across the school. Nevertheless, the quality of written work, especially in Key Stage 1 and the early years of Key Stage 2, is limited by the weakness most pupils have in reading and writing.

12. Art is a strength of the school, with standards well above average. The good quality of learning that pupils show is the direct result of good teaching. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection.

13. Standards in design and technology are broadly average across the school and the quality of learning is satisfactory. Overall the school has made satisfactory progress in this subject since the time of the last inspection and good progress in relation to the improvement of teacher knowledge and the introduction of a scheme of work.

14. In geography and history, on the basis of available evidence, standards have declined since the last inspection and are now below average. The quality of learning is satisfactory in both geography and history across Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in history across Key Stage 2. However, it is unsatisfactory across Key Stage 2 in geography.

15. Standards in music are average across Key Stage 1 and above average across Key Stage 2. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when attainment was satisfactory across the school. The standards being achieved reflect the good quality learning that is taking place.

16. Although standards in physical education have declined since the time of the last inspection, when they were said to be well above national expectations, they remain average across the school. On the basis of the evidence available, and the limited range of physical activities observed, the quality of learning is satisfactory in both key stages.

17. Given the close proximity of the school to the channel ports, the enhancement of the curriculum through the teaching of French across the school is a positive feature. Standards are appropriate for the age of the pupils, and the quality of learning is good.

18. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are slower learners are supported well through good quality planning and the additional support provided by learning support assistants and parental volunteers. The National Code of Practice is closely followed and the targets within pupils' individual education plans are proving effective in helping most to achieve appropriate standards. The quality of learning is satisfactory for children under five and pupils in Key Stage 1, and it is good across Key Stage 2. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress across the school, but good progress at Key Stage 2. Where pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught by the special needs co-ordinator, they too make good progress.

19. Only two pupils have English as an additional language, but the school has made appropriate provision to meet their needs. They are achieving standards appropriate for their prior attainment and their quality of learning is satisfactory.

20. Overall the school is now well placed to make the necessary improvements in standards and quality of learning. The targets set for English and mathematics are both challenging and appropriate given the current context of the school. In spite of the concerns over standards identified in many subject paragraphs, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this is now an improving school, committed to raising attainment and, most importantly, with the capacity to succeed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They enjoy school and are appreciative of the opportunities offered to them through both their formal lessons and the good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils settle quickly to their lessons throughout the day and show an interest in what is being taught. They are confident in their dealings with both adults and each other and work well together in pairs and in groups, a particular feature of English, mathematics and science activities.

22. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Arguments within the playground are dealt with and discussed; incidents of challenging behaviour are dealt with in a consistent manner. Pupils understand the policies relating to behaviour and actively participate in agreeing class rules at the start of the year. The school's 'Golden Rule', 'Treat other people as you would like to be treated', is known by all pupils and provides an excellent objective for pupils of all ages. Pupils are very polite to adults in the school and frequently hold doors open for each other. Whilst there are some instances of missing items, pupils in general are trustworthy, as demonstrated by the availability of equipment around the school and the good provision of displays. A small number of exclusions have occurred and these have been appropriately handled.

23. The personal development of pupils and the quality of relationships in the school are good. Pupils throughout the school are involved in the daily routines: collecting registers, preparing the hall for assemblies and acting as monitors to the physical education store. Many small acts of kindness between pupils were observed, and on several occasions pupils were seen to volunteer to help those finding their lessons difficult. Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are very good and generally relationships between pupils are good. When there are disagreements, pupils respond well to the opportunities afforded them to try and resolve them and are able to express their feelings and try to understand other viewpoints. Pupils are confident that there are adults in the school who will help them if needed and that incidents of bullying or racism will be dealt with. Stereotypical views are challenged through circle time, as was seen in Year 6 when the view was stated that boys and girls always like different games.

24. Children under five and pupils in the reception classes settle quickly into the school routine and work well alongside each other, learning to share resources. During a 'Bear Hunt' around the school they showed a high level of awareness of the need not to disrupt other classes and also showed considerable concern for each other.

25. Attendance at the school is above the national average, and since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the rate of unauthorised absence, which is now below the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons observed, good or better in 58 per cent and very good or better in 21 per cent, reflecting the finding of the previous report. In the early years' classes, teaching is at least satisfactory and is good in more than 40 per cent of lessons. In Key Stage 1, almost half the teaching is good or better. Teaching is best in Key Stage 2 where two thirds of the teaching is good and a quarter is very good. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence suggests that the recent changes in the senior management of the school and, in particular in curriculum management are raising the quality of teaching and learning, which in turn is beginning to raise standards, especially in Key Stage 1.

27. Teaching is best in science, where all the teaching is satisfactory and more than half is good or better. In English, teaching is satisfactory and teaching within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy is beginning to impact upon standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. In mathematics, the effects of the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy are beginning to

improve standards, but teaching, though good overall, is inconsistent within year groups in both key stages. Where teaching is very good, for example in mathematics in Year 6, the teachers show very high expectations of their pupils, have good subject knowledge, the pupils respond positively and the quality of learning is also very good. Particular strengths are in the teaching of art and music, where there are significant proportions of very good teaching and (although in a small sample of lessons) in history and geography, where all the teaching observed is good. Teaching in information technology, physical education, French and religious education is satisfactory, and whilst most of the teaching in design and technology is satisfactory, there is a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching.

28. A particular strength across both key stages is good class management. Teachers create secure environments for learning. Through good relationships and effective strategies they maintain pupils' interest and levels of concentration. As a consequence, pupils adopt positive attitudes to their work and have the confidence to try out new ideas that enhance their learning.

29. In Key Stage 2, most teachers have a good command of subjects and have high expectations of pupils. Most pupils respond positively to the challenges provided and the brisker pace of lessons in this older age group, and they are keen to participate. Teachers' plan across year groups and planning is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Most teachers have clear learning objectives and assess pupils' learning throughout lessons, helping them to understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve. A weakness with some joint planning is the tendency to teach the lesson almost identically in both classes, without taking full account of differences in the context of each class. An area for further development is to provide more opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves and to develop their skills as independent learners.

30. The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. Teachers generally provide activities that enable all pupils to make progress at least commensurate with their prior attainment. At the time of the previous inspection, a strength of teaching was the effective use teachers made of the help provided by parents, students and governors. This is still the case. The special needs co-ordinator gives a strong lead in the teaching of special needs pupils. Several of the learning support assistants are using effective strategies to cater for the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs. The learning is good in these cases. Where non-teaching staff are asked to support small groups of pupils of differing abilities, including those with special needs, in Literacy Hour lessons, they lack clear guidance and plans in order to be wholly effective, and as a result, the learning is satisfactory and not good.

31. The evidence available confirms that the present Year 6 has progressed from below average standards on entry to standards that are close to the national average. In addition just over a quarter of the pupils now in Year 6 joined the school after the reception year, many of them during Key Stage 2. Given the falling standards that were evident at the end of Key Stage 1 this indicates that the quality of learning for this cohort has been good in Key Stage 2. While judged satisfactory overall the quality of teaching for the under fives is improving as a result of the changes in management and curriculum leadership. This is evident in the judgement that the majority of children under five will achieve all the desirable learning outcomes, with the exception of language and literacy, by their fifth birthday. Similarly the

quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is improving as appropriate strategies are adopted to improve areas of weakness – for example in some aspects of literacy teaching. The recent improvements in teaching may be ascribed to a number of factors: changes in staffing and staff responsibilities, substantial in service training, systematic and regular monitoring of teaching in the core subjects, and the setting of agreed targets.

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

32. The school provides a broad curriculum which follows statutory requirements and is further enriched by the teaching of French. There is, however, an imbalance in the amount of time allocated to English at the expense of other subjects, for example, religious education and information technology. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory but there is scope for further planned opportunities for outdoor activities. An informal programme for personal, social and health education includes work on drugs awareness, sex education and personal safety. The quality of work in this area is a strength of the school. A home-school agreement is well supported by most parents, although occasionally there are some who do not support the values of the school. Circle time will be implemented formally from the summer term. There are effective strategies for the teaching of numeracy and literacy skills, the school having adopted the national frameworks. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including after school sports clubs is provided for pupils at Key Stage 2, and the school fields successful teams in football and netball in the local leagues. Fewer of these opportunities, however, are offered for Key Stage 1. The daily act of collective worship meets statutory requirements and appropriate arrangements are made for pupils withdrawn from assemblies. The governing body has begun to monitor the curriculum effectively.

33. The issues surrounding the curriculum which were identified in the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed. Good policies and schemes of work are now in place for most subjects and design and technology follows the national guidance. There are, however, no schemes of work for physical education, for the under fives or for speaking and listening. This means that, although there is joint planning between teachers in the same year group, planning for progression in skills through the school is not quite so clear and is not always referred to in planning in Key Stage 1. The policy for information technology is currently being reviewed and there is a new policy for assessment. The curriculum as a whole awaits review in the light of expected new national guidance.

34. The school provides good opportunities for equal access of pupils to the full curriculum. Where there are factors inhibiting full access, such as below average reading standards, the school has identified these and is beginning to take appropriate action. Pupils with special educational needs feel equal partners in the life of the school. It affords them equal status and full access to the curriculum, including French. Support is carried out both within the classroom and through withdrawal to the Sunshine Room. The range of activities pupils with special educational needs are offered is of good quality, based very largely on their individual needs, and it meets their interests and aptitudes well.

