

INSPECTION REPORT

ALMELEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Almeley, Herefordshire

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116645

Headteacher: Mrs D. Coates

Reporting inspector: Chris Rhodes
16408

Dates of inspection: 3rd –5th April 2000

Inspection number: 196102

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Almeley Primary School Almeley Herefordshire
Postcode:	HR3 6LH
Telephone number:	01544 327267
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Holden
Date of previous inspection:	30 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Chris Rhodes	Registered Inspector	Children under five English Information technology Music Physical education Religious education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The schools' results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Mr John Kerr	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Danice Iles	Team Inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Science Art Design and technology Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Almeley is a very small but growing two-class primary school for pupils aged 4-11 in the heart of the Herefordshire countryside. There are currently 22 pupils on roll. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is similar to that found nationally. About a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs, which is above the national average. None have statements identifying the need for specific additional support. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. All the children are white. One pupil was excluded last year, but there have been no sanctions in the recent past.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective. Pupils have very positive attitudes and their personal development is excellent. The overall quality of teaching is good. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and senior staff is very good, and the governing body is very effective. Academic standards have been maintained at levels close to the national average. The school is improving on past performance in all other areas. There are an extremely small number of pupils in each year group who are achieving well as individuals. The school provides sound value for money despite the high unit costs.

What the school does well

- The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff is very good.
- The governing body carries out its responsibilities very effectively
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in both classes. It is particularly strong in the reception/Key Stage 1 class
- Teachers know their pupils very well, and set them tough but realistic targets.
- Children of all ages have good opportunities for learning as great care is taken to provide a full, broad and balanced curriculum
- Children's attitudes are very positive. They are very enthusiastic about school
- The attention given to pupils' personal development is extremely good.
- Relationships are excellent
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good
- Teachers work very closely with the parents, who contribute actively to all aspects of school life

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science which are currently in line with national averages
- Teachers do not always explain the purpose of the lesson to the children
- Some activities in literacy and numeracy lessons do not challenge all of the pupils at the correct level for their age or ability for the whole session
- Some marking does not show pupils how to improve
- There is no agreed system for evaluating and recording how effectively lessons meet their objectives
- The overall quality of handwriting and presentation in Key Stage 2 is still not high enough

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The new headteacher and teachers have moved the school forward considerably since the previous inspection in 1997. Very good progress has been made towards addressing the key issues set out in the report. Strong parental support and the rising roll are evidence of increasing public confidence. The quality of teaching has risen in all parts of the school, and has had a direct and positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Academic standards have been maintained. The range and quality of pupils' writing has improved. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now better in Key Stage 1. There are improved home-school links. All the required policies, including sex education, are now in place. Progress is better in design and technology and history in Key Stage 1 and in art in both key stages. The overall quality of handwriting and presentation continue to give concern in Key Stage 2, and some marking lacks detail in Key Stage 1. The school has already recognised that there are still not enough resources for the youngest children. Despite the school's unavoidably high unit costs, it now gives sound value for money and is well placed for continued improvement.

STANDARDS

The number of pupils involved in the 1999 national tests at the end of both key stages was less than ten. The group was therefore too small for results to be reported or compared with all or similar schools.

Children under five are currently working at expected levels in language and literacy, mathematics, physical and creative development and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are reaching higher levels in speaking and listening. Their personal and social development is well above the expected level because they learn quickly from the teacher's skilled approach and the very good example set by older pupils in the class. They are well prepared to begin work within all the early stages of the National Curriculum.

Pupils in the current Year 2 and 6 are given challenging tasks and are working hard. They are achieving overall standards in their books and lessons that are in line with the national average for English, mathematics and science. Teachers know their children extremely well, and have set tough individual targets for this year's national tests at the end of both key stages. Overall standards of handwriting and presentation are not high enough in Key Stage 2. Standards of speaking and listening are above those found in a broadly typical school. Standards in religious education match those expected in the local agreed syllabus. Standards in information technology [IT] are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages, but children in Year 2 have limited opportunities to work successfully across the full range of the IT curriculum as the school does not have all the necessary soft or hardware. Pupils in both classes are making sound progress in all other subjects and are achieving appropriate levels. Some individual pupils are achieving above average levels in aspects of their work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning, to school and to each other are very good. Relationships are excellent. Pupils enjoy their work and respond to teachers in a mature way.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall. There are occasional lapses of concentration by individual pupils. Behaviour in the playground is good.
Personal development and relationships	The ways in which older children take and handle responsibility for their own learning and as members of the wider school community are excellent.
Attendance	Good. Lessons start on time.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. They like to work hard and value the opportunities their teachers give them. They look after each other, and the younger children, very well. The school community is very close and thrives on the strengths of its good relationships. These factors combine to create a positive atmosphere for learning. They help the pupils to make greater progress and develop stronger personal skills because they feel secure, trusted and valued.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The overall standard of teaching is good. One of the lessons observed [6%] was excellent, a further five [29%] were very good, eight [47%] were good and three [18%] were sound. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is of an overall higher standard in class 1 because the lessons have a consistent pace and excitement that keeps the pupils particularly well motivated and keen to succeed. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is of a good standard and meets the needs of all pupils in all but a small minority of cases. Although the teaching in the reception group is very good, they are not always provided with a range of activities that suit their particular needs and learning is less effective. The quality of teaching in English is good in both key stages, and good in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2. The overall quality of marking in Key Stage 2 is particularly good, and pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The quality of learning is also good as teachers meet the needs of all pupils effectively. Pupils are generally given work that challenges them at the correct level and are motivated by the teachers' own enthusiasm. The effective use of open questions makes pupils think intellectually. They are taught basic skills thoroughly, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers plan these very carefully but occasionally find it hard to organise some aspects of the 'whole class' sessions as the age and ability range is so wide. Discipline is well managed, lessons have pace and, in the very good lessons, every moment is a positive learning experience. In some cases teachers do not explain clearly enough at the beginning of the lesson what the children will have learned or will be able to do by the end of the

session. This makes it harder for pupils to understand the purpose of the lesson, and for teachers to measure success at the end.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Considerable care is taken to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum. The additional resources provided by parents and friends of the school, through links with local schools and a wide range of visits, provide an above average range of learning opportunities for pupils of all ages.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Especial care is taken to ensure that pupils are given work at a suitable level of difficulty and play a full part in the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and central to the school's success as a caring community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good and safe working environment where pupils can thrive and grow in self-esteem. Staff have already identified that aspects of assessment need to be revised.

There is a very close and effective partnership with parents that is to the benefit of all pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and local agreed syllabus for religious education. Considerable efforts are made to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by the size of the school. Good use is made of volunteers who bring additional expertise to support staff in classrooms. Teachers have already identified that aspects of assessment need to be revised, particularly the ways in which they record pupils' achievements on their planning, and the revision and implementation of the marking policy. The school is very successful in developing strong relationships based on respect, trust and understanding.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school. She is committed, as are governors and staff, to raising standards and increasing the size of the school so that its future is assured.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very effective in fulfilling their joint and individual responsibilities
The school's evaluation of its performance	Although the two full-time teachers have evaluated each other's work in the past, current arrangements are not formalised. Governors do not evaluate the impact of all of their spending decisions on the quality of children's learning
The strategic use of resources	Resources, including specific grants, are allocated wisely.

