

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITE NOTLEY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

White Notley

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115111

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Bennett

Reporting inspector: Eileen Parry
2615

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd May 2002

Inspection number: 195823

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Vicarage Avenue
White Notley
Witham
Essex

Postcode: CM8 1RZ

Telephone number: 01376 583376

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. A. Hutchinson

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2615	Eileen Parry	Registered inspector	English Art Music Foundation Stage Special educational needs	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Characteristics of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13448	Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2632	Roger Holmes	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
1678	David Peckett	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small Church of England primary school has 101 pupils on roll: 56 boys and 55 girls. It serves the village of White Notley in Essex and also draws in pupils from other nearby villages. Many pupils come by school bus. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds although the percentage eligible for free school meals at five per cent is below the average. The school population is entirely white and there are rarely any pupils from other ethnic groups. No one speaks English as an additional language. Pupils start school at the beginning of the school year in which they reach five years of age. Their attainment on entry varies from year to year because of small numbers but is generally average. No pupils have statements of educational need but 29 are on the school's register for special needs. This is broadly in line with the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

White Notley is an effective school overall. Pupils do well to achieve good standards in literacy and numeracy by the time they leave the school. In other subjects with the exception of design and technology, standards are also average or better. Teaching overall is good. Governors provide strong support for the school and have ensured that there have been satisfactory arrangements for the management of the school whilst the headteacher has been ill. Because of the good standards reached in some subjects, balanced by the high cost of pupils' education, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress to reach above average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music.
- Teaching overall is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- It takes care of children very well, makes very good provision for pupils' personal development and helps them to become caring, responsible and thoughtful young people.
- The school sets high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes and they respond well to these.
- Governors support the school very well and take an active part in its management.

What could be improved

- The standards that pupils reach in design and technology by Year 6 are not high enough.
- Some writing tasks in subjects other than English are too easy, especially for the more able.
- The headteacher does not check teaching formally.
- The headteacher has not set performance management targets for staff this year.
- The accommodation in Key Stage 2.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in July 1997, it has made good progress in tackling the issues identified. Planning is now a sound balance using national guidance and effective daily and weekly planning, and the standards that pupils reach in their work have improved. Pupils

in the infant class now make good progress. The governors' annual report to parents now includes all the required information. Improvements have taken place in information and communication technology (ICT), and pupils' personal development is stronger than previously. Improvements in the reception class have been slower than they might have been because the class teacher, who is the deputy, has undertaken management responsibilities in place of the headteacher.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

These results need to be interpreted with caution because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group. As the table shows, pupils have reached above average standards in the national tests in 2001 in English, average results in science and below average in mathematics. Compared to pupils in similar schools based on the take up of free meals, results in the table above are not so good being average in English, well below average in mathematics and below average in science. However, it is worth noting that the same pupils in White Notley did not do so well in mathematics as they did in English and science and that this was because fewer reached the higher level 5 in the national tests. Compared to their test results when they were seven, pupils in Year 6 have done very well and made very good progress in English and science and average progress in mathematics. Taken over five years, the average results are improving faster than in most schools. The governors set challenging targets in 2001 which were not reached because two pupils left the school and this makes a big difference when small numbers of pupils are involved. Equally challenging targets have been set for 2002. At Year 2, the standards reached by pupils in the national tests were average in reading and mathematics compared to all schools and above average in writing. They were below those of pupils in similar schools.

The current Year 6 pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. This is also true of pupils in Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Throughout the school pupils achieve well in ICT and music, reaching standards that are better than are seen in most schools, and in the other subjects, pupils' attainment and progress are average. The exception to this is in design and technology where standards are satisfactory by Year 2 but not as high as they should be at the end of Year 6.

Children in the reception class are likely to reach the standards set for them nationally as early learning goals and better than that in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in meeting their individual targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils get on very well with one another and with teachers and support staff.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school helps pupils to become caring, responsible and thoughtful young people.
Attendance	Slightly better than average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Teaching overall is good. Throughout the school, good and very good teaching was observed. Teachers have good knowledge in all subjects but there are particular strengths in science and music. In the good lessons, teachers plan well, use a wide range of resources and make learning interesting through first hand experiences. Pupils know what they should be doing because teachers make the tasks clear and pupils work hard to achieve what is set out. A feature in this school is that the extra teaching and teaching assistant help in some lessons means that groups are often small and staff are able to give attention to individuals when it is needed.

Throughout the school, the children are taught to speak, read and write effectively in English lessons but there is some lack of challenge, particularly for the more able, when they are asked to copy up writing in other subjects rather than do their own. Children are given a secure knowledge of number and measures in mathematics lessons and good opportunities to practise these skills in subjects such as science.

Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory. Basic skills in reading, writing and number are taught well but there are some aspects of the curriculum for young children which are not given enough attention. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from being in small groups or classes but also receive additional support. This was not seen because it occurred on a different day to those of the inspection.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for infants and juniors. Satisfactory for reception children where the new curriculum guidance is being brought in but is not yet securely in place.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Small groups and individual support mean that pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils at the school who have English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Pupils are given many valuable experiences which help them to be thoughtful and reflective young people.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils and has good arrangements in place for their welfare and their health and safety. Children's personal and academic progress is recorded effectively.

The school has a good partnership with parents who help in many practical ways such as in classrooms or helping to escort classes to the village hall for physical education. School performances are well supported and parents plan and take part in fund-raising events.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. Strengths, such as the promoting the personal development of the pupils and improving the standards of their work, are balanced by some procedures which have not been carried out.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors know what the school does well and where it needs to improve because of their active involvement in the school's life.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The staff and governors undertake between them a variety of monitoring and evaluation but there are some areas that could be better.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of its funding and resources. It ensures value for money in the purchase of supplies and services, but acknowledges the need to apply principles of best value more widely.

The school has a good supply of teachers and support staff. There are sufficient materials and equipment for all subjects. Parts of the building have been sympathetically modernised and offer good accommodation but other classrooms are dilapidated. There is no hall. Overall, accommodation is unsatisfactory.

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 school expects children to work hard • It helps children to become mature • Teaching is good and children make good progress • Children like school • The school works closely with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra activities • Children getting the right amount of work to do at home • Being better informed about how children are getting on.

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive comments made by parents, and finds that some of the criticisms are partially justified. Children work hard but they also tell inspectors that sometimes the work is too easy. Although the homework policy was agreed with parents, there has been no recent monitoring of how consistently and effectively it is used. Behaviour during the inspection was very good in all classes and there is a wide range of interesting activities outside lessons to enrich and enhance the taught curriculum. Procedures for consulting parents could be developed further. Most of the parents who voiced criticisms balanced their comments with praise.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results of the national tests for eleven year olds need to be interpreted with caution because of the small numbers taking them each year. Pupils achieve well and are reaching standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. This is a better picture than that suggested in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 where English was above average, mathematics below and science average. Standards in English have benefited sooner from the use of the national strategy and those in mathematics are catching up. Results in mathematics were lower in 2001 because so few pupils reached the higher level. It is likely that this year, 2002, results will be better, especially in mathematics where there are more pupils working at the higher level. The school does not fare so well in comparisons with similar schools, with results in English average, mathematics well below average and science below average. One of the reasons for this is that the school has a much more socially balanced intake than the low number of pupils who take free school meals suggests. However, in order to improve these comparisons, it is the percentage who reach the higher level that needs to be increased, particularly in mathematics and science. In science and English, girls have usually done better than boys, but boys have performed better in mathematics. There is nothing in the teaching or provision that can account for the differences.

2. The governing body set challenging targets for 2001 which were not met. The reason for this was that two pupils who were expected to reach the higher level left and this affected the percentages. For 2002, the targets set are even more challenging, particularly in English, and the small numbers taking the tests leave little margin for success if one pupil does not reach the target. The inspection view is that the target is achievable with this year's pupils.

3. At Year 2, results in 2001 were average in English and mathematics but above average in writing. Results were better in writing because more pupils reached the higher level compared to the national figures.

4. In music and ICT, pupils throughout the school are reaching above average standards because there is quite a lot of teaching expertise in these subjects. Pupils do not achieve well enough in design and technology at Key Stage 2 because too little time is available for teaching the subject and too much attention is given to the final product rather than on developing the skills and understanding related to designing and making things which function. In physical education, geography, history and religious education by the end of Year 2 and 6, and design and technology at Year 2, standards are in line with expectations. More able pupils, predominantly in the juniors, often show better knowledge and understanding in discussion than their written work suggests. This is because so much of the written work is copied from various types of worksheet by all of the pupils and does not show differences in attainment.

5. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. Small classes and extra support help them to make good progress against their individual learning targets.