35. The curriculum is enhanced by day visits to museums and places of interest, and an annual residential journey. The school welcomes visits from theatre groups such as the travelling planetarium and holds regular book weeks and fairs which are well supported by

pupils. Many members of the local community, including some with no family connection to the pupils, work voluntarily in the classrooms. Procedures for monitoring individual personal development are very good. Homework is used effectively to support learning in many subjects.

36. Provision for spiritual development is good, although religious education does not yet make its full contribution because of the restricted time allocation. Pupils are encouraged to explore their own thoughts and feelings through discussions in lessons and circle time, and through the expressive arts of drama, art and music. For example, they make thoughtful analyses of the work of artists like Kandinsky. They learn about the beliefs of others, for example Hinduism and Islam, and pupils have visited a synagogue to enable them to understand and respect faiths other than Christianity. There are frequent opportunities for reflection during assemblies.

37. Provision for moral education is good. Pupils negotiate classroom rules with their teachers at the start of the school year and understand and appreciate the systems in place for rewards and sanctions. They particularly enjoy the weekly commendation assemblies when pupils are praised for their performance, effort, behaviour and consideration for others. From their earliest days in the school, they are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. In the reception classes, they demonstrate their understanding of these principles in the mobiles they make, which carry their own messages of thanks and appreciation to others who have helped them. They generally conform well to expectations in the classroom, although not always on the playground.

38. Social development is very good. The school is conscious of the low standard of social skills in some children who are admitted to the reception classes before they are five, and teachers and other adults give very good examples of consideration for others. The quality of relationships is very good and pupils are confident that they can take their problems to at least one member of staff. Each class elects two members of the School Council, which meets regularly and has been instrumental in improving playground provision. Together with many other opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility and initiative the School Council makes an important contribution to the personal and social development of pupils. There are close links with the Baptist Church. The school lets its premises for playschemes in school holidays and this is much appreciated by parents. These playschemes are for pupils with very mixed abilities and youngsters can learn to work with others with a range of skills or disabilities. Social awareness is also heightened by various fund-raising activities for charities at home and abroad, and pupils have the opportunity to nominate a cause they wish to support, for instance, the Raystede Animal Shelter and the Blue Peter Appeal.

39. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils learn to understand and appreciate their own cultural heritage and art and music make a very good contribution to this area of learning. They have the opportunity to work with performers in visiting theatre groups like Firehouse Productions and the Polka Dot Theatre Company. During book fairs, they work with authors and poets, like Roger McGough and Michael Rosen, and with illustrators, dressing up as their favourite characters at the end of the week. They enjoy music concerts

provided by the local council and have recently had the very good experience of working with an artist-in-residence. While there are fewer opportunities for pupils to understand and appreciate the literature, art and music of other cultures, particularly from non-white, non-European sources those that are available make an important contribution to pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school is very successful at providing a safe and secure environment for pupils. There is a good Health and Safety policy, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Arrangements for first aid and pupils' health are very good. An annual risk assessment ensures that safe working practices are followed throughout the school. The child protection policy is well written and explicit, and staff receive regular briefings. Within the personal, social and health education programme and the sex education policy, there is a strong emphasis upon helping pupils to remain safe. Circle time also makes a good contribution to pupils' well-being by providing a structured opportunity for them to raise issues of concern.

41. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, both through the structured recording in classroom files and through the informal monitoring which occurs as a result of the trusting relationships within the school.

42. The school's policy for developing good behaviour in school, entitled '*Relationships in School*' is excellent. It is regularly reviewed and provides both guidelines for encouraging positive behaviour and strategies for managing challenging behaviour. The policy is applied consistently throughout the school and understood by pupils, who appreciate the associated system of certificates. Incidents of poor behaviour, both in the classroom and in the playground, are carefully recorded. Parents receive a useful booklet which explains the school's approach to behaviour issues and bullying. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality is very good, and parents are contacted on the first day of absence if no reason for the absence has been received.

43. Monitoring of pupils' academic performance is satisfactory. Since the last inspection the school has put in place a policy for planning, assessment and recording. Baseline assessments are made on entry and a range of assessment tools are used through the different year groups. The school analyses national test results and uses this information to target resources to particular groups of pupils. However, the use of assessment information to guide the planning in some subjects, for example geography, is not yet fully developed. An example is that the identical plans for lessons across year groups are not geared to the specific needs of pupils in the separate parallel classes. All pupils have individual targets, but these are sometimes not specific enough to be useful in raising achievement in the core skills. The day to day use of assessment in class is satisfactory, but the quality of marking is variable and does not always suggest targets for further improvement. Even where errors have been identified, these sometimes continue to occur without being followed up by the teacher.

44. The school meets fully the recommendations of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. It effectively identifies pupils' difficulties early in their school career and provides a sound programme for the pupils' development. There are new and good systems in place for assessing and recording pupils' progress on 'tracking' sheets. These lead to the

regular review and re-writing of the pupils' individual education plans in order to keep pace with the progress pupils make. Pupils have specific and measurable targets, including behaviour targets and those related to personal development. Parents are invited to be actively involved and outside agencies are used appropriately.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents are generally satisfied with the work of the school. In those areas where over 20 per cent of parents responding to the parent's questionnaire were dissatisfied, the inspection evidence overall, did not support their views for the reasons given earlier (ie: in the summary).

46. The school has a number of good strategies to encourage parents to become involved in its work. It encourages parents to help in the classroom, and those who do so make a good contribution through listening to pupils read and helping with group activities. This was seen to good effect in a Year 1 religious education class which was undertaking a role play, where a parent was able to provide good support to one group of pupils. There is an active parent teacher association which raised over £5000 last year and has provided the 'Trim Trail' in the playground, a feature well used and appreciated by pupils. The overall impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory.

47. The school provides a range of good quality information for parents, especially for the parents of reception children, and regularly distributes information about the curriculum, including curriculum workshops. School newsletters are well presented and informative. Annual reports to parents on pupils' progress are detailed and provide comprehensive information on the topics covered and what pupils are able to do. Reports include targets for the coming year, but some of these are not specific enough to be useful.

48. The school has effective systems for involving the parents of children with special educational needs. They are always invited into school to review their children's progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Although parents do not always take advantage of these formal occasions, the school nevertheless offers other opportunities such as open evenings, the weekly 'drop in' session and after school opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. A newly formed 'Forward together' group is currently involving a number of parents from Year 1 in coming into school each week in order to discuss how they might help their children at home in partnership with the school. This very positive development is making a very good contribution to enable parents to help their children at home, through providing them with specific exercises and strategies.

49. The school has a clear homework policy that conforms to national guidelines, but the amount of homework set is not universally accepted by parents, many of whom feel that there is too much which can have a detrimental effect on extra-curricular activities. However, the homework is set weekly and pupils know when homework is required to be completed

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. Since the last inspection in 1996, there have been considerable difficulties in staffing. These have affected the leadership and management of the school. As a result, while the school has been successful in addressing the key issues identified at that time, there was a decline in standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 between 1996 and 1998. Although standards improved between 1998 and 1999 they remained both below the national average and below the levels being achieved in 1996. However, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have continued to improve steadily since 1996 (notwithstanding a slight decline in mathematics in 1999) at a rate that is broadly similar to improvement nationally.

51. Changes in the character of the school intake account for some of the changes in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. The governing body and headteacher also took firm and appropriate action to address the weaknesses in teaching and curriculum provision, in order to reverse the serious decline in standards that took place primarily between 1997 and 1998. The resolution of a number of long-standing staffing issues, a 50 per cent changeover of staff and the opportunity to reconstitute the senior management team have meant that the school is now significantly different in its organisation and structure from that in existence prior to September 1999.

52. Many of the positive changes which have taken place are too recent to have had their full effect. For this reason, leadership and management at present are judged to be satisfactory with some good features. The headteacher's vision of a school that has a commitment both to high standards and to high levels of care for its pupils is now underpinned by a very effective acting deputy headteacher, who also manages Key Stage 2. In addition the newly appointed Key Stage 1 manager has improved morale within this phase and built an effective team who are going forward effectively to raise standards and the quality of learning. Newly appointed co-ordinators for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are also proving effective in setting targets for improvement and a clear sense of direction for the future. The amount of progress that this team has made in a relatively short time is impressive.

53. Although the special needs co-ordinator has only been in post since September, she has already made a significant impact, in spite of the fact that she is only paid to work two days a week. A new assessment and tracking scheme has been started and training has been given to learning support staff. She has given a very good lead with the quality of her own teaching, and initiatives such as the 'Forward together' group and the new format and writing of the individual education plans have meant a more focused view of the needs of individual pupils with special needs.

54. An important element in the improvements that are evident in the way in which the school is managed has been the effectiveness of the governing body. Not only do governors meet all the statutory requirements placed upon them, but they also carry out their responsibility for the general oversight of the school with an effectiveness that could serve as a model for others. For example, all governors have to meet a quality assurance standard, which includes a requirement to undergo appropriate training and to spend an appropriate amount of time in school. The governing body, many of whom are parents, has a high level of professional expertise and is unusually well informed. The chair and vice-chair provide very good leadership and have established rigorous, effective and yet relaxed relationships

with both the management and staff of the school, and their fellow governors. The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and was a prime mover in the staffing and management changes that have taken place over the last eighteen months.