The school is managed with skill and determination, and makes best possible use of the resources available to it. There are sufficient staff for the secure delivery of the curriculum. Full and effective use is made of classroom space. Governors are aware that the kitchen and nearby rooms require refurbishment. The sink in the mobile classroom is at an unsuitable height for younger pupils. Children under five do not have all the resources needed for the full delivery of an early years curriculum. The principles of best value are applied conscientiously.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are expected to try hard and do their best • They make good progress in their lessons • The school is well led and managed • Children like coming to school • They are well taught • The staff are very easy to approach • Parents are a valued part of the daily life of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour • Activities outside lessons • The amount of homework

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Behaviour is good. There were a few occasions when individual pupils lost concentration and stopped work, but they did not interrupt the others and teachers quickly brought them back to task. There is a satisfactory range of out-of-school activities, including the keep fit class that parents can join as well, and the strong links with neighbouring schools that give pupils opportunities to work and play with others of their own age. The level and content of homework is appropriate for the age and ability of the children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The number of pupils involved in national tests at the end of both key stages is less than ten. The group is therefore too small for results to be reported in this or subsequent paragraphs, or to be compared with all or similar schools.
2. Children are admitted in the September preceding their fifth birthdays. At the time of the inspection there were four pupils either under five or who had been five earlier in the term. Their attainment on entry to school is close to that expected nationally. By the time they are five, they are working at expected levels in language and literacy, mathematics, physical and creative development and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are reaching higher levels in speaking and listening. Their personal and social development is well above the expected level because they benefit from the skilled approach from the teacher and the very good example set by older pupils in the class. They are well prepared to begin work within all the early stages of the National Curriculum.
3. A careful analysis of the written work in the current Year 2, discussion with pupils and their teacher, and observations of children's work during lessons indicates that overall standards in English and mathematics are in line with national averages. Standards in science are in line with national expectations. Standards in English, mathematics and science are similar to those reported during the previous inspection, except in writing, where there has been an improvement. Standards in information technology [IT] are close to the national expectation, although pupils do not have opportunities to work at depth in all aspects of the IT curriculum. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the local agreed syllabus.
4. The number of older pupils in Key Stage 2 is very small. Current standards at or near the end of the key stage are in line with national averages for English, mathematics and science, and with the expectations for IT and religious education. The number of pupils involved is too small for any useful conclusions to be drawn from a comparison of the standards reported at the end of Key Stage 2 in the previous inspection. Pupils are currently reaching expected levels in art, design and technology, history and geography in both key stages, and in physical education [PE] in Key Stage 1. It was not possible to see any PE lessons in Key Stage 2 or music in either key stage during the inspection.
5. Pupils have well developed skills in speaking and listening, and achieve above average levels at the end of both key stages because they listen carefully and are thoughtful in their contributions and replies to questions. The curriculum for older pupils includes a number of well chosen activities so that pupils discuss and debate, have opportunities put an argument together and to question each other's ideas and opinions. Progress is good because pupils are encouraged by their teachers to 'have a go' even when they are uncertain.
6. Standards in reading are close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and are well in line at the end of Key Stage 2. Younger pupils use an appropriate range of phonic and picture cues to work out unfamiliar text, and read confidently at levels that match their ability especially when they know the book well. Older pupils are secure independent readers. They use punctuation accurately to place emphasis correctly, and are able to explain the difference between the contents and index pages in non-fiction books. The oldest pupils talk intelligently

about the characters and events in their current reading, and make reference to the text when expanding on their answers.

7. Standards in writing are in line with national averages at the end of both key stages. Most younger pupils develop their ideas in sentences, and use capital letters and full stops correctly. Their spelling is usually accurate. Pupils' books show evidence of steady progress over time and that by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is at least in line with national averages. Although some sentences are too long, pupils' written work shows clear evidence of a sound understanding of the use of inverted commas, a wide variety of types of writing, a good vocabulary and the correct use of paragraphs. Many children achieve good standards of joined cursive handwriting in their practice books but the same standard is not transferred to their everyday work.
8. Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are working securely in all elements of their number work. They count accurately and know the place value of each number up to and beyond 100. Pupils of higher ability are also able to add three two-digit numbers together. They recognise the difference between odd and even numbers and identify simple fractions such as a half and a quarter. They are very secure in their understanding of shape and basic measurement. They know the correct mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes and are able to describe their properties. They measure with basic units including hand spans but are also familiar with centimetres and millimetres. Work on charts and graphs show that pupils can use and apply their understanding of mathematics in everyday situations and that higher attaining pupils understand how to interpret the information accurately. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress, especially in number work. Older pupils are working successfully at appropriate levels in work covering fractions, decimals and percentages. They use their knowledge of angles of turn successfully to instruct screen and floor robots to follow a pre-set course.
9. Pupils in both classes use the skills they have learned in literacy lessons effectively in other areas of the curriculum: writing accounts in religious education and a play about life in a Victorian school in history, reading for information, and talking and listening carefully in all lessons. Pupils used their numeracy skills and a correct mathematical vocabulary to explain the results of graphs they had drawn in a science lesson to demonstrate the amount of protein in different foods. They use data collection and graphical work successfully in geography lessons and demonstrate an understanding of angles of turn when programming a floor robot in IT. Key Stage 1 pupils measure accurately in design and technology.
10. Teachers know their children extremely well, and have set very careful and challenging personal, literacy and numeracy targets for each individual pupil. These have been shared with pupils and parents in order to improve their results in national tests. Teachers plan very thoroughly, and grade work carefully graded against the level descriptions for the National Curriculum to make sure that children are set tasks that are challenging as well as appropriate for their age and ability. The only exception is in some literacy and numeracy activities when not every task meets the needs of the wide age range in the class. Pupils are highly motivated, especially in the many well-taught lessons, and nearly all work very hard all the time. With the exception of handwriting in Key Stage 2, their progress towards the achievement of their targets is good. The small size of the current teaching groups allows teachers to give particular pupils considerable individual support, and help them to understand any areas of difficulty more clearly and to see how they can improve. Good individual support was given, for example, to a younger pupil in Key Stage 2 who has a particular high ability in mental mathematics and to readers in Key Stage 1. Pupils make much better progress as a direct result of the individual attention and well-matched tasks. The quality of work and progress made by