6. Children start the reception class with a wide range of attainment. The school's baseline assessment is undertaken in the first term and results suggest that attainment is below the average for the local education authority at the start. However, as the school admits all of the children in autumn, some of them are disadvantaged by being assessed at a much earlier age than others. This year around a half were summer term birthdays. Because

of these factors, the baseline is not a fair indicator for this school. Looking at the children now would suggest that attainment was probably typical of what one would expect to find. By the time they reach the end of this class, most are likely to reach the national standards set for them in all areas of learning as early learning goals and better than that in their knowledge and understanding of the world where all do well. Attainment overall is likely to be in line with the expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Children are very enthusiastic about their school. They enjoy coming, work hard at their lessons and are proud of their achievements. Overall, their behaviour is very good and they get on very well with one another and with teachers and support staff. Their personal development, which shows a growing maturity of outlook and a thoughtful understanding of important aspects of life, is a strength of the school.

8. Children have very positive attitudes to learning. They understand that to work hard and do their best is in their own interests, but also recognise that learning can be fun and they make the most of opportunities to enjoy their work, while still putting in the required amount of effort. In lessons, they settle quickly to their activities and concentrate on their work. Even when the tasks set are not particularly inspiring, they work quietly and sensibly, showing a high degree of commitment to achieving the best they can. They are quiet, attentive and responsive in lessons, properly focused on what they are doing.

9. Around the school, pupils always behave well. They are well aware of the school rules and observe them sensibly, because they understand that the rules are designed to ensure their safety. There have been two fixed term exclusion in the last year, following seriously disruptive behaviour. The school has dealt sensitively with the issue and has set support systems in place.

10. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Children get on well together and are sensitive to one another's feelings and needs. They respect views that are different from their own and are adamant that neither racism nor sexism could exist in this friendly, tolerant environment. Children say that there is no bullying in the school and that no one is treated unkindly. Older children specifically state that the school has taught them to be considerate of others, through its general ethos and through discussions in assemblies and personal, social and health education. In lessons, children co-operate well; for example, children in the infant class quietly discussed the computer program they were using and made joint decisions about what actions to take. In a mathematics lesson, children in Year 6 worked very constructively in pairs to draw pie charts.

11. Children are keen to accept responsibility and undertake a range of helpful duties willingly, such as managing the overhead projector in assemblies, looking after registers and tidying up cloakrooms. The older children need little encouragement to look after the younger ones, making sure that they are playing happily at breaks and reading stories to them during wet lunchtimes. They are quick to show initiative, for example, in providing chairs for visitors, and they are proud of their fund-raising activities for a range of national and international charities. They often produce good work that they have spent time researching at home, although opportunities for independent learning at school are more limited.

12. Attendance is slightly better than that usually seen in similar schools and unauthorised absence is below the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Taking account of pupils' work and of discussions with pupils as well as lessons seen, teaching overall is good. Throughout the school, there was some very good teaching observed and as in the previous inspection, about a third of the teaching seen was good or better. Only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory.

14. In all classes, relationships are good and pupils respond well to the expectation that they will work hard. Lessons are planned carefully and well prepared. There is a good emphasis on first hand experience, as in the science lessons using the school environment. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to collect and observe, to investigate and to use their knowledge to explain why things happen. Teachers use a range of resources effectively such as video and information texts in a Year 5 literacy lesson, or photographs and maps for geography. Teachers reinforce learning from one subject with skills in another; for example music appreciation inspires art, computers are used in many subjects, and numeracy skills are used, particularly the use and interpretation of graphs in science.

15. Teachers have good subject knowledge across the board but there are particular strengths in science and music. Although only one lesson was seen, other evidence such as that from assemblies suggests that subject knowledge in religious education is also strong. Good use is made of these strengths in class exchanges. For example, all of the science for infants and juniors is taught by the co-ordinator; the specialist skills in music are used so that all pupils learn to play a recorder, and other music lessons are taught predominantly by the specialists.

16. Literacy and numeracy lessons are mostly taught well. A feature of school organisation that helps teaching and learning to be successful, especially in these subjects, is that for part of the week an extra teacher is employed so that some classes in Key Stage 2, which has two year groups, are split and teachers work with small groups with a narrower range of ability to plan for. Consequently, they are able to give close attention to individual pupils and maintain a brisk work pace. Pupils know that they must work hard and do so quietly and willingly. They also work well in groups, discussing ideas and opinions calmly and openly when they are asked to. In the infants, a teaching assistant and a student provided similar small groups with the consequent benefits to the pupils of more attention. The pace of most literacy and numeracy lessons is good and there are many examples of effective questioning skills such as a numeracy session in reception and one in Year 3/4 where questions were skilfully asked at different levels to provide challenge to all. The one literacy lesson that was judged unsatisfactory was judged so because pupils were asked to undertake unchallenging written repetition of work that they had successfully covered orally at the beginning. There are also examples of this type of unchallenging written work in subjects such as geography, history and religious education. This is particularly inhibiting to more able pupils who are unable to show the depth of their understanding and knowledge.

17. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. In the best examples there is a mixture of praise, criticism and points for improvement but sometimes the marking lacks this good balance. Teachers are working hard on developing target setting but there is some way to go. For example, much of pupils' written work is prefaced by a 'target' which is the learning objective for the lesson and is the same for all pupils. At the same time, individual targets are being negotiated and reviewed within literacy lessons; these are much more relevant to the pupil.

18. The teaching in the reception class is satisfactory overall. Although specific skills such as reading, writing and number work are taught well, some aspects of the learning for young children are not given enough emphasis. In particular, the classroom could be better organised to give more opportunities for children to choose their learning. The children try very hard to keep their attention on the teacher during long sessions such as the literacy

lesson but for some it is too much and they stop listening. A strength of the teaching is the creation of a caring environment and the good relationships with adults which give young children a secure start in their education.

19. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the caring relationships and the teaching in small groups. They also have extra sessions which focus on their particular learning needs but these were not seen as they happen on a different day from when the inspection took place. Their records and responses in class show that they are making good progress because of this combination.

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

20. The curriculum provision for infants and juniors has improved since the last inspection and is now good. There are a good number of visits out of school and opportunities for visitors into school and they make a good contribution to the curriculum. The school has a rich environment for studies in art, science, geography and history. The planned curriculum includes better use of these resources, including studies of habitats in the school grounds, Walton on the Naze for a different and contrasting environment, and visits to museums, the church and other villages.

21. The long-term curriculum plan ensures that statutory requirements are met and the provision is broad and balanced. By planning for all subjects within a two-year cycle for infants and juniors, the school provides effectively for the mixed-age classes. Careful thought has been given to identifying links between subjects. For instance, older pupils have written sensitively about their exciting visit to the castle in Colchester, demonstrating how well they can write and how valuable the experience was to their knowledge and understanding in history.

22. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been fully implemented. Additional Literacy Support materials are used with groups. Progression in the teaching and learning of basic skills in using numbers, reading, spelling and grammar is good.

23. The school works hard to overcome the poor accommodation for physical education. The outdoor facilities, both the hard surface and the grass, are good for games and athletics and could be used more for gymnastics and dance when the weather permits. There is a long walk to the village hall as an alternative to the very small and unsuitable space in the school but this is not convenient and depends on a good number of adults to ensure the pupils' safety.

24. The curriculum for pupils with special education needs is good. Arrangements are in place to ensure equal access for pupils with special educational needs to the full curriculum. The current provision meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice. There are useful links to other schools to provide additional opportunities for the most able pupils.

25. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The youngest children's learning is planned from a mixture of the National Curriculum and the curriculum for the early years. At present, the balance between these is not quite right with too little opportunity for pupils to make choices either from resources within an activity or from a range of activities.

26. The statutory curriculum is broadened by the very good provision for personal, social and health education. There is a governors' statement on the sex education the school

provides. Learning about drug misuse is part of the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils are given careful and sensitively planned opportunities to learn about relationships, teamwork, collaboration, their own health and well-being, their responsibilities and how their actions impact on friends and the wider community. The addition of special focus weeks given further enrichment and widens the learning opportunities; these include multi-cultural weeks, book weeks and the Queen's Golden Jubilee festival.

27. The extra-curricular provision is very good. Learning opportunities are enriched and extended by a number of extra-curricular activities that include games coaching, music, sporting activities, and visits to theatres, museums and other interesting places. The after-school activities are open to all pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. Year 6 pupils also have access to a weekly computer club. The school has a tradition of including valuable residential visits to Hill Top in Norfolk and Marchant Hill. Each year there is a whole-school production that involves everyone and is one of the highlights for pupils, staff and parents. Last year 'Baboushka' and 'The Pied Piper' gave opportunities for music, dance, drama, singing, speaking and the joy of taking part. Pupils receive specialist teaching for woodwind, guitar and keyboards and about one third take these opportunities. All pupils learn to play the recorder. Pupils take part in infant music festivals. The links to the local churches are strong and add important opportunities that enhance the wider curriculum.

28. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved from the previous inspection. Parents are very happy with this aspect of the school's life.