55. Working well together, the governing body, the headteacher and her management team are now ensuring that the work of the school and its planned development are beginning to lead to a raising of standards. An important factor underpinning this improvement has been the high quality of monitoring of teaching. For example, subject co-ordinators have been given time to monitor teaching in their subjects directly and the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and the Key Stage 1 manager all monitor teaching on a regular timetabled basis. The willingness of staff to be monitored in this way and their willingness to allow members of the governing body also to monitor their work is an indication of the new confidence that is currently present amongst the majority of the teaching and other staff. Detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual staff has meant that the delegation of responsibilities is generally effective.

56. The governing body monitors the performance of the headteacher and she in turn appraises other members of staff. Appraisal is used to identify perceived strengths and weaknesses in performance and to set targets for future improvement and training that will help the school meet its targets, and, whenever possible, will support individual teachers' own wishes for their professional development. Many of the staff are recent appointments and will have their first experience of this process during this academic year.

57. In addition to the statutory targets for English and mathematics, the school identifies its own priorities and these are published within the school improvement plan. In order to make them more accessible, key targets are published separately in a document, *'Targets for 2000 and 2001'*. The targets chosen are appropriate, based on the consideration of objective evidence, and should contribute well to raising standards and the quality of learning. Most significantly, there is a strongly shared commitment to improvement amongst all staff, and a shared pride in their school. Given the overall effectiveness of the majority of the teachers there is also the capacity to succeed, and this is reflected in the small, but significant 'green shoots' of improvement that are taking place in relation to standards and the quality of learning in the core subjects.

58. A number of governors have professional financial expertise and this is apparent in the rigour with which the school improvement plan is the key element in determining budget priorities, once fixed costs have been addressed. The governing body's curriculum committee discusses and amends as necessary the suggestions of the school's senior management team for inclusion in the school development plan, and the finance committee considers the range of budgetary options provided by the school to support the proposed development plan.

59. The skill of the governing body in financial management in order to maintain the curriculum and raise standards is apparent in the way in which they have sought to manage the financial difficulties created by the current falling roll situation. Recognising that the financial position was difficult, they alerted the local authority and, with their agreement, produced an unbalanced budget for the current academic year. At the same time they have

produced a detailed set of proposals for implementation over the next five years that should enable the deficit to be addressed in a planned way that will minimise the impact on the school. This plan is to be formally considered by the local authority in the near future.

60. Day to day financial management is carried out well by the bursar, and all the personnel of the school office make a good contribution to the efficient day to day functioning of the school and its positive relations with parents. Systems for financial management are unobtrusive, and the way in which they are adapted to meet the pressures of unexpected costs (e.g. unplanned maintenance) confirm that they are sufficiently flexible. The use of a computerised financial management system means that the bursar is able to provide the management of the school with all the financial information needed. In addition, subject co-ordinators are provided with the financial information that they need to manage the resourcing of their subjects effectively. Funding from the Standards Fund has been used to provide good quality in-service training, and additional money provided to support pupils with special educational needs is being used well to improve the standards achieved and quality of learning experienced by these pupils. A good quality information technology development plan is in place and has been approved by the local Private Financial Initiative under the National Grid for Learning scheme, although the full benefits to the curriculum are unlikely to be apparent until the next academic year.

61. There are sufficient, appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to support the curriculum and the provision of learning support staff is good. The accommodation is good and has been imaginatively used, both inside the building, where no available learning space is wasted, and outside, where a good range of activities are provided within the school grounds. Learning resources are generally satisfactory. They are good for art and music across the school but they are unsatisfactory for English in Key Stage 1.

62. The improvements that have taken place recently have been dependent in part on the way in which staff new to the school, including those newly qualified, are inducted. The procedures that are in place, under the supervision of the acting deputy headteacher, are of good quality. They are used very well to provide new staff with an understanding of the overall ethos of the school and to encourage a commitment to it. Newly qualified staff are given regular time for additional training, including visits to other schools, and all those spoken to valued the support that they had received.

63. Given the current deficit financial situation, the school is particularly conscious of the need to get the best value possible: for example, by buying in bulk whenever possible, always obtaining a number of estimates and balancing cost against value.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to address the school's weaknesses, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- raise standards and improve learning in English by:
(*Paragraphs: 74 – 88*)
 - * providing a more structured curriculum in Key Stage 1;
 - * making better use of assessment information to identify specific targets more accurately for individual pupils, especially in relation to basic skills;
 - * ensuring an increase of teacher expectations in relation to the pace and accuracy of pupils' work.

- raise standards and improve learning in mathematics by:
(*Paragraphs: 89 – 98*)
 - * ensuring that the good quality assessment, monitoring and planning procedures now in place are applied consistently by all teachers;
 - * sharing the good practice already present in many classes.

- raise standards in Key Stage 1 science by:
(*Paragraphs: 99 – 109*)
 - * preparing the pupils better for the schools' investigative approach by first ensuring the acquisition of basic skills;
 - * refining the good joint planning further so that it more accurately reflects the needs of individual pupils;
 - * more consistent use of marking and assessment.

- raise standards and the quality of learning in information technology by:
(*Paragraphs: 127 – 134*)
 - * providing a structured curriculum that will ensure progressive consolidation and development of skills;
 - * making better use of available resources;
 - * ensuring the effective use of information technology across the curriculum.

65. In addition to the issues for action detailed above, there are other weaknesses that the school should consider:

- the lack of a clear policy for the under fives;
(*Paragraph: 73*)
- the lack of a policy for physical education;
(*Paragraph: 145*)
- the balance of time allocated to individual subjects;
(*Paragraph: 32*)
- the special needs co-ordinator needs to be given more time in school in order to make further improvements to the support for pupils with special education needs. This is especially important in Key Stage 1.
(*Paragraph: 53*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	37	38	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	347
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2	75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	138

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	95.4
National comparative data	94.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	37	23	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	25	29	25
	Girls	14	18	15
	Total	39	47	40
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	65 (61)	78 (74)	67 (63)
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	27	25	27
	Girls	16	15	18
	Total	43	40	45
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	72	67	75
	National	82	86	87

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	32	32	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	22	22	26
	Girls	26	21	26
	Total	48	43	52
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	75 (64)	67 (62)	81 (64)
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	23	22	26
	Girls	28	22	26
	Total	51	44	52
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	80	69	81
	National	68	69	75

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	344
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y R – Y 6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	24.7

Education support staff:

Y R – Y 6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	206

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	2	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.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	620961.00
Total expenditure	634621.00
Expenditure per pupil	1628.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	-10388.00
Balance carried forward to next year	-24048.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	353
Number of questionnaires returned	116

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	40	1	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	46	13	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	52	15	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	51	17	4	0
The teaching is good.	43	41	13	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	33	23	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	34	6	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	37	8	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	31	41	20	7	1
The school is well led and managed.	41	37	14	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	46	4	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	38	16	4	6

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

66. Children are admitted to the reception class in the year in which they are five. Not all have previously attended pre-school playgroups and assessment on entry shows that they begin school with language and literacy skills which are below the average, although they are above the average in personal and social development. Given the importance of early language skills, attainment on entry is below average. By the time they are five, children meet the national desirable learning outcomes in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative and aesthetic development. They exceed the national targets in personal and social development and do not achieve them in language and literacy. At the time of the inspection, there were eighteen children under five in the reception classes. One child has a statement of special educational need.

Language and literacy

67. All children speak clearly but not all are confident, and about half of them need prompting to express themselves. They chat happily to each other, adding detail to satisfy their listeners. They act out the story of the *'Bear Hunt'* and adapt their speech and mannerisms to the characters they are role-playing. Teachers makes good use of the school buildings in the hunt and their good planning ensures that children 'find' a bear. In 'show and tell' sessions, children exchange news and stories, sometimes talking 'through' their teddy bears. They take great pleasure in telling the adventures of Elvis the bear that they take turns in having at home for two nights. (Elvis was lucky enough to go to two birthday parties during the inspection.) Although the teacher has to prompt very heavily, this provides a good stimulus for imaginative speaking and careful listening, and children are beginning to copy their teachers' writing and to trace letters. There are, however, very few recognisable letters and very few children are writing independently. They handle books appropriately, telling the stories from clues in the pictures and a few are beginning to read for themselves. They take home reading books so that their parents may share them with them, and are very pleased when they learn all the words on the 'bones' packed in their cardboard dogs. However, the teaching of reading and the revealing of the pleasure of books are less effective than they should be. Instead of allowing children to flip aimlessly through pages, adults could for example, sit with a group and examine the books in detail. Although children make satisfactory progress, they do not achieve this national desirable learning outcome by the time they are five.