pupils with special educational needs is particularly pleasing. Their individual targets are carefully monitored by the headteacher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, the school and each other. They enjoy coming to school and value its friendly atmosphere. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils are attentive and have highly developed listening skills. Despite the wide age range in both classes, all pupils are equally involved and eager to participate and succeed. This is also evident in assemblies where the whole school participates with enthusiasm.
12. Pupils have very mature respect for their teachers. This results in excellent relationships and highly motivated learning. Pupils of all ages respond well to a challenge, and grow in confidence and self-esteem following the quiet guidance from staff. They respond positively to their teachers' encouragement to evaluate their own work and are pleased with the results. They enjoy the humour in lessons and work very well together. Levels of concentration are high in lessons. However, there are occasional lapses in attention by individual pupils. These are corrected quickly and the children brought back to task.
13. Behaviour has greatly improved since the time of the previous inspection. It is now good in lessons and about the school. Pupils have natural good manners and are confident in speaking to adults. Behaviour in the playground is good and older pupils look after the younger ones in a school where ages mix freely. There is a strong sense of a school family. Pupils are trustworthy and polite to staff and to each other, and are respectful of school property. Parents are largely satisfied with the behaviour in and around the school. One pupil was excluded last year, but there have been no sanctions in the recent past.
14. Pupils mature very quickly and so become more responsible and involved with the school routines. The ways that older children take and handle responsibility, both for their own learning and as members of the whole school community, are excellent. Older pupils attend to the computers, keep the PE store tidy and carry out library duties. The excellent relationships with teachers lead to sensible discussions, where pupils often use an extended vocabulary and imaginative ideas. If pupils have a difference with each other, they are encouraged to listen to both points of view, apologising if necessary for hurtful behaviour. In general, pupils work in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour. Parents, teachers and pupils confirm there is very little bullying. It is certainly not tolerated and pupils are confident any problem would be dealt with quickly.
15. Overall standards of attendance are good. There was a dip in the rate of attendance last year when a family with three children took an extended holiday to see relatives in New Zealand. This was an exceptional case. Pupils are punctual at the start of the day and for lessons. There are very few unauthorised absences.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. Of the 17 lessons observed during the inspection, one was judged to be excellent, a further five were very good, eight were good and three were sound. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching has improved noticeably since the previous inspection, especially in Key Stage 1. The percentage of very good or excellent teaching in the school has risen from seven per cent to thirty-five per cent and the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped from twenty-five per cent to nil. The overall quality of learning is good because pupils are given work that challenges

them at the correct level and are motivated by the teachers' own enthusiasm. The use of open questions challenges them to think intellectually. They are taught basic skills thoroughly, discipline is well managed and interest levels are kept high through a series of linked well planned activities. In the very good lessons, every moment is a learning experience.

17. The quality of teaching for children under five is very good. It is particularly effective because the lessons are well planned and move along at a quick pace. This does not mean that the teaching is rushed, but carefully timed activities ensure that pupils' interest levels remain high, they have a variety of things to do, and there is a continuing excitement about learning. As a result the children try very hard in all their work, enjoy school and make good progress. Great care is usually taken to make sure that they are given tasks that are appropriate for their age. There are a few occasions when the whole class is together, at the beginning of the literacy hour for example, when the youngest children struggle to keep up with older pupils and do not learn as effectively as when given a separate activity. However, in all other tasks and lessons, the younger children benefit considerably from being with the older pupils and make good progress because they enjoy the activities and are successful in completing the work they are set. The children are managed very sensitively, and feel very secure with their teacher.
18. The overall quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Two thirds of the teaching in Key Stage 1 was very good or better and the remainder was good. The quality of teaching has improved dramatically since the previous inspection, when half the lessons were unsatisfactory. There has been a change of teacher and pupils are now extremely well managed. Two thirds of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is good and the balance is sound. Teaching in both key stages is successful because teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject material and pass on their own enthusiasm to the children. There is a positive impact on pupils' learning because children feel very confident in their teachers, concentrate harder and are lifted by their lively approach. An excellent example was seen in a science lesson about sound for younger pupils. The combination of very effective planning, a well paced and structured lesson that moved from a computer game, through a singing and listening activity to practical opportunities to make musical instruments, had the pupils entranced, enthralled and acquiring a considerable depth of new knowledge.
19. Other characteristics of good teaching found in both classes include the effective use of questions so that pupils consolidate what they already know and are encouraged to think about their answers and test their own understanding. Effective individual support enables children to ask their own questions, feel encouraged and make better progress. Work in both classes is set at the correct level of difficulty for individual pupils, and ensures that they work hard but are successful. All materials are well prepared and ready, and no time is wasted. Pupils are managed very well. On the rare occasions when attention slips, teachers are effective in bringing the pupil concerned back to task and other children are not affected by the temporary lapse. In the best examples, especially in Key Stage 2, books are marked with the children but also contain brief written comments so that the pupils know how well they are doing and what they should do next to improve.
20. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively in line with the new national strategies. Teachers are careful to include all the required elements, but find it very hard to organise the 'whole class' sections as they have such a wide range of age and ability within their classes. Not all the activities make all the children work hard for the whole session, although this is balanced by the considerable amount of individual attention received in other parts of the lesson. The skilful

use of a second adult means that the teacher can concentrate on one age group, but this assistance is not always available.

21. Teachers are very clear in their planning, but do not always explain the purpose of the lesson at the start of the session. This makes it harder for the pupils to understand what they are to learn, and for teachers to measure how successful their teaching has been. On the few occasions in Key Stage 2 when teaching is sound but could be stronger, the activities do not meet the needs of all the pupils in the very wide age and ability group. In some subjects, religious education, for example, the written tasks consolidate what the children have been taught but do not give them enough opportunities to extend their individual learning, knowledge and understanding. Some worksheets are very limited and do not challenge the more able pupils. There is not enough insistence on higher standards of handwriting and presentation. Books are marked regularly, but those for younger pupils in particular, do not contain sufficient comments that remind the children of how well they have done or guide them on how to improve.
22. Children with special educational needs are well taught and benefit from the individual teaching that is a feature of most lessons. Good progress is particularly evident in Class 1.

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

23. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and local agreed syllabus for religious education. The additional resources provided by parents and friends of the school, the good links with local schools, and a wide range of educational visits including a residential course for Years 5 and 6, provide an above average range of learning opportunities for pupils of all ages. Very careful attention has been given to the design and provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for mixed aged classes. Topics are planned carefully over four years to avoid repetition and to ensure that pupils can develop their skills and knowledge in each subject as they grow older. There are insufficient opportunities for practical activities for children who are under five in aspects of some literacy and numeracy lessons and for structured outdoor play. The school makes considerable efforts to provide a full PE curriculum but indoor lessons have to take place in classrooms when it is wet or in the village hall. Pupils have opportunities to use large gymnastic apparatus when they visit the local secondary school.
24. As at the time of the previous report, the local community is much involved in the life of the school and makes a very important contribution to pupils' learning. This is well illustrated by the contribution made by a visiting teacher who supports music teaching on a voluntary basis. Relationships with partner institution are very constructive. There is a cluster or pyramid arrangement that ensures co-operation between similar primary schools and very positive curricular and extra-curricular help from the local secondary school. Considerable efforts are made to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by the size of the school, and that no pupil is excluded from any activity.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are given work at a suitable level of difficulty and play a full part in the life of the school. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are effective, although some age groups are not fully challenged in all of the periods when the teacher's full attention is with another part of the class. There is very good provision for personal, social and health education, including sex education and an appropriate awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. Extra-curricular activities are well provided given the size of the school, with music and drama playing an important part.

26. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural is very good and central to the school's success as part of its community.
27. There are moments of true awe and wonder. This was seen, for example, when older pupils in a science lesson found and felt their own pulse beating for the first time, when younger pupils distinguished the difference in tone as guitar strings were tightened, and in a design and technology lesson when they were shown a miniature chair that was also a musical box. The older pupils show a very responsible and caring attitude towards the younger pupils. There is no impatience in joint activities in lessons and the older pupils helped the younger pupils very happily with the activity in a whole school assembly. The school is a moral society, with an accepted code reinforced in assembly themes and through all staff's consistent and positive attitudes. Pupils are very aware of the differences between right and wrong and set themselves high personal standards.
28. The pupils enjoy and benefit from positive social occasions. These include the regular school cooked breakfast in the village hall that brings parents, children and teachers together for an enjoyable shared meal, the weekly keep-fit sessions run by the school nurse for parents and children, and the termly production involving all pupils. Classroom displays emphasise the importance of literature in the school and there is a sound range of multi-cultural books. Visits to the Cardiff Arts Centre and to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra contribute very effectively to the cultural development of the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The school provides a good and safe environment where pupils thrive and grow in self-esteem. Teachers know the needs of each individual child very well. Procedures for child protection are good. The headteacher, who has wide experience in special schools, is the child protection officer. She pays close attention to the child protection policy and the ways in which it is carried out. Procedures follow locally agreed practice and training is up to date. Regular health and safety checks are made by the headteacher and risk assessment is extremely well managed. Points for immediate action are recorded and dealt with quickly. A matter of current concern, which has already been notified to the local authority, is the removal of an asbestos panel.
30. Pupils are well supervised at playtime. There are good facilities for older children including substantial climbing equipment. However, the playing facilities for the under fives are limited and there is no secure area for them to ride wheeled toys. The school nurse attends on a regular basis and contributes to the health education programme. There are staff qualified in first aid to deal with minor injuries and clear procedures if parents need to be contacted with more serious matters. The staff work well together to promote good behaviour, regular attendance and punctuality. Behaviour management is discreet and as a result, teachers earn the respect of their pupils. Bullying, if it does occur, is not tolerated. Parents are generally satisfied with the standards of behaviour and give teachers full support in the event of a child continuing to misbehave.
31. There is a well-devised programme of personal and social education. It has clear aims: to promote a healthy lifestyle, to foster a sense of community and the environment and to develop children's self-esteem. Sex education is taught in an appropriate way with particular regard to the mixed age classes. The school nurse supports the teaching of the older girls.

32. The school has already identified that aspects of assessment need to be revised. The previous report stated that baseline assessment was too limited to affect Key Stage 1 planning. Although considerable improvements have been made, teachers still rely on their largely unwritten knowledge of each individual pupil in assessing their academic and personal development. There are no consistent systems for recording the outcomes from lessons. This has an adverse effect on continuity, as for instance, in IT between key stages. There is also a lack of developmental marking in some books in Key Stage 1. As a result, pupils are not always aware how well they are progressing in the short term or how they could improve. Annual reports to parents are detailed and make perceptive comments on personal development. They say what pupils can do in each of the subjects, and explain how well they are doing in relation to national expectations for their age.
33. The school makes good use of baseline data, test results and its own observations, to set pupils with special educational needs appropriate targets in their individual education plans. The school's procedures are managed efficiently. Pupils make good progress as a result.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The school has an unusually close and positive relationship with parents. It has maintained the strong ties with parents and the wide links with the community and other schools in the cluster seen at the time of the previous report. Parents are very satisfied with the way the school is managed and the standards it achieves. Their views of the school are almost entirely positive and letters to inspectors voiced no particular concerns or complaints. A small minority thought that behaviour might disrupt learning. This was not found to be the case. If individual pupils do go off task, they are brought back to work very quickly. Some parents were concerned about the lack of opportunities for out-of-school activities. The level of provision is similar to that found in comparable schools and includes a keep-fit class that parents can join. There are strong links with neighbouring schools, giving pupils an opportunity to work and play with other children of their own age.
35. There is a huge sense of goodwill towards the school that is really valued by the village. Parents are well represented in the community and are jealous for the preservation of the school. Many parents are seen at the school almost every day, giving them excellent opportunities to talk to staff if they have a concern. Parents feel very welcome in school. Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the life of the school, for instance helping with booster classes and supporting the music curriculum. Volunteers include parents, relatives, and members of the community as well as a former headteacher. They also help with transport to out-of-school events. The majority of the families are regularly represented on the parents', teachers' and friends' association, which has been very successful in raising funds for school projects. The school breakfast provides a valuable social focus for children, their parents and friends.
36. Written communication from the school to parents is of good quality. The newsletters are interesting and there is an informative school column in the parish magazine. The prospectus is helpful and the governors' annual report gives details of how the school is progressing. The annual reports sent to parents on their children's progress are carefully worded. They state what children know and can do and there are perceptive comments on their attitudes and personal development. The reports give parents a clear indication of the level their children are reaching in comparison with national expectations. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully informed and play a key role in helping their children to make good progress.

37. The majority of parents either hear their children read or are instrumental in promoting regular reading at home. Reading diaries are well used by teachers and parents as a means of communication and for diagnostic purposes. Parents' comments and active support help enormously in the development of their children's reading and spelling. Parents appreciated the numeracy evening arranged by the school as it gave excellent examples of how they could help at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The overall quality of leadership and management given by the headteacher and senior staff is very good and contributes very effectively to pupils' achievement. The headteacher's professional ability and well-organised routines enable her to give full attention to her own class while ensuring that the school runs calmly and efficiently. She has a very clear vision for the future of the school and is committed, as are staff and governors, to fulfilling its aims, raising educational standards and increasing the number on roll so that its continuation is assured. The headteacher is held in high regard by parents. She recognises the strengths of her staff and delegates wisely. The organisation of academic, financial planning and administration is very effective, and maintains the high standards recorded at the time of the previous inspection. The continual monitoring and evaluation of pupils' performance, and the headteacher's own personal knowledge of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses, has resulted in the setting and achievement of appropriate individual pupil targets. The school's commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity is evident in its daily life and the staff's determination that the pupils will receive the best possible quality education.
39. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its statutory duties. It has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is able to guide its future direction effectively through the improvement plan. A series of committees have been formed to share the responsibility and each governor is assigned to a curriculum area and observes lessons. The improvement plan is a useful document but does not make costs clear enough or indicate how governors will evaluate the success of their decisions. Governors and the staff participate in training courses, making good use of local support services. There is a high level of staff professional development. Recent appointments to the staff have been well considered. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, for the Act of Collective Worship and the Code of Practice.
40. The headteacher, staff and governors have established a rolling programme of curriculum development within the school improvement plan that contains very appropriate priorities for development. They are aware that an induction policy is required for staff and that current staffing arrangements have restricted the possibilities for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The two full-time teachers have evaluated each other's work in previous terms but do not do so currently. Good use is made of information technology, both in classrooms and in the school office. Although the governing body has not yet established effective value for money checks on all purchases to formally evaluate the effect of their spending decisions on the quality of children's learning, it works hard to ensure that income, including specific grants and resources, are used as wisely and correctly as possible.
41. The school is too small to need separate subject co-ordinators for most subjects. The two full-time teachers work very closely together and plan very carefully. The headteacher has oversight of the whole curriculum. She ensures that pupils work through an appropriate and balanced curriculum and that the full requirements of the National Curriculum and local agreed syllabus for religious education are met. The part-time teacher in Key Stage 2 teaches science and

information technology. The school is aware of the need to establish stronger

links between the IT curriculum taught in the two key stages, and that pupils' depth of experience in IT in Key Stage 1 should be extended. The work for pupils with special educational needs is planned very efficiently by the headteacher, who draws on her previous expertise as a specialist in this field.

42. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. There is a good level of resources, but children under five do not have sufficient practical apparatus for some activities and no protected external area for riding wheeled toys. Classroom accommodation is adequate and the available space is put to good and imaginative use. The governing body is aware that the kitchen and nearby rooms require refurbishment. The sink in Class 1 is too high for use by the younger children. This concern was also noted at the time of the previous inspection. The lack of a hall for assemblies and physical education will become an issue should the school increase much more in size. Computers are located effectively and are used well in and out of lessons. Best possible use of the staff, accommodation and learning resources is leading to the increasing success of the school. The governors apply the principles of best value carefully. Despite the current inevitable high unit costs, the school is very effective and provides sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue the school's current improvement, the headteacher, governing body and staff should work together to

raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science, by

- explaining the purpose of the lesson to each class or group at the start of the session
[paragraphs 21, 57, 62]
- re-planning the structure of literacy and numeracy lessons so that every age group is challenged at the correct level of difficulty throughout the session
[paragraphs 10, 20, 21, 56, 61]
- increasing the depth of some marking by including written comments that inform pupils how well they are doing and show them how to improve
[paragraphs 19, 32, 57, 62]
- agreeing a common procedure for annotating short term planning so that pupils' successes and difficulties are recorded systematically
[paragraph 32]
- insisting on a higher standard of handwriting and presentation in Key Stage 2
[paragraphs 7, 10, 54]

The following minor issues should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan :

- governors do not formally review the effectiveness of all of their curricular spending decisions
[paragraphs 39, 40]
- pupils do not have all the space and resources they need for physical development and for some practical activities for children under five
[paragraphs 23, 42, 49, 86]
- the kitchen area and nearby rooms require refurbishment
[paragraph 42]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	29	47	18	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	22
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	6

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	1	2	3

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	1	1	1
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	3	3	3
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	1	1	1
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	3	3	3
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	86	87

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	1	2	3

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	1	1
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	3	3	3
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	1	1
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	3	3	3
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	68	69	75

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	22
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)	2.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12
Average class size	12

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	10

FTE means full-time equivalent

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	1	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	2000
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	£
Total income	91002
Total expenditure	93518
Expenditure per pupil	5501
Balance brought forward from previous year	9454
Balance carried forward to next year	6938

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	22
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	89	11	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	94	6	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	53	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	33	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	83	17	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	72	28	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	94	6	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	11	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	39	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	78	0	11	11	0

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised in letters or at the very supportive parents' meeting. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Behaviour is good. There were a few occasions when individual pupils lost concentration and stopped work, but they did not interrupt the others and teachers quickly brought them back to task. There is a satisfactory range of out-of-school activities, including the keep fit class that parents can join as well, and the strong links with neighbouring schools that give pupils opportunities to work and play with others of their own age. The level and content of homework is appropriate for the age and ability of the children.

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

43. Children are admitted in the September preceding their fifth birthdays. At the time of the inspection there were four pupils either under five or who had been five earlier in the year. Their attainment on entry to school is close to that expected nationally. By the time they are five, they are working at expected levels in language and literacy, mathematics, creative and physical development, and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are reaching higher than the expected levels in speaking and listening. Their personal and social development is well above the expected level. Children are well prepared to begin work within the early stages of the National Curriculum.
44. The quality of teaching for children under five is very good. It is particularly effective because the lessons are very well planned and move along at a quick pace. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of young children. Carefully prepared activities ensure that children's interest levels remain high, that they have a variety of things to do, and there is a continuing excitement about learning. The children sense that their teacher wants them to be happy and successful, and they respond positively, thinking for themselves and trying hard. They make good progress. Teachers take great care to make sure that children are given tasks that are appropriate for their age, but there are a few occasions when the whole class is together at the start of a literacy or numeracy session when the youngest children struggle to keep up with older pupils and guess answers because their understanding is not at the level of the work in hand. This affects the quality of their learning because they start to feel uncertain.
45. The school makes very good provision for the personal and social development children under five. They make very good progress and develop a mature approach to school and each other. They settle with the older pupils quickly because, in many cases, they already know them well. Pre-school children ate, for example, with older brothers and sisters and their friends at the monthly before-school cooked breakfast. The older children welcome them into the class and make them feel part of the group. As a result, they respond positively to school and behave well. They have good manners. They quickly gain in confidence, learn to play and work collaboratively and show concern and respect for each other. They understand the difference between right and wrong. The high quality of the teaching they receive develops their sense of curiosity and wonder, and makes learning fun. Those with special educational needs are identified early, are included in all activities and given particular help when needed.
46. Children under five work hard and develop above average skills in speaking and listening. They make very good progress as they are very aware of the older children in the class and strive to be as fluent and attentive as their friends. The teacher is very skilled in ensuring that they have plenty of opportunities to express themselves orally to the group, and to strengthen their widening spoken vocabulary. Children are becoming confident in the early stages of writing and reading and are well prepared to start the National Curriculum. They enjoy 'reading' books and know that the pages tell the story in a sequence. They know that books are for enjoyment as well as helping them to find out things. They have begun to develop their early writing skills effectively. They can write their own names, using capital letters correctly. They find the start to some whole class literacy sessions very difficult when the

material is more suitable for the older Key Stage 1 pupils. The teacher works very hard to keep a balance between the age groups in these activities, but the younger pupils do not use their time as productively as they might if they were given separate and more appropriate activities.

47. Children's attainment in mathematics is close to nationally expected levels because they try very hard, and the teacher has adapted the early stages of the National Numeracy Strategy very skilfully to their needs. They make good use of computer programs to demonstrate their knowledge of numbers to ten. They show an increasing familiarity with the use of number in all aspects of their daily classroom routines, enjoy counting games and rhymes, and are starting to show an awareness of addition and subtraction in counting activities. They know the names of common shapes such as circle and square.
48. Children gain in knowledge and understanding of the world through science and topic lessons. They talk about where they live, their families and past and present events in their own lives. They enjoy exploring and learning about living things, and are aware of the events that surround them as a farming community. They use computers confidently. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of different materials, and are skilled in cutting and sticking activities. They make good progress and learn effectively because the teaching is consistently interesting and well planned. Their attainment is in line with that expected for their age.
49. Children were observed in a physical education lesson based in the classroom because the weather was too cold and wet to go outside. They used the space available sensibly and confidently, and made good progress in investigating different ways of travelling, and in inventing movements to suggest the wind, a breeze or sunshine. Although they were very excited by the activity, they tried very hard to follow the rules and had tremendous fun. Attainment is in line with that expected for the children's age. They have access to fixed climbing apparatus outside their classroom but do not have opportunities to ride and use wheeled toys. They have developed their physical skills appropriately, and handle tools and construction materials confidently, as was seen when they made chairs of the correct size for the baby bear.
50. Creative opportunities are well planned, often as part of a wider topic. A good example was seen when the children sang tunefully and varied the level of their voices in a series of experiments about sound. They listen to music carefully, and use their imagination creatively in their art, dance, stories and play. They use pencils, crayons and brushes accurately when they paint, draw and colour. Their attainment is in line with that expected for their age.