29. Spiritual awareness is developed within the Christian ethos of the school and is very good. The clergy from the local churches are regular visitors to lead assemblies and teach Years 5 and 6 pupils. Assemblies generally provide a suitable context for pupils to reflect on important issues in their lives. For example, in considering the beauty of the world and the variety of life they reflected on the need to care for and protect them. The religious education syllabus includes lessons about different faiths, contributing to both spiritual and cultural development. Children are being encouraged to understand faith and commitment and why religious artefacts are considered to be so special. There are regular services in the church to understand and sense its special and spiritual atmosphere as well as to observe the building and the symbols of the Christian church. Teachers use opportunities to foster a sense of awe and wonder when these occur, such as the beauty of the structure of a flower. In subjects such as art and music there are many examples of teachers and pupils reflecting and considering the issues of spiritual development, for instance writing with sensitivity after listening to music or reading poetry.

30. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is a very clear ethos set by staff who expect pupils to know and understand right from wrong and the consequences of their behaviour on others. For instance, when a group excluded a pupil from what they were doing, the teacher carefully explained how we learn from mistakes and used it as positive teaching point. Personal and social education lessons reinforce such issues as the qualities of a good friendship and caring for others. In lessons such as English, pupils are asked to consider relevant issues such as racism and colour in football.

31. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Teachers and support staff promote pupils' social development very well. There are regular opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively with one another both within their own year group and with pupils from other year groups. During break times the pupils play together and mix socially really well. In lessons teachers expect pupils to consider how to work together effectively, as seen in a geography lesson in Year 5/6 and a science lesson in Year 1/2. Year 6 pupils are given responsibilities such as looking after the reception children as they start school. The

residential visit made by the older pupils provides a valuable opportunity for them to gain independence and to develop their social skills.

32. The school provides very well for pupils' cultural development. There are visits to galleries and cultural centres. The religious education programme enables pupils to learn about their own culture and several major faiths. Other subjects, such as geography, history and English, include opportunities to learn about cultural traditions of the past and present. The school uses the strong link with the church and with the local environment to foster an understanding of aspects of the pupils' own culture. When buying new resources and artefacts for English, history, geography and religious education the school takes into account how these can promote cultural and multi-cultural education as part of a diverse society. Links with community provide opportunities to study the local environment and join in the traditional cultural activities, such as maypole dancing.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school takes good care of its pupils and has good arrangements in place for their welfare and their health and safety. There are appropriate procedures for child protection and staff know what action to take if issues arise. Pupils feel safe and secure and are confident that they can turn to their teachers or other adults in the school if they need help or support.

34. Health and safety procedures are guided by an appropriate policy and overseen by the deputy headteacher and a nominated governor. Regular inspections of the premises are carried out and have been effective, for example, in ensuring that damaged planking on the entrance to demountable classrooms has been replaced. Procedures for school trips are carefully vetted and appropriate risk assessments carried out. Emergency procedures to cope with problems with the school bus have worked effectively so that parents are not left worrying about their children when it has been delayed. The school has identified the shared pedestrian and vehicle entrance to the grounds as a possible hazard, and the possibility of vehicles driving onto the playgrounds when it is being used by pupils. Action has not yet been taken to minimise these risks.

35. Procedures for monitoring and improving the pupils' behaviour are good and based on the school's Christian values, self-discipline and respect for others. Children respond very well to the consistent approach taken by staff and welcome the rewards and praise they receive for behaving well. They are helped to develop an understanding of how their actions affect others through discussions in class, through the personal, social and health education programme and in assemblies.

36. As a result of these effective systems children behave very well towards each other; they say they are very happy in the school and that bullying almost never occurs.

37. Good attendance is encouraged through the clear expectations set out by the school in its communications with parents. Patterns of absence are monitored by the school and followed up if necessary.

38. Pupils' personal development is monitored well by the staff. They know the children very well and are quick to spot any changes in attitudes or behaviour. Concerns are addressed with the parents if necessary and the school has, on occasions, initiated further medical investigations to help an individual's development.

39. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress in infants and juniors are good, and this is better than at the time of the last inspection. The school's system makes comprehensive use of test data, including optional national assessments in Year 4, to predict

how well each pupil should perform. Pupils' actual progress is then compared to the predictions and any slowing of progress leads to extra support being provided. This system has helped raise pupils' performance in recent years so that the school's results have improved faster than the national average. At the moment, this assessment information does not provide enough detail to set individual learning targets for pupils which would take each pupil forwards from their existing position. Analysis of school results has been used effectively to spot areas of work that could be developed, for example spelling in Year 2. This has led to development to the curriculum and improvements in the pupils' work. There are several systems for assessing children's skills and knowledge when they start the school and as they move through the reception class, but taken overall they are too cumbersome.

40. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed accurately and have individual targets set for their learning. These are followed closely by teachers and support staff so that they make good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents are generally pleased with the school and give positive support to their children's learning. The quality and range of information provided for them are good and the practical support they give, through helping with activities or raising funds for the school, is a valuable asset.

42. Most parents have positive views about the school. They agree that children enjoy school and are expected to work hard. They feel that teaching is mainly good and that standards achieved by the pupils are satisfactory in most subjects, with especially good progress made in ICT. They think that, overall, pupils behave very well and have good attitudes to learning. Relationships are good and pupils are growing into mature and responsible young people. Personal development of pupils is seen by parents as a strength of the school. Most feel welcome in school and are generally satisfied with the information provided for them.

43. While parents are mainly happy with what the school provides, there are some areas of concern. Some parents feel that the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged. Some say that behaviour in one class is not as good as it should be, that the marking and setting of homework is inconsistent and that they are not always informed soon enough about problems relating to their children, or consulted sufficiently about what the school does. Nineteen per cent of parents who completed the questionnaire did not think that the school offers a good range of interesting activities outside lessons. A small number of parents do not feel comfortable about approaching the school with queries or problems.

44. The inspection team agrees with most of the positive comments made by parents, and finds that some of the criticisms are partially justified. Work is not always sufficiently challenging for all children and, although the homework policy was agreed with parents, there has been no recent monitoring of how consistently and effectively it is used. Behaviour during the inspection was very good in all classes and there is a wide range of interesting activities outside lessons to enrich and enhance the taught curriculum. The school acknowledges that procedures for consulting parents could be developed further. Interestingly, most of the parents who voiced criticisms balanced their comments with praise for other aspects of the school.

45. The quality and range of information provided by the school are, on the whole, good. The prospectus and regular newsletters contain appropriate information, while the governors' annual report to parents is attractively presented and illustrated with children's work. School reports give good details about what children are learning. Most cover both strengths and

weaknesses in what children know, understand and can do, and give some indication of areas for improvement. The space for children's own comments on their progress is well used. In addition to the usual range of formal parents' meetings to discuss children's progress, the school arranges special evenings to explain aspects of the curriculum such as numeracy, literacy, science, art and personal, social and health education. Every classroom is set out with practical activities which can be shared by parents and their children, and which constitute an enjoyable and imaginative way of showing parents what really happens in school. The very high attendance at these events indicates how much they are appreciated by parents.

46. A small number of parents regularly help in classrooms, or escort parties of children going to the village hall, the high school or to swimming lessons. The school finds this help invaluable. A very active Parent Teacher Association arranges fund-raising and social events which are well supported by the majority of parents and which provide a good range of additional equipment for the children to use.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Overall the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides caring leadership and sets the tone for the strong pastoral element of the school's life and its success in meeting its aims in this area. Good arrangements have been made for the deputy headteacher to assume responsibilities during the headteacher's absence and phased return to work and most aspects of management have continued uninterrupted. Although the headteacher has a good knowledge of the teaching skills of the staff by teaching herself and by being in classrooms, she does not undertake formal monitoring and this aspect of her leadership role is unsatisfactory. Much of this work has been devolved to co-ordinators. Co-ordinators, and this includes the headteacher in this role, have concentrated on looking at planning and reviewing some lessons. They have analysed data from tests very well and spotted some areas for development. Although they do look at pupils' work, teachers skills are still at early stages and are not sophisticated enough to pick up issues such as the amount of writing that pupils do that is identical or differences in the way that teachers mark pupils' work. Co-ordinators have, however, taken a strong lead in developing the work within the subjects for which they are responsible and standards are rising as their efforts take effect.

48. The governing body takes a strong and active role in supporting the school. Many of them have adopted a subject and undertake visits to talk to staff and review lessons using a standard form. As a result, governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in the school. They have also had an active involvement in the early and later stages of producing the school's improvement plan. A combination of whole-school review based on local educational authority documentation and reviews by co-ordinators and governors means that improvements are carefully planned and effectively monitored.

49. The appraisal and performance management of the headteacher and other staff have not been completed satisfactorily despite the governors setting this as one of the targets for the headteacher to do. This is because the headteacher has not seen it as a priority.