Mathematics

68. Children are very intrigued when teachers share sweets between teddies, leading to simple addition and subtraction and enabling them to learn and use the strategy of adding 'one more.' (One child who could not explain how he arrived at the correct conclusion simply declared, 'I don't know how I did it. I'm just a genius.') Effective questioning draws from children satisfactory knowledge and understanding, although some have to be prompted to recognise and make the figure four. Teachers make good use of the plenary session to show and share work on stories of six to consolidate and reinforce pupils' learning. Lessons are well prepared and resourced, and support staff are well briefed and appropriately deployed. Children are developing an appropriate vocabulary: for example 'one more', 'longer than' and

'shorter than.' Most sequence numbers from one to seven accurately, although some are less successful in seeking and making patterns. They make figures from play dough, explore number by counting cubs and use a computer to help them to write figures. They order and match teddies accurately by size and colour. Higher attainers sequence larger numbers, for instance 16 to 23, correctly. The mathematics corners in the classrooms are very well organised with tasks based on shapes, patterns, a 'feely-box' and pegboards, all of which encourage the exploration of number and pattern. Occasionally, children who are supposed to be working independently grow frustrated because there is insufficient support from teachers and classroom assistants, and they drift away to different activities. By the age of five, most pupils achieve the national desirable learning outcome.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Good teaching ensures that the children work with a variety of materials and tools competently and confidently, using rolling pins and play dough to try and reproduce bears. Adult helpers encourage the extension of skills in cutting, sewing and gluing. Children are very pleased by the idea of 'keeping Teddy warm' in a simple cloak and there are some good attempts at early sewing skills. Their fine motor skills are developing well in some very neat colouring-in. They learn to complete design sheets with little help, and learn about the different taste areas on the tongue. Children sequence accurately the stages of growth from babyhood to their own age. They discuss the differing smells of flowers, deciding whether a poppy or a nasturtium is nicer and take great care in planting seeds, showing true delight tamping down the compost in its individual pots. They successfully build a cave for the bears, using cartons and storage containers. Children use a computer to support their learning in several areas but they are not yet sufficiently competent or experienced to use it without support. Overall, children meet the requirements of the national desirable learning outcome and progress is good.

Physical development

70. Children run, skip and jump with increasing control, most of them demonstrating good spatial awareness and being careful to avoid collisions. The quality of teaching is good and the children respond well to the teachers' prompting and interpret music in dance lessons appropriately. They curl and stretch their bodies and travel in various ways, using their hands and feet well, although some find the control necessary for walking on tiptoe a little beyond them. Class teachers encourage children to use the correct pencil grip for drawing and writing, and to manipulate scissors and card competently and safely. They balance and manoeuvre wheeled vehicles confidently and meet the national target by the time they are five. Nevertheless their progress is limited because of the lack of sufficient planned opportunities for outdoor activities.

Creative development

71. Teachers build well upon previous work, showing their own sketch-books with last week's work and demonstrating close observational pencil drawing, encouraging pupils to study their teddy bears carefully. Children find this very challenging but most of them tackle the job and look very closely, describing what they see before making their own drawings. The class teachers provide a variety of pencils for shading, leaving the choice to the children. Children make self-portraits in pencil at an appropriate level of skill and there is evidence of

free drawing supporting work in language and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make up stories about the 'Bear Hunt' and act it out both by themselves and using plastic characters in a sand-pit. In the 'cave' they add to the story of *The Three Bears* by introducing a cat as a pet. Boys act out hunting for bears whilst girls tidy up and look after the children, re-living their own experiences. They add detail to the story as it develops, being so tired after all the cleaning that they have to lie down and rest. Children enter into the lives of their teddies, making up adventures for them. They sing counting songs, going home songs and registration songs from memory, accurately and musically. However, adults do not always listen carefully enough to children to encourage them to use their imagination and extend their exploration of language. Most children achieve the national desirable learning outcome and make good progress.

Personal and social development

72. Sensitive and effective teaching ensures that children quickly become familiar with school routines like lining up and waiting their turn to speak instead of calling out. They remember their book-bags at home time, and their individual acts of kindness to one another are recorded on cardboard discs which make a mobile for their classroom. They organise themselves fairly well for work, but there are a few squabbles in the role-play corner on occasion. Sometimes, this activity does not last long because there is not always an adult available to stimulate imaginative and creative role-play, and so children drift away to other things. They make zig-zag books about their personal likes and dislikes in food. Children listen well to their teachers and each other and are usually polite to adults.

73. Planning for children under five takes account of all six desirable learning outcomes. However, there is no adaptation of tasks to individual ages and abilities, and no indication of how the transition to the National Curriculum programmes of study is made, or when. This is because currently there is no co-ordinator for this area of the school's provision. Children's abilities are assessed when they start school and again at the end of the reception year to provide guidance for teachers in the higher years. Teachers regularly assess individual strengths and weaknesses in language and mathematics, and there are very good procedures for monitoring and recording personal development. Although indoor accommodation is spacious, there is no separate secure outdoor area for under fives. This should not restrict greater opportunities for outdoor activities since there is sufficient adult support to ensure adequate supervision. Resources are good, including wheeled vehicles and equipment for climbing and balancing.

ENGLISH

73. Results in National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven have varied considerably since the last inspection, and they are presently below the levels noted at that time. Taking the last four years together, overall standards have been below the national average in reading but close to the average in writing. Results fell to their lowest level in 1998. They improved in 1999, when the number reaching the higher level (Level 3) was close to the national average in reading and writing. Nevertheless, the number of pupils aged seven who reached the expected level (Level 2) or higher in 1999 was below the national average in writing and well below average in reading. The results were also well below those found in schools whose pupils are from similar backgrounds. Inspection evidence indicates that present standards are not high enough: the attainment of pupils aged seven is below average in

speaking and listening, and well below average in reading and writing. The school has recognised this and the recent changes in curriculum management and staffing are beginning to raise standards and improve the quality of learning, with the evidence of the inspection confirming that the improving trend begun in 1999 is continuing.

74. In the 1999 national tests for pupils aged eleven, the number who reached the expected level (Level 4) or higher was broadly in line with the national average, although the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was below. Standards were well below the average for similar schools. Taking the last four years together, test results have been below the national average overall, though they have improved at a rate similar to that found nationally. The National Literacy Strategy has begun to secure an improvement in standards, and this has been noted by parents. Most pupils in Year 6 are achieving average standards, with a small number attaining above average standards.

75. Many pupils have limited speaking skills on entry to school. However, most make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening, helped by generally good standards of behaviour throughout the school. The majority make satisfactory progress because of regular discussions in literacy hour and circle time, so that most pupils aged seven speak clearly in explaining their ideas to the whole class, though their contributions are generally brief. Some need a lot of encouragement. However, some pupils in Key Stage 1 sit quietly but do not listen actively. They avoid answering questions and make unsatisfactory progress as a result, not only in speaking, but also in the reading and writing tasks that follow. Pupils in Key Stage 2 become progressively more confident in speaking to a range of audiences in a variety of contexts. By age 11, most contribute successfully to structured class discussions, explaining their views to the class in adequate detail, though their fluency and confidence are below average. They use formal language and technical terms appropriately. Most read aloud competently, though few read with dramatic expression or talk about their wider reading in detail. A recently formed school council is a good initiative that offers a high level challenge to a selected few.

76. The school teaches reading through a collection of children's fiction without the support of a graded reading scheme. The book collection has recently been graded into a progressive sequence, but a significant number of pupils are given books that are too difficult for them, and this is a serious weakness that frustrates their achievement. Pupils aged seven have not been trained well enough in sounding out unfamiliar words and so have limited ability in reading for meaning independently. This leads to a lower level of interest in books than usually found, in spite of the large amount of time given to reading outside the literacy hour. This time needs to be more closely directed, with more support given to lower attaining pupils. By contrast, pupils with special needs make more secure progress because their reading programme is carefully structured and their development closely monitored to ensure that books are matched more exactly to their level of need.

77. Pupils quality of learning in reading in Key Stage 2 is good. By age eleven, most read longer texts for themselves at the expected level with good concentration. Their reading aloud is accurate and levels of understanding are good, though their ability to discuss books and make comparisons is below average. Many have favourite authors but generally they choose books that do not challenge them at the higher level. Library and research skills are sound, reflecting successful teaching of the targets of the literacy framework.

78. Pupils' handwriting develops well through the school and standards noted in the last report have been sustained. Most pupils write with sound control by the end of Key Stage 1, with most achieving a joined, legible style. Pupils aged seven write for a variety of purposes, including stories, personal journals and descriptions. Some write extended stories, using speech for dramatic effect and showing a good grasp of story conventions such as a happy ending. Nevertheless, the amount of work produced overall is much less than generally seen, and lesson observations confirm that many pupils in Year 2 are not confident in writing independently. To some extent this is because targets in the literacy hour do not always prepare pupils well enough for the writing tasks that follow, and those of average attainment and below make little progress as a result. Pupils generally have a narrower range of vocabulary than usually found and the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation is often well below average. This indicates that they need more support in these elements in free-writing tasks, including the journal that has been introduced to increase their confidence through writing at length about personal experiences.

79. The slow start made in literacy affects pupils' progress early in Key Stage 2, although over time they learn to write successfully for an increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences. Some use is made of word-processing in all years, though skills are not developed to a high enough level. Basic story writing techniques learned in Year 2 are developed further in the traditional stories written in Year 3 and widened effectively in Year 4, where well presented examples show a good grasp of the conventions of three kinds of story. Pupils in Year 6 write effective poetry of different kinds and in more complex forms such as persuasion and formal argument, and many structure their ideas in paragraphs, using a variety of sentence structures. The close focus on good literature in the literacy hour is leading to an improvement in the range of their vocabulary and so to the quality of their perception and thought.

80. Standards in spelling were judged to be poor at the last inspection. There has been some improvement because of an increased emphasis in homework tasks and regular testing. Nevertheless, standards of spelling and punctuation remain below average in everyday work because pupils do not routinely use dictionaries as they draft or proof-read their work before handing it in, or do corrections as a result of teachers' marking. Standards of accuracy are higher in work that is planned, drafted and corrected for display, and the quantity of such work increases steadily through the school.

81. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects. Teachers plan lessons and organise their classrooms so that these pupils have appropriate work and adequate support whilst taking a full part in class activities. They make good progress when withdrawn during literacy hour for support from teaching assistants because the work is well planned to meet their needs.