ENGLISH

51. The number of pupils involved in national tests at the end of both key stages in 1999 was less than ten. The group is therefore too small for results to be reported or compared with all or similar schools. An analysis of pupils' past written work and their current achievement in lessons during the inspection indicates that overall standards are in line with the national average at the end of both key stages.
52. Pupils have well developed skills in speaking and listening, and achieve above average levels at the end of both key stages because they are encouraged to listen carefully and to be thoughtful in their contributions and replies to questions. Teachers are very skilled in asking questions that make the children think intellectually, and give the pupils time to reflect before answering. The small size of the teaching groups means that everyone has plenty of opportunities to offer answers. The curriculum for older pupils includes a number of well chosen activities so that pupils discuss and debate, have opportunities put an argument together and to question each

other's ideas and opinions. Pupils' positive attitudes to each other and to learning result in activities that are enjoyable as well as productive. Progress is good because pupils are encouraged by their teachers to 'have a go' even when they are uncertain.

53. Standards in reading are close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and are well in line at the end of Key Stage 2. Younger pupils are able to use an appropriate range of phonic and picture cues to work out unfamiliar text, and read confidently at levels that match their ability when they know the book well. They enjoy talking about stories and poems they have read, and use their reading skills effectively in other lessons to look up information or to read instructions. The reading diaries are very detailed, and form a close link between home and teacher. They celebrate success and staff explain areas of difficulty carefully so that parents and school can work together to help the pupil make greater progress. Older pupils are secure independent readers. They use punctuation accurately to place emphasis correctly, and share their enjoyment of favourite authors with their friends. They are able to explain the difference between the contents and index pages in non-fiction books. The oldest pupils talk intelligently about the characters and events in their current reading, and make reference to the text when expanding on their answers.
54. Standards in writing are in line with national averages at the end of both key stages. Most younger pupils are able to develop their ideas in sentences, and use capital letters and full stops correctly. Their spelling is usually accurate. The more able pupils are able to extend their ideas in a series of linked sentences and can spell difficult words. Although most form their letters accurately, none uses a joined script. Pupils' books show evidence of steady progress over time and that by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is at least in line with national averages. Although some sentences are too long, their written work shows clear evidence of a sound understanding of the use of inverted commas, a wide variety of types of writing, a good vocabulary and the correct use of paragraphs. Most children achieve good standards of joined cursive handwriting in their practice books but the same standard is not evident in their everyday work.
55. The number of pupils involved is too small for any useful conclusions to be drawn from a comparison of the standards reported in the previous inspection. However, it is clear that the quality of speaking and listening in Key Stage 1, and the range and use of imaginative vocabulary in pupils' writing in both key stages, has improved. Reading diaries now form a friendly and regular dialogue between school and home, and are much valued by parents as part of their close partnership with the staff. Although there now is a consistent approach towards the teaching of handwriting, concerns about the quality seen in many books remain. Standards in spelling have risen. There are now no concerns about pupils' attitudes towards learning in Key Stage 1.
56. The overall quality of teaching is good, and has risen since the previous inspection. Teachers plan their work carefully, and take full account of the requirements for the literacy hour. They are confident with the various materials. Tasks generally match the needs of individual pupils and basic skills are taught effectively. Teachers in both key stages have not yet been able to fully devise a completely effective way in which to teach the formal session that starts each lesson. The age range is, of course, extremely wide and it is very hard to ensure that the material is appropriate for all pupils. On occasion, one age group may not receive as much time for focused skills teaching or opportunities to extend their work in group activities as they would receive in larger schools. This is balanced in part by the considerable amount of

individual attention they receive at other times in the lesson. Pupils in both classes use the skills

they have learned in literacy lessons effectively in other areas of the curriculum. They write narrative accounts in religious education and plays in history, read for information, and speak and listen carefully in all lessons.

57. Good and very good teaching occurs when the teachers use questions skilfully to consolidate pupils' understanding, test their knowledge and encourage them to think more deeply. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic because lessons have a pace and wide variety of activity. Relationships are very strong and are based on trust and respect. They allow lessons to be fun but without losing the need to work and try hard. Children are very well managed and any unsatisfactory behaviour is corrected quietly and immediately. Books are marked carefully, and those in Key Stage 2 in particular, contain short useful comments that acknowledge work well done or suggest ways in which improvements could be made. These help pupils to learn more effectively. Not many lessons start with a clear statement of what the children will have learned by the end of the session. This makes it harder for pupils to understand why they are doing certain tasks, to judge their own success, or for teachers to measure accurately how well the lesson has gone. There is no formal co-ordinator. The two full-time teachers work very closely together and ensure that the work is planned and managed effectively. The headteacher oversees standards and is responsible for improving practice and raising standards. This is done very effectively through target setting.

MATHEMATICS

58. The number of pupils involved in national tests at the end of both key stages in 1999 was less than ten. The group is therefore too small for results to be reported or compared with all or similar schools. The standards of attainment seen in lessons and pupils' books during the inspection are in line with the national average for the end of both key stages. There are individual children who are achieving beyond expectation during Key Stage 2. Pupils with special needs achieve to the best of their individual ability and make good progress because they receive patient, well directed support.
59. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are working securely in all elements of their number work and are reaching higher levels in multiplication. They count accurately and know the place value of each number up to and beyond 100. Pupils of higher ability are also able to add three two-digit numbers together. They recognise the difference between odd and even numbers and identify simple fractions such as a half and a quarter. They are very secure in their understanding of shape and basic measurement. They know the correct mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes and are able to describe their properties. They measure with basic units including hand spans but are also familiar with centimetres and millimetres. Work on charts and graphs shows that pupils can use and apply their understanding of mathematics in everyday situations and that higher attaining pupils understand how to interpret the information accurately. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress, especially in number work. Older pupils are working successfully at appropriate levels in work covering fractions, decimals and percentages. They are receiving extra help in using and applying mathematics and in interpreting data. Other subjects also contribute to competence in numeracy. Pupils use their understanding of data collection and graphical work successfully in science and in geography lessons, and their knowledge of angles of turn when programming a floor robot in IT. Key Stage 1 pupils measure accurately in design and technology.