50. The school makes satisfactory use of its funding and resources. After essential costs such as staffing have been identified, any budget surplus is spent in accordance with priorities defined in the school improvement plan. Specific grants are spent appropriately, for example, to provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs, booster classes and extra clerical help.

51. Decisions to maintain current staffing ratios and ensure a good supply of learning resources are seen as priorities by the governors, so that funding is allocated accordingly. The appointment of additional teachers and teaching assistants, allowing staff to concentrate on small groups, is beneficial for the pupils' progress.

52. Expenditure is routinely monitored to ensure that spending decisions are made sensibly. Close checks are made on major items; for example, the purchase of laptop computers was deferred until it was clear that they could be afforded. The balances in the data sheet on page 23 do not reflect an accurate picture of the financial position as they include several sums that are planned for expenditure. The school says it will be carrying forward about £16,000, which is five per cent of its budget.

53. Routine financial control and administration are efficient and effective. Some recommendations of the recent audit report have already been implemented; others are covered by the draft action plan which awaits ratification by the governing body. Money has been set aside to pay for the modernisation of the office computer system in the next financial year, which is intended to increase efficiency and allow staff easier access to pupil records.

54. Although the school tries hard to ensure value for money in the purchase of supplies and services, it acknowledges the need to apply principles of best value more widely. The governors' understanding of best value in educational terms is very variable and reflects the need for more development in this area. A draft policy is in preparation.

55. The accommodation of the school is of two very distinct types. The older building has been sympathetically modernised and extended to form good accommodation for infants and for administration. Pupils in juniors learn in temporary classrooms which are safe but unattractive and somewhat dilapidated. There is no school hall but good use is made of a large temporary classroom for assemblies and for dining facilities. Physical education lessons are affected by the lack of a hall but the school works to overcome this through alternatives. Overall accommodation is unsatisfactory.

56. Given the good standards that pupils achieve, both academically and in terms of their personal development, and taking into account the cost of educating the pupils, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve further the standards and quality of education offered, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Make sure that pupils in juniors have a better experience in design and technology by:
 - continuing with the development plans for the subject and raising teachers' skills and confidence;
 - reviewing the amount of time spent on the subject;
 - ensuring that lessons concentrate on developing the specific skills for design and technology.
Paragraphs 97-102.
2. Increase the level of challenge in some writing tasks especially for the more able by using fewer worksheets or structured answers and allowing a more open response that will let pupils demonstrate their particular level of knowledge.
Paragraphs 75; 92; 107; 112; 136.
3. Improve some of the formal aspects of leadership and management by agreeing the headteacher's level of formal monitoring of teaching and learning and implementing it.
Paragraph 47.
4. Ensure that teacher appraisal and the headteacher's performance management tasks are completed.
Paragraph 49.
5. Continue to work with the local education authority to improve the accommodation.
Paragraph 55.

In addition, the governors should consider the following minor points in their action plan:

- Review procedures for risk assessment of the traffic access to the rear of the school.
Paragraph 34.
- Further develop the curriculum, planning and assessment for the children in the Foundation Stage (reception class)
Paragraphs 25; 39; 66.
- Continue to develop and refine the school's understanding and sharing of learning targets with pupils.
Paragraphs 39; 75.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

29*

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

22

* These do not add up to the same as the grid below because some lessons were not given a teaching grade, for example those taken by visiting sports coaches.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	14	6	1	0	0
Percentage	0	19	54	23	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

101

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

29

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

6

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

0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	4	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	16	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	94 (91)	94 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	13	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (91)	81 (91)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	7	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	10	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (100)	77 (72)	85 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	10	10	11
Percentage of pupils	School	77 (78)	77 (83)	85 (94)

at NC level 4 or above	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

** These figures are not included as there are fewer than 10 boys and/or girls in the year group*

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	101
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	25.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	44

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	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	316256
Total expenditure	324307
Expenditure per pupil	3211
Balance brought forward from previous year	61537
Balance carried forward to next year	66919

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	101
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	50	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	52	3	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	55	9	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	47	12	2	7
The teaching is good.	40	57	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	57	10	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	43	2	7	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	34	59	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	31	53	5	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	41	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	45	19	5	12

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

58. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. The youngest ones attend part time for a while. At some times of the year there will be Year 1 pupils in the reception class as well as those in the Foundation Stage but at the time of the inspection, all of the children were Foundation Stage. Overall, by the time they reach the end of the reception year, they are likely to reach the national standards set for them in all areas of learning as early learning goals and better than that in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, individually their attainment ranges from some who are likely to exceed the expectations to others who may have special educational needs and may not reach them. The amount of progress that children in reception make is difficult to assess because the first set of assessment information (baseline) is unreliable.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Provision and teaching for children's development in this area are satisfactory overall with some significant strengths balanced by some weaknesses. Children cope well with the two adults and respond equally well to both, to other teachers, to parents who help in the classroom and to visitors. Children's behaviour is usually good and they get along with each other well. Occasionally there are little disputes or moments when their behaviour needs correction as when play in the outside Wendy House became a little boisterous but children are quickly settled and calmed by the two adults. Children know the school routines and follow them happily, for example going to assemblies, having school meals and at playtimes. They show a good degree of personal independence as they get ready to go home and look after their own belongings. As the school has all children taking part in the school productions, the youngest have a good experience of working with older pupils and performing in the village hall which helps to make them more confident.

60. There are times in the week when learning is more flexible than those observed and during this time the children show that they can choose what they want to do from a fairly small range of activities and stick to their chosen activity for good lengths of time. However, the way that resources are stored and equipment is presented does not encourage this part of their personal development enough. For example, all of the materials for art and craft are stored in containers out of reach, so that children select only from the range offered. Some children can listen and take part in formal lessons for good lengths of time whilst others have very short concentration spells and quickly start to move around or lose interest. Whilst the staff are sympathetic to this and allow some of the children to move when they need, it would be better to review the way the sessions are organised to create a more flexible approach. Some aspects of personal development are covered well formally through very effective teaching in religious education lessons and consideration of issues such as caring for the environment as part of the school's programme for personal, social and health education. One child provided an interesting solution to rubbish in the environment by 'putting the bad people in the bin as well as the rubbish'. Informally as well, the children are taught to be aware of differences, such as the African child's name and colour in a story and the different animals and fruits that she would see compared to what is in England.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Children enjoy stories and look at the pictures with interest. They can talk about what has happened, ask questions about the pictures and say what might happen on the next

page. A weakness shown by several of the younger children is that they find it difficult to listen quietly in formal situations. During a literacy session, for example, they were unable to listen to the story without moving or calling out. The adults are very patient and consistent in reminding children about listening quietly and sitting still but the session was too long and the content too formal for some.

62. The teaching of sounds and letters is good. A mixture of games and songs helps children to hear and say initial sounds and some blends. Strong emphasis is given to listening to children read. Some are already reading simple sentences, whilst others enjoy looking at pictures and talking about them but have just started to recognise their own names and some letters. All of the children know the difference between letters and numbers and that marks on the paper have meaning. The highest attainers are able to write their own names and a range of simple words and phrases by themselves. For example, as they worked together to write a thank you letter, some children used and spelled correctly words such as *like*, *they* and *love*. They also knew that there should be capital letters and full stops. Other children are not so independent and ask adults to write down their ideas so that they can copy over or under the adult's writing. Overall, teaching is satisfactory because, although the basic skills are taught well, the timing of the session is too long and there is not enough emphasis on young children learning in play contexts.

Mathematical development

63. Children are developing sound skills and knowledge in mathematics and making good progress especially in number because of good teaching. They enjoyed number songs and rhymes and all joined in the activity of counting up to and back from 20. Some very able children were extremely confident with numbers up to 100, and could name any given number and say what comes before or after. In a whole-group activity, children were very good at spotting when the teacher had altered the number square below 10 and quickly put it right. There was some good challenge in this activity to stretch the more able by changing numbers such as 62 and 87 which took some time for them to spot. Good provision was made for some of the least able children to work with the teaching assistant at a bingo game. This was particularly useful since it also made the children take turns, a concept that some of the group did not really understand and need to acquire through such activity. Other children worked happily and successfully with the teacher to sort animal shapes by colour or shape although this could have been made more challenging to those who were doing it too easily, for example by giving them objects that would fit the criteria of both sets.

64. The children can extend repeating patterns and recognise the basic two-dimensional shapes. They know the names of coins and their play in the 'garden centre' showed that they understand that money is used to buy goods and sometimes change is returned. In talking about pictures, children used language correctly to describe *longer/shorter* and *taller/smaller*.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Teaching and provision in this area are good and are helped by the small size of the class and the number of adults including parent helpers. Generally, children achieve well. They have a good experience of using computers which they handle with confidence. They were able to select a program for themselves when the one they were working on had finished. With a parent helper, children sequenced pictures to represent the growth of a bean, printed the sequence off and answered questions accurately to show that they knew words such as *seed*, *root*, *stalk*, and *flower* to support what they were learning in science. Each of them has a bean growing in a jar and children were quite keen to talk about their work. In their current books, other types of growth have been recorded, including the life cycle of the butterfly.