82. Although standards in literacy are improving, they remain low and this limits pupils' achievement in other subjects in Key Stage 1, where they need a great deal of guidance in tasks that involve reading and writing, and the amount of work covered is often very small. The Key Stage 1 leader is working effectively with the English co-ordinator and Key Stage 1 teachers to improve the effectiveness of teaching within literacy lessons. The school is committed to developing literacy skills across the whole curriculum and in Key Stage 2, standards in extended writing are sometimes higher in other subjects than in English because the tasks are more clearly defined and accuracy is improved through drafting. For instance, pupils' science reports in Key Stage 2 are well structured, and there are good examples of

writing in history reports in Year 5. The quality of writing is improved by the correct use of technical terms because teachers identify these elements in their lesson plans and have high expectations for accurate use. Pupils are given good support in Key Stage 2 in reading for information, but they need more opportunities to develop their library skills through higher level research tasks, including comparing findings in one text with those in another.

83. Teaching was satisfactory in all lessons seen in Key Stage 1. Overall teaching is good in Key Stage 2, where there was one very good lesson, half of the remainder were good and half were satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons in either key stage. In all classes, teachers plan lessons carefully to follow the targets of the official framework within the recommended time allocations of the literacy hour. As a result, lessons cover a range of suitable activities at a sound pace that takes pupils' learning forward. Texts are well chosen to illustrate language targets, and these are generally explained clearly, building on pupils' prior knowledge. In Key Stage 1, a recently introduced phonics scheme is leading to well focused instruction in connections between reading and writing. Nevertheless, these precise targets are not repeated and reinforced insistently enough to ensure that all pupils learn and remember them, which means that some make insufficient progress over time. The school has recognised this weakness and is currently refining its monitoring and assessment procedures so that individual targets can become an effective tool for raising pupils' standards over time.

84. Teachers generally read aloud dramatically, which holds pupils' interest, and they offer good models in speaking and writing. A very good feature of a lesson in Key Stage 2 was the teacher's quick and insistent questioning that kept all pupils involved in creating alternative ways of linking ideas in complex sentences. All were expected to write an answer on their clipboard, and this very effective technique ensured that all took an active part. Pupils competed to be first to write the answer, and when they held up their results, the teacher could quickly see who had and had not understood, and who needed more instruction. Pupils in both key stages have been well taught the routines for group work, and generally they work independently without fuss. However, teachers' expectations are generally not high enough to promote pace in writing in either key stage. As a result, many pupils work too slowly and do not learn to proof-read their work carefully enough. Skills learned in spelling and dictionary exercises are not rigorously applied to extended writing, which makes progress less secure over time. Pupils are not required to do corrections or follow-up work after marking, which means that much of teachers' hard work loses its impact, even though their appreciative comments lift pupils' self-esteem. Teachers make good use of a final review in lessons to give opportunities for speaking and to check their progress.

85. Management of the subject is satisfactory because recent changes aimed at raising attainment are beginning to take effect. The new co-ordinator has made good progress in identifying weaknesses in provision and introducing changes to make practice more consistent through the school. Teachers have realised that standards need to be raised and have worked hard as a team to implement the National Literacy Strategy. Policy documents now need to be updated to identify best practice within the strategy. Teaching assistants have been trained so that they give effective support to groups of lower attaining pupils. A scheme for the teaching of phonics has been purchased for Key Stage 1 and is being used effectively. Pupils are now set individual targets to improve aspects of their writing, though some targets are too broad and therefore not realistic. Resources for reading have recently been

restructured in Key Stage 1, but their quality is too uneven to allow reading development to be fine-tuned. The school does not have enough sets of reading books for lower attaining pupils to be given intensive support in groups of similar attainment. Resources for reading in Key Stage 1 are unsatisfactory.

86. Procedures for assessing attainment are adequate overall, but not enough use is made of the information they provide, for instance to ensure that pupils reach their potential in speaking. In Key Stage 1, reading books are not matched closely enough to pupils' assessed levels of attainment, and this is a significant weakness leading to under-achievement. In Key Stage 2, not all teachers monitor pupils' reading records so as to guide the pace, range and challenge of what they read. As a result, some pupils read too slowly or read books that are too easy, and over time this results in few pupils attaining at the higher level. Teachers' assessments of writing do not match national test results in either key stage, and the school does not have an accurate picture of how its standards compare with those of other schools.

87. The subject has a strong presence in the school. In classroom displays, teachers make good use of pupils' work and print of all kinds to encourage interest. The library is well resourced and maintained. A large amount of additional time has been given to English in order to raise standards, but this time is not used efficiently and the curriculum balance needs to be reviewed. Other subjects could play a larger part in developing pupils' literacy skills if time was allocated to them and literacy provision was clearly mapped across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

88. In 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 or above at the end of Key Stage 1 in the statutory tests was very low in comparison with the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards were well below average. Standards were above the national average between 1996 and 1997 and declined sharply in 1998. The results for 1999 show a significant improvement on those for 1998 and inspection evidence confirms that this improving trend is continuing. Although standards observed remain below average, the work of pupils in Year 1, and the very small classes and use of setting in Year 2, with a new phase leader and a new co-ordinator, are the reasons underlying the positive changes that are taking place. In particular, the teachers in these classes are alert to the different stages of development amongst the pupils and they plan accordingly. In the light of experience they modify activities so that the high achievers can extend their knowledge and understanding, whilst the slower learners are given more time to learn and consolidate concepts before moving on. Pupils in Year 2 are on course to exceed the target of 70 per cent of pupils achieving Level 2 or above, which is a clear improvement although it remains below the national average for 1999. Given their attainment on entry, this indicates that satisfactory learning is taking place and that the underachievement of previous years is being successfully addressed.

89. Teaching is good overall, with three fifths of lessons good or better and the remainder satisfactory. The teachers are comfortable with the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, and lessons now include regular mental and oral work, which is proving effective in developing pupils' skills in mental calculations. Pupils are quick to spot patterns in numbers and are adept at solving mentally simple problems that involve addition and subtraction, doubling and halving, and they explain clearly how they worked out the answers. An

appropriate emphasis is given to number work. Teachers have a good understanding of how children learn and make very effective use of resources and visual aids that help them to understand mathematics in everyday life. As a result, pupils are making satisfactory progress in understanding the number system in Year 2, and good progress in Year 1.

90. The success with which pupils in this key stage are now beginning to learn is also attributable to the teachers' thorough planning and preparation. Pupils are highly motivated by the imaginative activities that they are given. In a Year 1 lesson for example, what might otherwise have been a routine exercise on multiples of two and five was made exciting and enjoyable by the use of humour, excellent discussion and the affirming of pupil success. That the teacher used questions very effectively was evident in the pupils' responses when they were ready to move on to recording on paper the problems that they could solve orally.

91. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in the statutory tests for 11 year olds in 1999 was close to the national average, although falling slightly below for the first time since 1996. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was below the national average. When compared with similar schools attainment in 1999 was well below average. Nevertheless, there has been a steadily improving trend in standards over time and this is reflected in the realistic statutory targets that the school has set for future improvement. The range and quality of work completed by Year 6 last term reflected the staffing and other difficulties that these pupils had experienced earlier in their school careers. However, the very good and good teaching observed in this year group is beginning to have a significant impact and pupils are now producing work of a much higher standard. They are on course to achieve results in line with or exceeding the 1999 national average.

92. The pupils say that they enjoy the challenging work that they are now given, regardless of their current standard of work. This was evident when pupils in both ability sets² were seen relishing the opportunity to work practically with measures involving length, mass and capacity. Higher attaining pupils also enjoyed working through some complex calculations, involving currency conversions, to calculate the cost of different holiday options, while middle and lower attaining pupils worked very hard to complete 'loop' cards in which a cycle of mathematical steps eventually returns you to the point that you started from. The skill with which the teachers modified their questions to match the different levels of understanding of pupils ensured that all pupils were working at full stretch. In both sets the pupils were meeting the teachers' high expectations for behaviour and work rate. Both classrooms were a buzz of purposeful activity with much new learning taking place.

93. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall, with examples of good or very good teaching seen in Years 3, 4 and 6. A third of lessons was satisfactory and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in one class in each of Years 4 and 5, where classroom management and opportunities for pupil participation were not as good as were seen generally across the key stage. Teachers have mostly made a good start using the National Numeracy Strategy as a framework for good quality planning. Secure subject knowledge, very good use of mathematical language and the effective pacing of lessons are key features of the good teaching observed. For example, in Year 3, in a lesson relating to fractions, pupils were constantly being moved forward through the effective use of questions that

²Year 6 is divided into two ability groups for mathematics – one for higher attaining pupils, and one for middle and lower attaining pupils.

challenged and motivated them. In nearly all lessons pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good or very good, and this was a direct response to the good quality of teaching, the high expectations of individual teachers and the effective implementation of the school's good behaviour policy. Overall the pace of learning is satisfactory, although it is good in Years 3 and 6 and in one class in Year 4. The quality of learning is enhanced in many lessons by the effective use of learning support assistants and/or volunteer parents.