60. The number of pupils involved is too small for any useful conclusions to be drawn from a comparison of the standards reported in the previous inspection. However, it is clear that there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and pupils are now making good progress. Attitudes and behaviour are now very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers deal with any occasional lapses in concentration effectively.
61. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1, leading to good concentration in class, increasing pupil confidence and the effective consolidation of knowledge and skills. Key Stage 1 lessons have a good pace and variety of activity. The teacher has high expectations and plans well so that each pupil meets with success. As a result, the children remain interested, enjoy the lesson and gain in knowledge. In Key Stage 2 the lessons are well planned to give good practice and reinforcement in number work. The quality of teaching and learning is sound. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, to remember the facts and skills they require and learn successfully at their own level. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit from the opportunities to attempt more difficult questions. However, when the lesson moves on to group work, and there is not a second adult available to help, they sometimes drift off task and make less progress. The planning in both key stages is based securely on the National Numeracy Strategy recommendations.
62. Particular strengths in the teaching in both key stages are the introduction to lessons that set a brisk pace and encourage participation in oral and mental work, the effective use of time, and the way in which pupils are actively involved in the lesson and enjoy learning. Teachers choose activities that match the task and the pupils' ability accurately. The detailed objectives for each lesson are not always made clear at the start of the session, and pupils are not always sure what they will be expected to do or understand at the end of the work. However, the mathematical concept that forms the main focus is explained very carefully in the introductory part of the lesson so that a wide age range can understand the topic. Teachers match work sheet and group tasks carefully to individual abilities. In Key Stage 1 there was good teaching of basic mathematical skills. Books are often marked with pupils in both key stages, but do not always contain diagnostic, helpful or encouraging marking to celebrate success or remind pupils how they can improve. The overhead projector is used to very good effect in Key Stage 2 to teach and reinforce the work, for example, on different sets of numbers.
63. The co-ordinator is keen to monitor, evaluate and improve mathematical achievement. The school has participated in the formal evaluation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has given them valuable and reassuring data about progress. The work scrutiny confirmed the well-organised teaching and the steady progress of pupils of all ability. Pupils with special needs receive extra help and support to enable them to concentrate and understand. The priorities for improvement in the subject are to develop the use of the National Numeracy Strategy and to set ambitious targets for the end of key stage and the voluntary tests. Targets are shared with pupils and parents in order to improve the Key Stage 1 and 2 results for individual pupils whenever possible.

SCIENCE

64. The number of pupils involved in national tests at the end of both key stages in 1999 was less than ten. The group is therefore too small for results to be reported or compared with all or similar schools. Current standards of attainment in pupils' books are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Individual pupils achieve higher levels in lessons and particular pieces of work. All the pupils in Key Stage 1 have a sound understanding of life processes and living creatures. They understand that different things have various properties, and have heated, cooled, bent and stretched various materials to find out about them through investigation. They have made good progress in learning about sound and light. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have extended their knowledge of living things through, for example, the study of the human skeleton and understand basic body processes such as digestion and the effect of exercise on the heart. The work of higher attaining pupils in particular shows that they are developing their investigative skills effectively, and write conclusions based on careful consideration. Teachers involve pupils with special needs in all activities where they make similar good progress.
65. The quality of teaching in a lesson observed in Key Stage 1 was excellent and in Key Stage 2 it was good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that enables them to teach with energy and enthusiasm. The use of well-focused questions leads to good quality of learning because pupils are challenged intellectually and made to work hard as they carry out their investigations. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, especially in Key Stage 1, and pupils are learning far more effectively as a result. Attitudes and behaviour are now good in both key stages.
66. Particular strengths in the quality of teaching in both key stages are the good pace of the lessons, the way in which pupils are actively involved in the lesson and are encouraged to enjoy the various activities. Key Stage 1 pupils enjoyed every second of a lesson on sound. The teacher was very skilled in listening to pupils' answers and comments, and in using them to develop teaching points. There was a wide variety of activity and the children moved round the room from focus point to focus point as the lesson developed from a listening activity, to a practical demonstration and then a chance to invent and experiment for oneself. The pupils in Key Stage 2 were very interested in their work on the body, and responded accurately and keenly to questions, showing that they remembered what they had learned in earlier lessons. The younger pupils in Key Stage 2 made a good start on their model of an arm although they had some difficulty in the later stages, as they had to work on their own while the teacher led the older pupils through an investigation into the effect of exercise on pulse rate. Teachers are skilled in choosing activities that match task and ability accurately, and ensure understanding. All books are marked but some do not contain helpful or encouraging comments that show pupils how to improve.
67. The work of the two teachers is co-ordinated by the headteacher through her monitoring of the long and medium term planning. The priorities for improvement are to set ambitious targets for the end of Key Stage 2 and other voluntary tests.

ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

68. An examination of the displays around the school, discussions with pupils and work observed in lessons indicates that children achieve at the levels expected for their age in both subjects. The quality of learning was good in the lessons observed in both classes because teachers encouraged pupils of all ability to think creatively, to experiment and to develop their skills, and helped them to be successful.
69. Key Stage 1 pupils are now making better progress in the development of their artistic skills and knowledge than was reported at the time of the previous inspection. They have learned how to mix colours correctly and have successfully completed paintings in the style of Mondrian. The quality of learning in Key Stage 1 is good, resulting from well-planned, interesting teaching. The children were observed designing and making a replacement chair for baby bear as Goldilocks had broken the original. They had to think carefully about different types of chairs, and then learn how to join the materials they had chosen through experimentation. Concentration levels were high. The pupils showed increasing confidence and ability in the use of their skills. Progress was slower than it might have been as the teacher did not encourage the children sufficiently to design their work in detail, and they wasted time in experimenting with junk materials that looked like the parts of a chair rather than selecting those that could be altered to fit part of a considered design. The work in pupils' books is very clear and well presented, the higher ability children in particular producing very well written descriptions of the process they have followed. Evaluations are thoughtful. The completed puppets and butterfly toys on display were well finished.
70. In Key Stage 2, the quality of learning is sound overall. It was good in the art lesson observed. The pupils are encouraged to think as they design, and to remember the facts and skills they require. Current work on designing slippers shows that pupils are learning successfully at their own level and that they evaluate their work. They have learned how to work effectively with clay and to choose the correct tools. Pupils are keen to be successful and persevere in order to overcome difficulties as when moulding their sculptures of heads. They are encouraged to evaluate and to feel proud of what they have achieved. Completed work was of a better standard than they had anticipated. There were examples of the use of a variety of techniques and media on display. The use of drawing and shading in the pupils' sketchbooks showed development of basic skills over time. Pupils spoke about their past work with confidence.
71. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, especially in Key Stage 1. This has resulted in an overall improvement in the quality of the work produced by the pupils and greater progress in both subjects. Progress in art is better throughout the school because pupils have more opportunities to learn and practise a variety of techniques and to work with a wider variety of media. Attitudes and behaviour are now good in both key stages. The quality of teaching was good in both class lessons observed. Teachers plan carefully, and teach pupils the separate and associated skills required for success in both subjects. This too is an improvement since the previous inspection. Particular strengths in teaching in Key Stage 1 are the good pace of the lessons, the very effective links made to other parts of the curriculum, and the way in which pupils are involved and challenged by the activities. This leads to a higher quality of learning and greater effort, as was seen when one pupil realised for himself in a design and technology lesson how accurately he would have to measure his chair if the bear and cushion were to fit into the finished product. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 was good in the lesson observed because skills were taught very thoroughly, referring back to earlier work in sketchbooks, and the teacher's own confidence with the materials encouraged the pupils to set themselves high standards.