66. There is a good range of construction equipment, although this is only available when the teacher decides and there could be more opportunities for this to be included during times of choice. The children are quite competent at joining sections together and a collection of their trucks and constructions from different types of equipment are placed on the windows around the cloakroom. Children learn about the world around their school through maps which show their villages and homes.

Physical development

67. Children do well when handling small tools such as brushes or scissors. They are quite skilful in joining construction equipment. Work on the walls shows that they can use paint brushes and pens and pencils with growing control. Children move about the classroom and school, both indoors and outdoors, safely, sensibly and confidently. They were able to ride the bikes and other wheeled toys competently in their small hard play area although there was nothing in the way of tracks or parking bays that would challenge them to 'drive' with better control. The area outside the classroom is used whenever the weather permits for sand and water play and sometimes for other activities. The school has delightful surroundings which provide good opportunities for outdoor exploration.

Creative development

68. Provision for creative development is satisfactory and work on display and the few examples of creative play seen suggest that the children are reaching an appropriate standard. The classroom is of a good size and can sustain separate areas for role-play, art, or sand and water. In addition, the area outside the classroom has small but self-contained space that is used for these activities. Children often draw and illustrate their work so that they develop competency in using pencils and crayons. The range of attainment is wide. For example, their illustrations of themselves and their family ranged from simple round shapes with sticks for arms and legs to detailed drawings with facial features and clothing. Children's past work has examples of using different materials and textures. Different types of flowers had been made to stock the 'garden centre' and at one time the children were playing very profitably helped by the teaching assistant. The children enjoyed working with clay and under the teacher's guidance produced neatly decorated thumb pots. Although the children do well in the work they are given, a weakness of provision is that their choice is restricted too much in terms of when and what materials they can use. This links to the judgement that personal development could be promoted more strongly. The children sing as they learn about sounds and number. In assemblies they join in and do well to remember difficult tunes and words. They play instruments together as a class and try very hard to keep to the beat of the music. Some of them do this well, others just enjoy the activity without worrying too much about keeping in time.

69. Teaching is sound overall. Planning for this group of children is a mixture of the curriculum for the early years and of the first level of the National Curriculum. A difficulty that the teacher is working to overcome is the need to provide the wealth of experience that is part of the curriculum for the early years with the tighter structure of the literacy and numeracy hours. The resultant compromise makes the curriculum and the teaching satisfactory rather than good. For example, the younger children cope with the numeracy session better than they do with the literacy hour because the literacy session was very long and some of them are not ready for the more concentrated and independent work involved. There is quite a lot of structured teaching and learning but less opportunity for children to exercise choice. The teacher uses the local educational authority baseline and then keeps detailed highlighted records of all the strands of the early learning goals and links into the National Curriculum for each pupil. Whilst this is a thorough record, it is very cumbersome and time consuming.

ENGLISH

70. Pupils achieve well in English throughout the school. Interpretation of the results needs also to recognise the impact of small numbers and the fact that this can influence the pattern each year quite a lot. Overall performance in the national tests in reading at the end of Year 2 in 2001 was average. Results in writing were better than in reading and better than those nationally because more pupils achieved the higher level 3 than did so nationally. In the national tests at the end of Year 6, results have been above the national average for the last three years. In 2001 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 4 was about the same as in most schools, but the proportion going on to the higher level 5 was much higher, making the school's overall performance above the national average. Girls performed better than boys, as has been the case over the last few years. However, there is no difference in the ways that boys and girls are taught that would account for this. Results in English at the end of Year 6 are in line with other schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, but they are much higher than at the time of the last inspection and represent considerable improvement, particularly for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. The extra adult help in the infants from the teaching assistant, parent and student means that there is very good support for groups and this helps pupils to make good progress. Similarly, a major reason for the good progress in the juniors is that the joint year group classes are split so that teachers work with small numbers of pupils and can match the work more closely, ensure that all pupils are fully involved and respond to individual needs very quickly as they arise in lessons.

71. Infants talk confidently in social settings and during lessons, for example, asking clear questions that help them to understand the story or what they are to do, or discussing their work in science and geography. Reading skills vary from some who are very fluent to some who need and receive extra help. Year 1/2s teaching assistant worked effectively with a small group who have some degree of special needs to develop their reading. The activity was well structured by the teacher to include reading from books, work using the tape recorders and worksheets, so that the pupils were kept working at a good pace through a series of short, suitable activities. The literacy hour is presented very effectively. A short but succinct session of phonics showed that by Year 2, pupils are acquiring a secure knowledge of sounds and blends. The more able Year 1 pupils benefit from parts of the lesson which are more challenging because they are aimed at the older pupils. The class are given clear, simple and specific targets for their group work so that they know what they have to do. As a result, they settle down very quickly, working with a good level of quiet discussion. Writing develops well. Year 2 pupils used the planning sheets in their lesson appropriately to jot down ideas rather than to write in sentences. Their completed books show that they write with confidence, structure stories well because of the planning and use language effectively. They understand the importance of good beginnings and rounded endings as shown in the final sentence of a fairy story, 'At last the giant was beaten and the people lived happily ever after'.

72. Work from the current Year 6 pupils is above average. Pupils throughout the school develop skills through performances such as the Christmas production of 'The Pied Piper' where they speak clearly and act confidently. In discussions, pupils in Key Stage 2 reveal a mature and thoughtful response such as when they were talking to an inspector about the school. Year 6 pupils also showed good listening skills at the start of lessons such as when they responded very well to questions about characters. Pupils often talk in pairs sensibly about their work, as in a Year 3/4 geography lesson where they talked about photographs taken on a recent visit.

73. By Year 6, pupils read competently. Good teaching in an extended writing session revealed the teacher's high expectations of their understanding of text such as noticing the ambiguity in what characters say in a story. The accuracy of their comprehension work shows that they read with good levels of understanding. Year 5 pupils coped well with a demanding text, reading phrases such as 'latent thinking', and 'cognitive map' even when they could not understand the content. They demonstrated good reading and comprehension when researching simpler texts on the same subject and used the information well to express their opinions both verbally and in writing as they considered the morality of using rats fitted with brain controls to rescue people.

74. The quality of pupils' writing by Year 6 is good. They write in a variety of styles in English. There is little difference between most of the pupils' skill in writing. Higher and middle attainers write competently. Pieces are usually fairly short and there is a lack of work of an extended nature. Writing is, however, well constructed, grammatically correct and neatly presented. Pupils use good language that is suitable for the style they are working in such as this example from a modern fairy story: 'she had sky blue eyes that sparkled like a diamond'. However, pupils' spelling is not as strong as other features of writing. For example, a pupil whose writing content was assessed at the higher level 5, regularly made errors involving double letters such as *apalling* or *dissappointing*. The lower attainers' work is noticeably different, being poorly presented, simply written and with poor punctuation.

75. Teaching ranged from one lesson that was unsatisfactory to one that was very good. Evidence over time would suggest that overall it is good. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. The inspection days were the days when an additional teacher works in juniors so that year groups can be taught separately for part of the week. This helps teachers to match the work, in most cases, very well because they are dealing with small numbers. This benefits those with special needs as well as those who are more able because of the quickness with which teachers respond to queries and the closeness with which they can supervise and support pupils whilst they are working. There is also extra provision for pupils with special needs but this was not seen since it occurs on a day when the inspection team was not in school. The best teaching has high expectations about pupils' responses in terms of English skills and behaviour. The one lesson that was unsatisfactory was because the group work parts of the lesson demanded little more of the pupils than what had been covered orally. There is other evidence in pupils' books that levels of challenge in English and of literacy skills in other subjects are not always appropriate. For example, a pupil whose handwriting is immaculate is still copying out writing for practice. In most other subjects, too much written work is identical for all pupils. Marking is conscientious and, at its best, recognises effort and quality as well as giving direction for improvement, but some marking concentrates on the positive without saying what can be improved. Teachers are trying very hard to use targets in most lessons and ask pupils to preface each task with a 'target'. Many of these, however, are the lesson objectives for the whole class rather than for the pupil and the process now needs to be refined to move individuals on. A good example of practice can be seen in Year 3/4 where individual targets are negotiated and reviewed half termly with individual pupils.

76. The co-ordinator has given a strong lead to developments in the subject and has been well supported in this by the literacy governor. Teaching has been monitored, data has been analysed and information has been used to set out a programme for development in the subject.