94. Under the guidance of the acting deputy headteacher and the mathematics co-ordinator, assessment practice in mathematics is good and forms an integral part of all teachers' planning. In addition to the statutory and voluntary national assessment tests, teachers are now assessing and recording pupils' achievements informally on a daily basis and formally at the end of each unit of work. In most classes across the school, this information is being used well to modify present lesson plans and inform future planning. In general, targets are set for groups of pupils and the school is working to refine the good procedures already in place so that more specific individual targets can be set for pupils. The quality of the targets in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs is taken into account well by teachers when planning their lessons. Teachers try to mark work in the presence of pupils, and where this is done, it is usually helpful in identifying targets for improvement. However, this is not always possible and the quality of formal marking is more variable and often consists of an affirming comment, such as 'well done', rather than helping to set future targets for improvement. In some cases the teacher has identified an error for the pupil, and yet this continues to be repeated in later work.

95. Changes in the management structure of the school, including the appointment of the acting deputy headteacher and the mathematics co-ordinator, have led to significant improvement in the way in which mathematics has been organised and taught over the last eighteen months. The school has changed in many important respects, not least in the rigour with which teaching is monitored and targets for improvement identified. For example, since her appointment in September 1999, the co-ordinator has monitored teaching in every class directly. Where areas of possible improvement have been identified as a result, she has then taught a demonstration lesson with the class in question, designed to address any areas of concern. This in turn has been followed by a jointly planned and taught lesson between the class teacher and co-ordinator. This work, combined with the provision of good quality training for the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy³, very good quality planning and a detailed audit of resources, has led to improved teaching and learning, and evidence that standards are beginning to rise.

96. The mathematics curriculum meets statutory requirements. The data from the national statutory tests, national voluntary tests and school devised assessments are analysed in detail and have been used effectively to identify areas of weakness and to help set targets for improvement: for example, by raising the number of pupils achieving Level 2B at the end of Key Stage 1, and seeking to ensure that more pupils achieve Level 4 instead of Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 2.

97. Mathematics is used appropriately to support other areas of the curriculum such as science and geography, both of which provide, for example, additional opportunities for data handling. However the time given to subjects such as science, design and technology and

³ The co-ordinator has been accredited as a Leading Teacher for the National Numeracy Strategy

geography is too limited for these skills to be used as frequently as might be desirable. Evidence of information technology being used to consolidate understanding of number and for data handling was seen in both key stages, with data being presented appropriately in both tabular and graphical forms. However, its use is under-developed at present, with teachers having to rely on a range of older and frequently unreliable computers.

SCIENCE

98. The results of the National Curriculum Assessments in 1999 showed 81 per cent of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) or above. This was close to the national average. There were 17 per cent of pupils reached the higher Level 5, which was below the national average. When compared with similar schools, these results were below average. The trend in results at Key Stage 2 over the three years since the last inspection is one of gradual improvement year on year. The previous report noted that standards were in line with national expectations. The school's results fell and have now returned to near parity with national figures, although not with those of similar schools.

99. Results at Key Stage 1 are based on the assessments which teachers make. In 1999, these showed that standards in all aspects of science were well below the national average at the expected Level 2 or above, but broadly in line with national averages at the higher Level 3. There has been further improvement with the number of pupils likely to achieve Level 2 or above in the present Year 2 in line with, or above, the national average for 1999. At Key Stage 2, the number of pupils likely to achieve national expectations is broadly similar to the national average for 1999 with a small minority of pupils achieving the higher Level 5.

100. At Key Stage 2, the school's new approach to investigate science has successfully tackled the underachievement of higher attaining pupils which was reported by the previous inspection. As a result, standards are gradually rising. However, there is room for improvement in Key Stage 1, where results are not as positive. Here, pupils are less able to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them. They do not always have the ability to work well in small groups in their first year or so in the school, and are sometimes not able to cope with the investigations. Recent improvement in the quality of teaching is successfully addressing these issues.

101. The work the school has completed in establishing an 'Investigational Science Hour', on similar lines to the national initiatives of numeracy and literacy, has had a positive effect on standards of science overall at Key Stage 2. Pupils discuss, in their working groups of three, the way they might carry out the investigations. They note down what they know and what they need to find out. They devise their experiments with due care, noting where fair tests are required. Following the tests, they produce charts and make measurements which allow them to draw sensible conclusions to their work. This was noted in work on testing electrical circuits in Year 6. The work in Year 5, where pupils were measuring the lengths of shadows, is equally well carried out, but here graphs and charts are produced through good use of information technology. Pupils make good progress in their learning in Key Stage 2. The way pupils work in mixed ability, single sex groups of three supports pupils who have special educational needs, and they too make good progress towards their own targets. Insufficient use of information technology is a weakness in the subject overall. On the other hand, there

are good links with numeracy in very many of the investigations, where measuring, weighing and temperature taking are required. Links with literacy are supported well through the writing of investigations and use of new vocabulary. The effective use of the skills being acquired in literacy and numeracy is an important factor in the improving standards and quality of learning in this subject across the school.

102. Pupils in Year 1 know the main parts of a plant and can label a diagram accordingly. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have made sound progress in being able to list plants, observe their growth, and understand that they need heat, light and water. Pupils in Year 5, following a visit by a dental nurse, complete good work linked to healthy living. They examine the effect of carbonated drinks on teeth and test toothpastes to find the most effective. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to produce a well-labelled diagram of the human ear and show understanding of such words as cochlea, anvil and hammer. Progress in this area of work is good.

103. Pupils make good progress in their work on materials in Key Stage 2 and sound progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 3 link their knowledge of materials with furniture in their class rooms, trying to classify them within groups. They carry out quite an involved investigation to determine the best materials to absorb liquid. They conduct their investigation to a clear framework, try to predict the outcomes, carry out a fair test and write up their results. By Year 6, pupils are able to classify various materials by their ability to act as conductors or insulators. They recognise the differences between solids, liquids and gases and can define them accurately in their own words.

104. Pupils' knowledge of physical processes such as electricity, forces, light and sound is consistently good throughout the school, although progress in understanding is better at Key Stage 2. Pupils are presented with good learning opportunities. In Year 1, they draw the sun, themselves and their shadows in the correct sequence, while the oldest pupils in the key stage understand the differences between translucent and opaque materials. Pupils in Year 3 can explain the importance of springs, and the forces they exert, in many household objects. Later, in Year 6, pupils show good progress in their learning by using a Newtonmeter to measure force and mass. They carry out a complex experiment to determine the elasticity of an elastic band by hanging different weights on the band and noting how far it stretches. Once again the good use of a framework for writing helps to focus and organise their thoughts.

105. Overall, the use of this investigational approach to work in science is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and the progress they make. Because of the interest created in science, pupils often have a very positive attitude to the subject, which spurs them to concentrate and persevere with their work.

106. Teaching is good in science overall, with more than half of lessons good or better and the remainder satisfactory. In one lesson teaching was very good. Teachers' good subject knowledge and their ability to capture the interests of the pupils through the organisation of their investigations, were mirrored by the pupils' willingness to work at a good pace, to get on with each other well and concentrate on their tasks. Pupils with special educational needs work well in the mixed ability groups of threes, and it is often difficult to pick them out as they make good contributions to the group activities. The good quality teaching at Key Stage 2 and the good response of the pupils have a very positive effect on the progress pupils make. In Key Stage 1, pupils find it more difficult to work in such groups. This is primarily because

many pupils do not enter the school with sufficient skills to allow them to work with others, share equipment, focus on tasks and work towards particular goals. A positive aspect of the teaching is the effective way in which it addresses these weaknesses. Although pupils are managed well in Key Stage 1, they do not always make good progress and their acquisition of basic skills is slower than it should be. The school is aware of this and is currently refining its monitoring and assessment procedures so that individual target setting can be used to raise standards and improve progress. The school has recognised that some restructuring of the work in Key Stage 1 is necessary in order to better prepare pupils for the school's investigative approach to science. Particularly by introducing smaller, more achievable and structured steps in planned activities that will allow younger pupils gradually to move into a freer investigational approach, improving the quality of learning and standards achieved. Teachers' plan together in each year group and overall the planning is of good quality. However, whilst carrying this out, there needs to be a greater awareness that, although planning by teachers in pairs is a very useful activity, there is a need to adapt the plans to suit the particular needs of their own pupils.

107. The school works hard at making links between science, literacy and numeracy. From their early work in investigations in Key Stage 1, pupils are encouraged to write brief statements about what they see. In Year 6, pupils write a 'sound story,' in which various episodes are related to differing sounds. They write well to the investigation frameworks set for them. They produce good quality charts, diagrams and graphs to illustrate their work. Work seen in connection with a local authority initiative on writing and science, shows good quality work from Year 6, some of which is above average. Work in information technology is not well used to support science, although sound links are established between design technology and science. Pupils in Year 1 design healthy meals using fruit and salads. Older pupils carry out the same type of work but with sandwich designs.

108. The subject co-ordinator has, over the last two years, made a significant difference to the work in science and has been a major influence on its improvement. A clear policy and scheme of work now exist, together with a well-considered assessment routine. The introduction of the 'Investigational Science Hour' has had a very positive effect on capturing the interests of the pupils and of improving standards in all areas of work. Time now needs to be spent checking that all attainment targets of the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum receive equal shares of time.

ART

109. By the ends of both key stages, pupils' attainment in art is well above national expectations. The school has maintained the high standard recorded at the time of the last inspection. A particular strength in Key Stage 1 is the use of drawing, painting and design to represent pupils' emotions and feelings. Examples are the making of 'soul birds' with the artist in residence and the paintings entitled, '*In the deep forest*'. Pupils are developing a wide range of skills that include drawing, painting, textiles, design, printing and collage work. Weaker is three-dimensional work.