MATHEMATICS

77. Standards have improved since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below expectations in Key Stage 1, especially pupils' mental abilities. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were in line with national expectations but their oral and mental skills were well below average. Following the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the changes in the curriculum, teaching and learning, standards are now good with most pupils in line with, or above national expectations. There have been significant improvements in the pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics, especially in their recall of information and their ability to calculate mentally.

78. The number of pupils in each cohort is small so the use of data to determine standards and progress needs to be considered carefully. The 2001 test results for the Year 2 pupils show that standards are average when compared to all schools and below similar schools, based on entitlement to free school meals.

79. By the end of Year 6 in 2001 the standards were similar to the national average but below those of similar schools. Only one pupil reached the higher standard, level 5, and this is well below average both nationally and compared to similar schools. It is also below the number that achieve this level in English and science in this school.

80. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and in particular the mental and oral work, is beginning to have a positive impact and pupils are making good progress. This shows, for example, in the secure understanding of numbers, aspects of measuring, shapes and data handling of pupils in Year 2. They can all order numbers to 100, such as 8, 29, 51, 58, 74. When using addition the majority of pupils can solve problems such as $16 + 12$ and $200 + 7$, and follow patterns such as $5 + 21$, $15 + 21$ and $35 + 21$. The most able pupils can add mentally using numbers such as $63 + 29$ or $112 + 117$. They are familiar with simple doubling and halving numbers to 20 and a significant number can work with larger numbers. They have a good grasp of place value and can count confidently to 100 in ones, fives or tens. Most pupils can tell the time using o'clock and half hours. In simple multiplication they can use the 2, 3, 4, and 5 times table and are able to divide numbers by 2. The more able pupils confidently divide numbers by 10. All the pupils are developing a good understanding of the mathematical vocabulary, including *total*, *sum of*, *the difference*, *double* and *minus*. They are developing skills to use numbers mentally and are used to explaining their strategies to solve problems

81. Year 6 pupils, aged ten and eleven, are developing a thorough understanding of mathematics. They are able to solve complex problems and use their knowledge and understanding to explain how they solved them. All the pupils have good mental recall to solve multiplication and division problems such as 260 divide by 100 equals 2.6, or can multiply 1.07 by 10 to give the answer 10.7. All are able to solve problems to find one quarter or a fraction of a number, such as $\frac{1}{4}$ of 764 or $\frac{5}{6}$ of 726. A good number can calculate them mentally. Pupils are very confident when using paper and pencil methods and all pupils can add and subtract successfully, multiply numbers such as 239 by 42, 82×0.6 and can divide 223 by 8 or 695.25 divided by 0.75. In addition and subtraction, problems with large numbers are approached confidently using numbers to 10000. Most pupils have good, instant recall of multiplication tables up to 12 and strategies to help them remember. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and they make good progress.

82. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in mathematics lessons are very good. They are attentive, listen carefully and are eager to respond and answer questions to solve problems. They enjoy learning. Strategies are explained confidently to share methods to solve problems. When answering questions they listen to, and show respect for, each other. When working together in pairs or small groups they work collaboratively very successfully, showing

excellent relationships between pupils. The high quality of the pupils' attitudes to their work has a very positive effect on their learning.

83. Overall, the quality of teaching in mathematics is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and has contributed to the raising of standards. All teachers plan using the national numeracy framework and support materials. They identify clear learning objectives for each lesson and in the best examples share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils and use it to assess and summarise progress. Teachers make good links with other subjects so that pupils can use their knowledge in practical contexts. In geography, for instance, Year 3 /4 pupils use their knowledge of co-ordinates to learn how to use maps. Pupils in Year 1 /2 were entering data onto a spreadsheet following a walk in the local area, as part of their geographical studies, and conducting a survey of how the pupils travel to school. In science, pupils take measurements and produce graphs.

84. Teachers have good questioning skills and encourage pupils to explain their thinking to the class. In all classes teachers ensure the pupils are motivated and the pace of lessons is good, with a variety of activities to ensure pupils apply themselves intellectually. Routines and expectations are well established. Lessons begin promptly and pupils settle quickly and are ready to work. The lesson structure follows the pattern recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy and this has helped to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. The use of white boards, number fans and digital cards are examples of ways that engage pupils of all abilities as well as helping the teachers to assess individual learning and progress. Sometimes work is well matched to what the pupil needs next but some of the published worksheets are not challenging enough and pupils sometimes do low level, unnecessary tasks, such as colouring in. Homework is set regularly and the best examples are used to extend and practise the pupils' current knowledge and understanding.

85. Pupils' work is marked regularly. In the majority of books the comments focus on pupils' efforts and presentation. Learning objectives for each lesson or series of lessons become the learning target for all pupils whether or not it is appropriate for the individual. This practice needs to be modified so that targets are personal and pupils understand better how they can improve. The involvement in their own learning should be an additional motivation for pupils and raise their expectations, especially of the more able and talented mathematicians.

86. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully and resources improved to support the teaching and learning. Some analysis has been done of the results of the national tests to identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning. Although the school is beginning to identify the more able pupils and raise expectations of their achievements, more needs to be done to challenge them. There has been some monitoring of teaching and learning as part of the subject leader's role and the records show a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. However, over the last two years that good practice has not been followed through so that the required improvements have not been monitored. The structure of the school day needs to be reviewed so the best use of time is considered. Currently some mathematics lessons are too long, especially for younger pupils.

SCIENCE

87. Pupils achieve well in science throughout the school. All pupils reached the expected level 2 in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001 compared to 89 per cent nationally, and nearly a third went on to the higher level 3, which is about the same as the national average. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 results have been just above the national average for the last four years, having risen considerably since 1997. In 2001 the

proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 4 was not quite as high as in most schools, but the proportion going on to the higher level 5 was greater and the school's overall performance was close to the national average. Girls performed better than boys; the difference was more marked than in most schools and this has been the case over the last few years. Results in science at the end of Year 6 are lower than in other schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, but they are much higher than at the time of the last inspection and represent considerable improvement, particularly for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels.

88. Pupils currently in Year 2 are developing a good knowledge of science and a firm grasp of the importance of investigations as a result of the emphasis given to this aspect of the subject by the teaching. As a result of the work they have covered on electricity, they understand that there needs to be a complete loop for a circuit to work, and that some materials conduct electricity whilst others are insulators. They also appreciate the potential hazards of mains electricity, for example explaining why switches should not be placed in bathrooms. In their work on plants they have investigated the effects of varying the amount of water and light that a bean seedling received. They appreciate that the test had to be made fair and understand why several plants had to be tested to allow for chance variations and why only one factor should be changed at a time. From their observations they are able to distinguish between the conditions for the bean to start sprouting and the need for light on the leaves as it continues to grow. They respond very positively to new ideas and use their scientific knowledge thoughtfully to try to explain new situations.

89. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to develop well in their knowledge of science facts and particularly well in their understanding of investigative work in the process of science. Pupils' grasp of the subject demonstrated through discussion is better than the test results would indicate, although the depth of their understanding is not so evident in their written work. Their knowledge of the subject builds effectively on their earlier work in Years 1 and 2; for example, they mostly develop a good grasp of the concept of current flowing in an electrical circuit so that they can explain how to reverse the direction of rotation of an electric motor. They also appreciate the differences between series and parallel circuits, explaining where switches could be placed to control different parts of the circuit. They have similarly good understanding of the other parts of the subject that they have covered, for example the roles of the parts of a flower in pollination, an outline of how photosynthesis produces energy for a plant and the way forces make things move if they are not balanced. As in the earlier years, pupils understand the importance of investigation and have developed an even better grasp of the procedures necessary to make a test fair and reliable. They think carefully about the subject and use their knowledge well in new areas, for example discussing why there is a glass envelope round the filament of an electric light bulb.

90. Pupils have very positive attitudes to science. They enjoy the challenge of investigative work and of using their knowledge to explain why things happen. In lessons they listen very attentively, answer questions thoughtfully and often raise their own questions, particularly in older classes. They work particularly well in groups, discussing ideas and opinions in a lively, friendly and productive way.

91. Science is taught well, with the science co-ordinator either involved with the teaching or responsible for the teaching in all classes in infants and juniors. As a result there is a very consistent approach, which places considerable emphasis on developing the pupils' understanding of how scientific ideas are generated and how they can be used to explain the world around us. Her own subject knowledge enables her to respond confidently to pupils' searching questions and this encourages them to think hard and effectively about the subject. Her very lively approach helps to develop and maintain their enthusiasm for the subject, for

example taking on the role of 'Gertrude the Gardener' to encourage the pupils to explain all the conditions needed for a plant to thrive.

92. The science curriculum is organised well, with good progression from class to class and effective arrangements to cope with the mixed-age groups within each class. All of the areas identified in the last inspection as needing development have been addressed well and good progress has been made, particularly in the quality of teaching and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in assessments. The co-ordinator has also very successfully increased the emphasis on investigative approaches as a result of her own careful analysis of pupils' work and this is leading to improvements in standards which are likely to continue. The subject contributes well to pupils' development of numeracy skills, particularly the use and interpretation of graphs. Pupils' literacy developments are supported very well through the effective discussions that play an important part in the way science is taught. There is little written work in science and this link with literacy could be strengthened to provide pupils with more opportunity to record their ideas and understanding. Computers are used well by pupils to record and present data, and to search for information so that the subject contributes effectively to their ICT skills.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Because of when it takes place in the week, no art lessons were seen during the inspection and there is too little information to make judgements about teaching.

94. As far as Key Stage 1 is concerned, there were many examples of art on the walls and in folders to indicate that standards are in line with the expectations, with some pupils achieving well. Parents regularly help in the classroom during art activities so that children enjoy good levels of support. Some leaf prints had been carefully stitched to bring out the veins and make an interesting display. Water colours of flowers showed good skill in mixing colours, an eye for detail and some well-observed initial drawings. Good links can be seen at the moment with the science curriculum and children clearly show an interest in the world around them. In one activity, they have found natural objects that interested them, drawn the shapes and then filled them in with appropriate shades of colour. Art skills can be seen in some of the science work where children have observed, drawn and coloured illustrations with care.

95. There was too little evidence to make judgements about the standards that pupils reach in Year 6. Only their art folders and a limited selection of work in the art corner were available and generally this showed average levels of skill in drawing and pattern. In Year 3/4, there was much more evidence to show that pupils do well and often produce work of good quality. The work here is wide and varied. Observational pictures of the world through their window, still life drawings of flowers in charcoal, landscapes of a good standard, and flowers made in clay, from material or painted in the styles of different artists show that pupils have a good experience and cope equally well with the range. Good links are made with music as pupils try to reflect their feelings and emotions visually from listening to pieces of music such as Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*.

96. Where there is sufficient evidence from pupils' work, it is possible to say that good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school now uses the national guidance and this can be clearly seen in the planning and work on display. Art makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. Standards in design and technology are at the expected levels for pupils at the end of Year 2, but not as high as they should be at the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection at Year 2, but much the same at Year 6.

98. Pupils in Year 2 understand the importance of planning before they make things. In the work they have done on playgrounds, they have carried out a good range of research into what could be in a playground as well as what they would themselves like to see there. The plans they have sketched are imaginative and realistic, with some useful extra information added as notes. Several pupils have then tried out ideas for such things as roundabouts and swings by making prototypes using construction kits. Earlier work has involved construction with card and as a result pupils have a sound understanding of simple construction techniques, such as scoring to produce an accurate fold and strengthening joints by using glue tabs. In other branches of the subject pupils have enjoyed making bread and had some experience of using textiles, although there was less emphasis on planning and evaluation in these activities than when resistant materials were used.

99. Pupils now have a sound start in design and technology, but they do not make enough progress in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils in Year 6 have had virtually the same experience of using strips of card joined by paper fasteners to explore levers as the Year 2 pupils. Overall too little time is available for teaching the subject and much of the work done is focused on achieving aesthetic effects rather than designing and making things which function. Consequently pupils do not develop the skills and understanding sufficiently, for example in how wood or textiles can be used. Pupils' design work is often imaginative, as it is in the earlier years, but is not informed by the experience of working with different materials and the knowledge of their properties that is expected for this age.

100. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology, particularly when they make things. They work well together, sharing ideas when making things. They use tools safely and understand the need to work hygienically when using food.

101. The subject is taught well in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils make effective progress in the subject. The one lesson seen with older pupils was also taught well, but overall teaching in Year 3 to 6 does not provide pupils with enough experience of the subject, particularly the skills and techniques of using resistant materials and the opportunities to evaluate their work purposefully.

102. Documentation for the subject identifies a sound sequence of learning for the pupils, which is working well in Years 1 and 2, but not in the older classes, largely because the teachers do not feel confident in their own skills or in the techniques of passing them on to their classes. The co-ordinator is fully aware of this situation and has plans to improve things through collaboration with the local secondary school, which has received grant funding to provide support to primary schools in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Four lessons were observed during the inspection. Work from pupils across the school and discussions held with pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 indicate that standards continue to be in line with expectations as they were at the last inspection. Since then, there have been improvements with the development of an agreed scheme of work.

104. As part of a local study, pupils in Year 1 /2 are studying environmental changes using photographs and maps to follow up their walk in the village. They have drawn simple maps of their route marking the most significant features. In their work they have considered the facilities and environmental issues and conducted a survey of how pupils travel to school. They can talk about these with a satisfactory level of understanding. There are some good links to other subjects, including ICT and design and technology.

105. Year 3 /4 pupils are studying the environment and conservation, and how the church and churchyard are managed. Pupils develop their geographical skills and knowledge using the first hand information gained on the visit and then using the photographs taken on the day with a digital camera. In their discussions they ably interpret the photographs and how the church grounds are managed to meet the needs of people and wildlife. When looking at the buildings and school environment, they considered how they could be improved. They have a good knowledge of the map of the world and can identify a good number of countries. In looking at large scale maps they use single figure grid references confidently and fully understand keys and the symbols used. Their factual recall of information is good and often above expectations. Much of the work for this unit of work is based on 'Views through the window' and pupils have looked at landscapes from very different environments from across the world. They have undertaken a study of rivers and the journey of water after it leaves the sea and returns down the drains.

106. Pupils in Years 5 /6 are also following the similar unit based on a local study. For them, the changes and developments in Black Notley are the source of their studies. The work shows sound skills in using large scale maps and six-figure grid references. In the stages of a river, they have learned about erosion and valleys. They have a sound knowledge of the water cycle and conservation issues. The presentation and organisation of their work are of a high standard but contain too many examples of copied text with the correct technical vocabulary. This does not represent individual knowledge or understanding when it is the same for all pupils. Pupils' factual recall of recent work is often good and shows how well they listen and enjoy the subject.

107. Pupils enjoy geography and show very good attitudes to work. They enjoy learning about the environment and the wider world. They listen attentively and discuss the issues sensitively and knowledgeably. They are very interested in the subject and the complexities of the earth. Pupils know that many of the tasks they are asked to complete are of a very low level and do not challenge them, for instance the colouring in of a printed sheet setting out the water cycle. The pupils' knowledge and understanding are often far better than some of the written work they are asked to do.

108. The quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to good and is good overall. Learning objectives are usually clear in the planning and shared with the pupils and lessons make good use of resources. The pupils were motivated well by first hand experiences as in the Key Stage 1 work based on a village walk and the Key Stage 2 work using the church. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills well in discussions when they ask pupils to answer in full sentences but not well enough when they ask pupils to copy up writing rather than write their own ideas. The marking of pupils' work is often linked only to effort and not linked to the progress pupils make. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support and make satisfactory progress.

109. The school uses the national guidelines to allocate areas of study and the amount of time for each unit to each class so that there is a good plan for coverage. The development of a scheme of work has helped to improve the provision of resources. There are good links to other subjects.

HISTORY

110. In the previous inspection there was a lack of evidence to enable a judgement to be made about standards in Key Stage 1. No lessons were observed in this subject this time because there are no history lessons in this half term. Pupils' work from all the classes was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils from Year 2 and Year 6. This forms the basis for saying that standards are in line with expectations. There has been an improvement in this subject with the development of a good scheme of work that is well organised and helpful to teachers. The policy has aims and objectives that promote a stimulating approach to the subject. The long-term plan gives a good coverage and time allocation over the two-year cycles. Each element of the subject is covered: chronology, interpretation and enquiry, and cross-curricular links.

111. By the time pupils are seven, standards are in line with expectations. Pupils are knowledgeable about the life around the time of the Great Fire of London. In discussion they show a good recall of facts and information and fully understand how we know so much about the period through using source material such as Samuel Pepys' diary.

112. Pupils in Year 6 have a good general knowledge and understanding of the Roman Period and of Ancient Egypt, that suggests that standards are at least in line with expectations and sometimes better. Some examples of pupils' work developed as homework are very good. In class work there are a small number of examples when pupils have written accounts that are of a good standard, for instance after their visit to Colchester Castle and when they wrote a letter home from a Roman soldier stationed on Hadrian's Wall. Their writing shows both an excitement and an understanding of the Roman period. However, there are far too many examples of work in pupils' books that are copied pieces of text where all they had to do was insert the key word from the list provided. There are too many worksheets that form a good basis for information and motivation but are then used unwisely as recording, and which stunt the learning opportunities.

113. Overall curriculum planning is good. There is planned progression and development and it is apparent that pupils enjoy much of what they do. For example, Roman recipes were the basis of a Roman feast which pupils recalled with enthusiasm. The portfolio of pupils' work shows the units of work set out in the long-term plan are covered and there is an interesting range of visits and resources. A start has been made by the co-ordinator in monitoring teaching but there has been no work clearly evaluating the outcomes. Other aspects of monitoring, such as teachers' planning and pupils' work, have not been undertaken. Good links are made across the curriculum to enrich the learning opportunities.