110. A feature of work in Key Stage 2 is the continuity and progression in the development of knowledge, understanding and skills from Key Stage 1. Pupils make good use of their sketchbooks to experiment across a range of media, and develop ideas of their own in relation to the work of other artists and styles. For example, work on colour blending in Key Stage 1

develops into a very good colour sense in composition in Key Stage 2. Early experimentation with drawing in Key Stage 1 results in very good observational skills in Key Stage 2. Pupils develop a good understanding and a sensitive appreciation of the work of great artists, for example Van Gogh, Kandinsky and Picasso. Pupils' representations of artists' work are a particular strength. They often have additional support; their attainment is appropriate, and their progress is similar to that of their peers.

111. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Particular strengths are the teaching of basic skills, using a wide range of media, and the effective teaching methods used by teachers. An example is the teaching of single colour blends in Key Stage 1, together with an appreciation of the use of the range of shades pupils produce. In Key Stage 2, pupils are taught to use their sketchbooks for a wide range of purposes: for example, close observation from life, colour blending, design, experimentation with pencil and the study of the work of great artists. The main focus of learning is experimentation, and this is successful because teachers generally have a good command of the subject, have high expectations of pupils and carefully plan the continuity of work. Learning is further enhanced by pupils' positive attitudes. Pupils enjoy art and the challenges presented to them and take a pride in their work. They work well together and behaviour is good.

112. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. A particular strength is the balance between learning basic skills and opportunities for creative work. This is effectively provided through a continuous and progressive scheme of work. The opportunities provided for personal development are good, particularly the spiritual, social and cultural dimensions of pupils' lives. For example, pupils are able to reflect upon the high quality of the art display throughout the school. Visitors, such as the artist in residence, enhance the curriculum. Art is taken into the community through local exhibitions. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

113. Art is well organised throughout the school and resources are good. Currently, there is insufficient time for the co-ordinator to monitor art teaching, and no consistent pattern of assessment based upon agreed learning objectives.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. The standards pupils achieve in design and technology are broadly average across the school. This shows that the school has made satisfactory progress, and in some areas good progress, since the last inspection, when there was no scheme of work for the subject and teachers' expertise was unsatisfactory.

115. The co-ordinator has recently adopted the nationally recommended guidance for the planning of activities for the subject. Class teachers follow these planning documents closely, and they provide many good learning opportunities for pupils as they gain support and expertise from the new documentation. As a result, standards are now beginning to rise throughout the school.

116. The subject shows satisfactory links with a number of other curriculum areas. Pupils in Year 5 use their numeracy skills well when measuring and cutting out shapes for their musical instruments. Pupils in Year 4 use their literacy skills to write about what makes a

good wallet, and what items might be kept in it, and use a labelled diagram to show how it might be made. Pupils in Year 6 show links with information technology as they plan and construct a floor robot with lights that flash in a particular sequence.

117. A weakness in the subject, apart from the development of skills, is the haphazard development of knowledge and understanding in food technology. Although food technology is attempted in a number of year groups, it is difficult to see how the current learning experiences fit into a sequence. They show a selection of activities, rather than a systematic choice of learning objectives supported by good activities.

GEOGRAPHY

118. Standards were judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection, but available evidence indicates that they are now lower because time available for the subject has been reduced, and is less than in most schools. Work seen in Year 2 is below average for pupils aged seven. There was no evidence on which to judge standards at age 11, because geography is studied mainly in the summer term of Year 6. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 produce a small amount of work of a satisfactory standard, and pupils across the range of attainment made good progress in lessons observed. Over time, however, there is not sufficient development in the depth and detail of their studies for pupils to reach standards generally found by age 11.

119. Attainment in Key Stage 1 is limited by low literacy skills, but pupils make a good start in understanding street plans by identifying their homes and writing their address. They tally the different ways they travel to school and use a computer to make a bar chart of the results. This work is extended in Year 2 by considering how land is used around Peacehaven. By Year 4, pupils are able to find major human and physical features in an ordnance survey map. Pupils in Year 3 study weather patterns in different climate zones and write an imaginary postcard home. This work is developed in Year 6, where news items on the flooding in Mozambique are sensitively displayed to prompt compassionate understanding of climate change. The evidence available suggests that this subject is making a good contribution to pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own. Year 6 end their course with a practical study of a river during a residential visit.

120. Teaching was of a good standard in the two lessons seen; both of which were in Key Stage 2. The lessons were well planned and resourced. Teachers have good subject knowledge and enthusiasm, leading to lively explanations that hold pupils' attention. Set tasks are interesting and well structured so that all are actively involved. Pupils with lower attainment and those with special needs are given additional guidance so that they make sound progress. Pupils in Year 4 collaborate well in studying maps, helping each other to find and interpret information. Class management is smooth and the atmosphere productive so that there is a good quality of learning. Teachers use questioning well to build on prior knowledge, check understanding and encourage closer analysis of information. A homework task given to a Year 3 class was very effective in extending learning opportunities and developing literacy skills.

121. Subject management is satisfactory. The scheme of work is based on recent official guidelines and is effectively resourced. The co-ordinator advises on medium term planning. Effective use is made of visits into the local community and further afield, to give pupils practical experience in applying their knowledge and skills. A good start has been made in

developing pupils' information technology skills through the subject, for instance, through contacts with a school in the United States of America and using the Internet for research. Further planning is needed to develop literacy and numeracy skills to support provision in English and mathematics.

HISTORY

122. The standard of pupils' work across both key stages is below average and lower than at the time of the last inspection. Less time is now available for the subject than in most schools. Pupils in all years produce some work of a satisfactory standard, but units of study are not covered in enough depth and detail. Pupils' achievement through the school is limited by low literacy skills; for instance the writing of younger pupils is very brief, and older pupils do not reach the higher levels of the National Curriculum in interpreting evidence using a range of information texts.

123. Pupils aged seven have an outline understanding of what has changed over time in the context of their own families and everyday life. They study the life and achievements of a famous person in the past, such as Florence Nightingale. Much of their attainment is expressed orally, and the written work of pupils with higher attainment is limited to a series of brief factual statements. Pupils aged eleven have covered a range of historical periods, including the civilisations of the Greeks and Aztecs, and aspects of British history including the Roman and Saxon invaders, Tudors, Victorians and Britain since 1948. They have skills in identifying and interpreting evidence from a range of sources, including documents and objects from the periods studied. Their writing shows a basic understanding of some of the main characteristics of periods studied, but much of their learning is expressed as brief statements, labelled diagrams and personal response.

124. Teaching was of a good standard in the one lesson seen during the inspection. It was well planned to show the value of an inventory as a source of evidence, and Year 4 pupils make good gains in understanding at this introductory level. The teacher gave a clear explanation of the purpose and process of interpreting evidence, and the activity to follow was well designed to allow all pupils to take part. Those with lower attainment and special needs were well supported, but expectations were not high enough for pupils of average attainment and above. They worked at the same level as others, and were not required to write down their ideas or use reference books to find supporting evidence. They were not challenged, although they were interested and occupied throughout. A discussion to end the lesson was well handled to clarify pupils' thinking and answer their queries. Pupils responded well to the teacher's encouragement and skilful handling of their misunderstandings.

125. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The scheme of work follows national guidelines, but pupils' limited achievement shows that units of work are given too little coverage. Not enough use is made of the subject's potential to support literacy development; units are not planned in enough detail to identify tasks such as imaginative writing, structured accounts of cause and effect, and interpretations of evidence from reference books. Nevertheless, there are good links with subjects such as art, where pupils' achievement is at a higher level; for instance, Year 5's Aztec masks and craft objects are an imaginative extension of their understanding. Resources are satisfactory overall, with good features such as the collections of pictures and objects illustrating life in Britain fifty years ago to stimulate

the interest of Year 6. A little use is made of information technology to find information, but this needs to be developed. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through a programme of special events and visits to local museums.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

126. Standards are below average for the ages of seven and eleven and progress is unsatisfactory at both key stages. This is primarily because much teacher expertise has been lost with recent changes in staffing. The newly appointed co-ordinator and the network co-ordinator are working effectively to raise standards and improve the quality of learning.

127. Pupils at Key Stage 1 use a computer to word-process their language work. This is, however, usually done by copy-typing already existing text and not by composing on-screen. The youngest pupils operate a mouse and delete errors with satisfactory competence but are very slow using the keyboard because of the low standards of their language skills. Pupils produce simple graphs of a survey of how they travel to school. By the end of the key stage, they are not proficient in saving and printing their work independently. No direct teaching was seen during the inspection at this key stage.

128. At Key Stage 2, teachers access the file for pupils in Year 3 to type in examples of abbreviations for the insertion of apostrophes. Pupils understand the function of the mouse but are still slow at the keyboard. They need help to print their work and there was some rough handling of resources, for example, the constant changing of the background colour of the screen. In geography, they use a laptop computer well for researching and working on a map-making program which the teacher admitted was unknown to her. In Year 4, the program is also pre-loaded by the teacher although pupils can explain how to use the desk-top publisher. Pupils work well together and each successfully chose a card and inserted an appropriate greeting. They also send electronic messages to a similar school in America.

129. At the end of the key stage, pupils put information into a programmable device, using it as input and output for work on controlling a sequence of traffic lights. The lesson was well planned, although, for much of the time, pupils' responses were more concerned with science than with information technology. Good use was made of the washing line to display step-by-step procedure. Teachers' effective questioning checked and extended pupils' knowledge and understanding. Unfortunately, the questions were not directed to all abilities so that lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs tended to lose interest, although they were still fascinated by the visual demonstration of the sequence. Pupils' questions made it clear it was a long time since they had seen the device – the last time being in Key Stage 1 when they used it for mathematics. The tasks set were sufficiently demanding and the teacher's expectations clearly high enough in this context, even for the highest attainers. She gave very clear instructions and it was evident by the end of the lesson that the majority had made good progress in interpreting the symbols.