114. It is now necessary for the school to evaluate the learning opportunities that pupils receive and the way resources are used. When planning, there needs to be more reference to the purpose of the learning and the progress of the pupils so that the work they undertake is more challenging.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

115. Standards have improved well in ICT since the last inspection as a result of a well-planned programme for the subject, good teaching and much better equipment. Pupils now perform better than the national expectations by the time they are in Year 6.

116. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are already confident in using computers. They operate programs successfully, knowing the conventions for selecting from menus and using the mouse correctly. Many are rather slow using the keyboard, searching for letters and using

only one finger. They use painting programs well and experiment with the effects of using different colours and shapes. They understand that computers can be programmed to carry out a sequence of events, for example to draw a shape on the screen, and have used a programmable vehicle, the Roamer, experimenting with the commands to follow a chosen path. Almost all the pupils achieve the national expectations in these areas and such consistency represents good performance.

117. Pupils continue to develop their skills well in the older classes and by Year 6 pupils have been able to launch a program, print and save their work for some time. They use computers as an increasingly regular part of their learning because they are readily available in classrooms and teachers build in frequent opportunities and reasons for their use. They can change the appearance of text for different purposes, for example posters and leaflets, using word-processing packages, and use computers extensively to handle data. Pupils are confident using spreadsheets to calculate results quickly and easily and enjoy printing out graphs in different formats to illustrate their findings. Some pupils produce their own spreadsheets, designing and entering the calculations so that, for example, they add up pocket money from different sources to give a grand total. Many pupils in Year 6 extend their work in ICT through the lunchtime club and are producing well-designed multimedia presentations, combining digital images with text and sound, for example a leaflet about the different teachers in the school and a fashion show.

118. Pupils enjoy using ICT and are beginning to see it as a natural way of extending their learning. They collaborate well when they have to share a machine and often discuss their work productively. They listen carefully to instructions and take care of the equipment they are using.

119. ICT is taught well. Teachers are confident in using ICT as a result of the training they have had and the work they have put in to practise the skills. Direct instructions are given very clearly and classrooms are organised so that pupils can support each other well when help is needed.

120. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has produced a good scheme of work that helps teachers develop the pupils' skills progressively. Resources for the subject are good, with desk-top computers in each class and a portable suite of modern laptop machines. There is a good range of software and supporting material which helps teachers apply ICT in a wide range of subjects, for example music composition, and the school benefits from the support of a technician as part of a consortium arrangement with other small schools.

MUSIC

121. No lessons were seen for the oldest pupils but where music was seen in the other classes, standards were above the average. This is because there is a well-planned range of activities and teachers who are secure with the subject and teach it well. In addition, extra instrumental tuition, whole-class recorder lessons and musical performances help to raise standards.

122. In Key Stage 1, a well-balanced lesson gave pupils experience of performance and composition. They used a computer program which helped them to learn how music is built up of phrases which can be repeated. They chose symbols to represent phrases and create a composition. Some used repeats successfully and chose a final symbol/phrase that rounded off the tune. The teacher built evaluation into the lesson well by asking pupils to say what made some tunes sound better than others. Their responses showed that they are

learning successfully. One said that a composition was good, for example, because it sounded finished. Pupils worked hard throughout the session, including during the group work. They also coped well with the poor acoustics of the large temporary classroom which makes sound reverberate and makes it more difficult for several groups to work at the same time and hear what is happening in their own.

123. A Year 4 group was also observed developing their ideas for composition. In a more complex task, they were setting words to music using a pentatonic scale. They knew that pentatonic meant that it had five notes. Some produced singable tunes that matched the rhythm of the words and played them fluently. Others created tunes that would be very difficult to sing because the intervals from note to note were too great. This was picked up by the teacher who explained what was needed in the next stage to improve the work. Throughout the session the pupils applied themselves diligently to their tasks and were happy to play their work.

124. All pupils learn to play the recorder and lessons are very well taught with attention to accuracy of notation and expression. Pupils are very enthusiastic and make good progress in the lessons. Some pupils learn to play other instruments such as the saxophone and the flute. They quickly learn the basic techniques and some go on to reach good standards.

125. Pupils listen to music as they go into assemblies and in some lessons they listen to pieces of music such as *Fingal's Cave* by Mendelssohn and they represent how the music makes them feel through art work and in writing.

126. The standards in music reported in the previous inspection have been maintained. In addition, the balance between performance, composition and appreciation has improved and is now good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. Standards in physical education generally match the national expectations for pupils' ages throughout the school. They have been maintained at this level since the last inspection.

128. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 plan a good sequence of movement for dancing to a creation theme. They respond well to the music, varying their dance to match the rhythm and dynamics of the piece and controlling their movements well for their ages.

129. Most of the work seen with older classes was taken by visitors to the school, for example as part of a local cricket coaching initiative, and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching in the school. These activities restricted the pupils' opportunities to demonstrate what they could do because of the narrow focus of the work. Their skills in throwing, catching and striking a ball cover the normal range for their age with some accurate and confident, but others with poor techniques. Most are average.

130. Unfortunately, in the lessons taken by visiting coaches, very little attention was given to technique, either through demonstration and description so that pupils knew what they were trying to emulate, or through sufficient individual feedback so that each pupil knew what to do to improve. Teachers in the school provided much more effective support, for example in the short-tennis club, where the teacher helped pupils improve their strokes, and even more effectively in swimming. In this case the teacher explained very clearly how to do the backstroke leg kick, supporting his words with gestures, so that they all achieved a good action. He then worked with individuals, fine-tuning their strokes by giving specific, well-focused coaching points. All pupils made good progress and they were also all involved

throughout the lesson, unlike the cricket coaching when pupils spent most of the lesson waiting for their turn.

131. Pupils respond very well to physical education and work hard in lessons where they are well motivated. They appreciate that exercise has an important role in a healthy lifestyle and many are developing interests such as sport and dance which will help them maintain a good level of activity as they grow older.

132. The school has a sound programme of work for the subject. Covering the full range of activities is made more difficult because the school lacks a hall. Pupils go to the village hall for gymnastics or to the local secondary school during the autumn and spring terms. It was not possible to judge how effective these arrangements are, but similar arrangements for swimming work very effectively.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. The scrutiny of pupils' work and the discussions with pupils indicate that standards are overall in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. There is still a significant priority given to Christianity but the curriculum has improved since the last inspection to include more learning about other faiths and cultures.

134. Pupils in Year 2 reach the expected standard in their knowledge and understanding. They learn about major festivals and celebrations of Christianity and other major faiths. They know why there are special occasions which have their own rituals and traditions. Pupils know the different parts of the Christmas story such as how Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem and the events after that first nativity. They know the Easter story and how Jesus left the tomb. They have visited the church of St Etheldreda to extend their knowledge by studying the artefacts and symbols and some of the history of the building.

135. By the end of Year 6 pupils gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of faith and commitment. They can express themselves thoughtfully and sensitively, for example through prayers, saying 'what the Bible means to them' or when they wrote very movingly about their religious beliefs and personal feelings. From Genesis they read the story of the creation and compared it with creation stories from across the world. During Lent and the Easter festival the pupils wrote a letter as though they had visited the tomb of Jesus on the morning of the resurrection, showing a good understanding of the events and emotions. Pupils study religious leaders and people who changed the world. They learn about the Bible and other holy books. For example, after discussing how something or place can be very special to someone for a whole host of emotional, sentimental and spiritual reasons, pupils learned how Muslims revere, respect and treat the Qur'an.

136. The one lesson seen was well taught and other activities which support learning in religious education, such as assemblies, were well delivered. Teachers plan thoroughly. In lessons and assemblies, they show a confidence in their approach to the sensitive issues involved in spiritual development and an understanding of faith. They have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and use their skills of questioning very well to encourage the pupils' personal response. The one lesson seen was carefully and sensitively introduced to interest the pupils. A calm and caring approach helped those children who found the ideas and concepts difficult. A weakness in teaching is that not enough opportunity is given to pupils to record their own thoughts and feelings in writing. Another is that marking is encouraging even on work that is obviously copied.

137. Pupils' attitudes in the one lesson and during assemblies were good. They were attentive and interested in stories from the Old Testament and the life of Jesus. They responded to questions with confidence and give thoughtful answers.

138. There are very strong links to the local churches, and the clergy play an important part in the teaching and learning. Their commitment helps to present the Christian faith in its different contexts. There are regular services in the church and special weeks when the focus is on faith and other major religions.

139. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The policy and scheme of work provide a consistent approach to the teaching and learning. Through the planned cycle there are opportunities to study Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. Resources are satisfactory and include books and artefacts from the major faiths. Religious education makes an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.