130. In discussion with pupils from Year 6, it was clear that, during the long-term absence of the previous co-ordinator, the subject was allowed to drift and skills have not been progressively built upon in the last year or so. They have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the uses of information communication technology in the wider community. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use their computer skills in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, there is little evidence of data handling in geography and science,

of modelling in design and technology or of computer-generated art and music. Teachers use information technology well to label clearly and enhance the quality of display around the school. Although little direct teaching was observed, it is clear that overall the quality is unsatisfactory since pupils make little progress in the development of skills.

131. At the time of the last inspection, the school was a centre of excellence for information technology. Recent staffing difficulties and problems with resources have changed this situation. Some staff lack the expertise and confidence to use all the resources available; much of the software is incompatible with new computers and the school is having problems with the server for the Internet. Although there are some newer computers, many are of older designs. The subject is only now beginning to be re-established and, because of the recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy, is not scheduled for development until the summer term, by which time the new equipment provided under the National Grid for Learning Initiative should have arrived in school. The school is in the process of adapting recent national guidance as its scheme of work for this subject. The co-ordinator has identified that the resources available are insufficiently organised to enable them to be used effectively and is addressing this issue.

132. The newly appointed co-ordinator and co-ordinator for the network understand what the role entails and they have put in place a good quality development plan. The co-ordinator perceives his role correctly as developing the subject and improving staff expertise and the use of resources. The network co-ordinator effectively supports all staff, including non-teaching assistants and the office staff. Together they have achieved a great deal since their appointment in September 1999.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

133. The study of a foreign language is not a requirement of the National Curriculum until Key Stage 3, but the school has made a firm commitment to teach French for twenty minutes a week to all pupils from reception onwards. Teaching is well founded on a detailed programme of study that sets out targets in a clear sequence, and the subject is soundly managed. Teachers through the school are given support in planning lessons that follow the programme, so ensuring that pupils make consistent progress. As a result, pupils aged seven are able to count up to ten and respond to simple questions, for instance saying their names, ages, and addresses. They know some French songs. By age 11, pupils can count to one hundred and some beyond that. They can take part in a dialogue, asking and answering questions, and order basic items in a shop or restaurant. Pronunciation is satisfactory overall.

134. Teaching was satisfactory or better in the two sessions seen during the inspection. Targets are clearly identified. The good pace and range of activities hold pupils' attention, and their learning is reinforced very effectively through frequent repetition using a variety of methods. Teachers know pupils well and use that knowledge effectively in expecting all to listen carefully, speak clearly and play a full part. All pupils are given strong encouragement, so that those with lower attainment want to join in, and they show pleasure when they give a correct answer. Links with music are a strength. Pupils clearly enjoy singing French songs and take part with enthusiasm. French could be used more often for routine instructions, to increase pupils' exposure to the language and give them a familiar framework for their learning. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

MUSIC

135. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations; by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above national expectations. This is an improvement upon the finding of the last inspection, when attainment was satisfactory in both key stages. The improvement is largely a result of good progress in the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and basic skills throughout the Key Stage 2, for example, increasing pupils' recognition of dynamics in music and their use of the associated musical vocabulary. A strength is developing a sense of rhythm patterns. Less well developed are unaccompanied singing and a sense of pitch.

136. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to perform complex rhythms in two and three parts. They are able to compose their own rhythm patterns and perform them confidently. Pupils develop notational skills and recognise some note values, bars and rests. Less well developed is instrumental work. Singing is enthusiastic in assemblies, but in terms of musical performance, attaining and sustaining a sense of pitch are less secure. The progress and attainment of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. However, in some Year 1 classes, these pupils are very well supported and make good progress.

137. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers plan lessons carefully with clear learning intentions, building on pupils' prior knowledge. As a consequence, pupils' learning is continuous and progressive. Most teachers have a good command of the subject and their confidence is reflected in pupils' willingness to participate fully and test their skills in performance. This works well whilst teaching musical notation and rhythm, but is less successful when teaching singing unaccompanied in class lessons, where a lack of musical support constrains development. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who respond well to the challenges provided. Pupils' attitudes in music are positive and behaviour is good. Most pupils enjoy music and participate willingly; this enhances the good quality of their learning.

138. At the time of the previous inspection, there was no scheme of work and the curriculum lacked breadth and balance. The report recommended an increase in the time devoted to classroom music. The school has made the development of music a priority and much has been improved. For example, a detailed scheme of work provides for the continuous and progressive development of pupils' knowledge and skills across both key stages, and there is sufficient time for music within the school week. There is a good overall balance between the development of knowledge and skills, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to listen to music and to play musical instruments. The provision for pupils' personal development is good. Particularly good opportunities are provided to develop the spiritual, social and cultural dimensions of pupils' lives. For example, the school has recently received visits from a group of Hindu dancers and a group of African musicians performing Masai music. The curriculum is extended and complemented by very good extra-curricular provision. There are infant and junior choirs and recorder groups. The school continues to produce musical plays and take part in local musical events. Some pupils choose to learn wind and string instruments with peripatetic teachers. All pupils take part in music lessons, and extra-curricular activities are open to all pupils.

139. Music is well organised throughout the school and resource provision is good. No time is provided for monitoring the quality of teaching throughout the school and procedures for assessing the progressive development of pupils' knowledge and skills are informal, but effective.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. Although it was not possible to observe the full range of activities in the physical education programme, close scrutiny of the planning for the subject, discussions with teachers and observations of a number of lessons show that the school covers all elements. The standards pupils achieve are similar to those expected for pupils in this age group.

141. At the previous inspection, standards were said to be well above national expectations. There has, therefore, been a drop in standards since that time. Several factors account for this. There have been numerous changes in staff, including a recent change in the co-ordinator of the subject. The school has concentrated much of its energies on the new initiatives of Literacy and Numeracy and science. As a consequence, standards in physical education have suffered and are now average overall.

142. Swimming is still a strong element in the work, with virtually all pupils being able to swim by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2. This is due, in no small measure, to the good teaching pupils receive at the local leisure centre. Much of the work in Year 6 is also of good quality, with a well-qualified member of staff able to bring out the best in the pupils. This was noted particularly in a dance lesson. The class teacher was able to put her good subject knowledge into practice and motivated the pupils to give 100 per cent of their efforts to the work. She chose good contemporary music, known by the pupils, and used her very good relationships with them to ensure no time was wasted. Relationships were also very supportive: pupils were prepared to make mistakes and learn from them, in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Pupils readily responded to suggestions and the well-prepared and structured lesson led to their making good progress in refining their performances. Insufficient teaching was seen in other years to make a wider judgement on the quality of teaching.

143. After-school activities and access to competitive sports for the older pupils are good and support progress in games. The school enters competitive teams and does well in netball, football and athletics; club activities support this.

144. There were weaknesses in planning which until recently did not ensure that skills were progressively developed across the school. The newly appointed co-ordinator has recognised this weakness and is in process of revising the curriculum for physical education, improving the quality of planning and providing effective support for teachers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. By the end of both key stages, attainment is in line with national expectations. In Key Stage 1, pupils know some Bible stories and learn the significance of them. Pupils know about the New Testament and that it contains the story of the life of Jesus. They develop an understanding of moral and social behaviour and respect for the beliefs of others. In Key Stage 2, these areas are further developed; pupils are able to analyse their own feelings and

beliefs through a wider comparative study of religions such as Judaism and Islam, as well as Christianity. Pupils are able to compare and contrast some of the principal features of these religions. An example is their ability to compare and contrast the Five Pillars of Islam with the Ten Commandments. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and the standards they achieve are appropriate.

146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, all the teaching is satisfactory and some is good, whilst in Key Stage 2, teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good with the majority being. Most teachers have a good command of the subject and use effective teaching methods to ensure understanding. For example, in Year 1, pupils learn about sharing and caring through role play activities and in Year 6, pupils relate their study of the laws set by different religions to their own beliefs and the rules of the school.

147. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives, and these help pupils to understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve.

148. Most pupils are interested in the stories, listen attentively and respond keenly to questions. Class relationships are supportive and pupils are willing to enter into class discussion about their own beliefs and feelings. These positive attitudes, together with the learning environment created by teachers, enhance pupils' learning. Behaviour is generally very good but there are examples of boys being restless and silly in Key Stage 2.

149. The school curriculum meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. There is a broad, well-balanced programme provided throughout the school. It is extended through school assemblies and the personal and social education programme, taught during 'circle time'. For example, in an assembly during the inspection, pupils learned about Jesus as the Light of the World, and were told a story with the theme of sharing and caring for others. A further factor in the effective delivery of the curriculum is the wide range of displays around the school. These are mainly about world religions and display artefacts from them, but one is inter-active, challenging pupils to find answers to questions with rewards for correct answers. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are given opportunities to offer personal reactions to the beliefs of others, to develop perceptions of right and wrong, and to compare and contrast behaviour within our society and across others. All pupils are able to participate equally in religious education.

150. Religious education is well organised throughout the school. There are sufficient resources, although there is a need for more artefacts. No time is allocated for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and there is no consistent pattern of assessment, based on agreed objectives and followed by all teachers.