72. The work in both subjects is co-ordinated jointly by the two teachers, with the headteacher maintaining an overview. Planning is linked to the two and four year plans for each key stage to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum for both subjects are met in full. The policy and scheme of work are to be revised in line with latest national guidance.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

73. It was not possible to observe any geography lessons during the inspection. One history lesson was observed in Key Stage 2 but none in Key Stage 1. However, the evidence from this lesson, from displays and photographs, and the scrutiny of topic work in folders, it is clear that pupils, including those with special educational needs, are working successfully at levels close to national expectations in both key stages in both subjects. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, especially in Key Stage 1.
74. The quality of learning in Key Stage 1 is now sound and has improved considerably since the school was last inspected, especially in history. Pupils talk about things that have happened to them and demonstrate an understanding of the passage of time in their history work. They have compared old and new homes, and made a doll time line to show which was the oldest and which the newest. The children have learned about seasonal jobs in geography, and bring their own knowledge and experiences to lessons. They are aware of changes in farming methods, how homes and villages alter over the years for a variety of reasons and have talked about the differences between towns and the countryside. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of presentation and detail in the work in both subjects, especially by those pupils of lower ability.
75. The quality of learning is good in the Key Stage 2. In the lesson observed, the pupils were encouraged to think, to remember historical facts about the Victorians and Tudors, and to use their research skills effectively. They were learning confidently and successfully at their own levels. The quality of learning has improved during the academic year as much of the earlier work depended heavily on work sheets and gave pupils few opportunities for independent research. Several children have used CD ROM to find out more at home. This is commendable, but some text has been downloaded 'blindly' from the encyclopaedias and pupils have difficulty in understanding what the text really means. Pupils have studied contrasting localities in Perthshire and India in geography lessons, and have produced sound work on climate and rivers. They have studied their own immediate locality carefully and planned walks around the village.
76. The teaching observed in the Key Stage 2 lesson was good. The teacher showed pupils Victorian artefacts and gave them activities that led to interested and thoughtful discussion. The final activity was to begin planning and writing a play about children in a Victorian school. A representative from each group reported on their planning and progress in the plenary session and it was evident how much the pupils had learned in previous lessons and the considerable degree of empathy they possessed. Both activities made very good use of literacy skills learned in English lessons.
77. The two teachers plan their history and geography lessons within two and four year cycles that ensure that no work is repeated and that pupils are given opportunities to practise and develop skills learned in earlier years. The school follows a well-planned scheme of work based on national guidelines.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

78. Overall standards are close to the national expectation for the end of Key Stage 1, although pupils do not have opportunities to work at depth in all aspects of the IT curriculum. Pupils know how to use a mouse correctly, can enter text and use the space bar and shift key for upper and lower case letters. They enjoy working with art programs, can select a tool using the screen icons, and use the mouse accurately to colour or draw their picture. They understand that floppy discs contain extra information and how to load them. They make good use of mathematics programs to practise their mental skills in number recognition, addition and subtraction.
79. Standards are in line at the end of Key Stage 2. Older children know how to select the program they need from a pop-down menu, and enter text confidently. They know how to change the size and appearance of text, use the mouse to change the screen shape and how to save finished work. They handle data confidently, entering information about, for example, the levels of proteins in different foods that they have discovered in science lessons and use questions to find answers. They know how to present their findings as a block graph, and use their skills in numeracy to explain what it means. Pupils obtain information from CD ROM or the Internet, although some history folders contain printouts that suggest that text is downloaded without much understanding of the actual meaning. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know the purpose of bar coding, and that the strips on credit and shop cards contain different sorts of information. They program simple floor and screen robots successfully. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make appropriate progress. Some individual pupils achieve higher levels.
80. It was only possible to see one IT lesson. The quality of teaching was good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and pupils learn effectively as they feel confident about the depth of her knowledge. Each pupil was set work at the correct level of difficulty. Instruction is often individual but leads to high levels of pupil concentration and increased success. Skills are taught thoroughly, as was seen when pupils were learning how to enter instructions into the floor robot so that it moved in the shape of a square. The teacher helped the pupils to work out the angle of turn required if the robot was to follow a triangular route for themselves. There is a good record of individual achievement by pupils in Key Stage 2 but the teacher has not been in school long enough to ensure that information is transferred effectively when pupils move from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.
81. Computers are now used more effectively in Key Stage 1 and form a far greater part of pupils' learning than was reported at the time of the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are not as high. National expectations have changed, some hardware is showing its age and changes in staff have interrupted pupils' continuity of learning. The scheme of work, praised in the previous inspection, now needs revision. The recent appointment of a new skilled and enthusiastic co-ordinator is already having a positive effect on standards. The headteacher monitors attainment through observation in both classes. New equipment has been purchased and will shortly be introduced.

MUSIC

82. It was not possible to observe any music lessons during the inspection as they take place at the end of the week. However, an examination of the very comprehensive and carefully assessed lesson plans shows that pupils in both key stages are taught all aspects of the National Curriculum at an appropriate level. Very effective use is made of expert voluntary help to support the teaching. Planning is thorough and includes the teacher's and pupils' reflections on

how well the lessons had gone and what had been learned. Individual pupil records identify current strengths and weaknesses, and what needs to be done next. Good links are made with other aspects of school life including assemblies and school productions. Pupils are given good opportunities to hear live as well as recorded music and have visited the Birmingham City Symphony Orchestra. Their reflection on Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' gave them an opportunity to contribute their own recollections of life in the countryside.

83. The standard of singing could be judged in the two assemblies. This was tuneful, controlled and pupils knew how to sing strongly without shouting. The school appears to have maintained the standards seen during the previous inspection, although it was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. There was no evidence of the continued use of the multi-track studio.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

84. It was only possible to observe one physical education lesson. This had to take place in the Key Stage 1 classroom, as the weather was too cold and wet to go outside. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 2.
85. The quality of teaching in the observed lesson was very good, and ensured that the children had a safe and positive experience. The lesson was well planned with appropriate emphasis given to warming up before vigorous activity, a good range of varied activities that kept pupils involved and a high expectation that they would strive to improve on their own performance. The quality of learning was very good because pupils were keen to show how much they had understood, listened carefully and responded positively to the physical and mental challenges they were given. The teacher was very secure in her knowledge of purposeful physical activity, recognised the limitations of the available space and made learning fun as well as challenging.
86. Teachers' planning shows that pupils have access to all aspects of the National Curriculum, including swimming. From the evidence seen and from discussions with pupils, it is clear that the school has maintained the standards seen at the time of the previous inspection. The school makes good use of the playground area and nearby recreation ground for games. The lack of a hall restricts what pupils can achieve, especially in unsuitable weather, but good use is made of the village hall for gymnastics and dance lessons. Older pupils have an opportunity to follow outdoor adventurous activities during their annual residential visit, and the school encourages pupils to take part in teams formed with local schools. The school makes good use of the gymnasium at Brillley, and older pupils can use the secondary school facilities for indoor cricket, tennis and gymnastics. Girls have equal opportunities with boys, and are proud of their achievements in games such as cricket. Pupils take part in competitive games and sports, and there is a good range of after-school activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

87. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are in line with those expected in the local agreed syllabus. There is a well constructed four year long term plan that ensures that the curriculum is largely Christian, recognises the major festivals, but does not repeat the same subject material. The planned curriculum gives appropriate attention to other major world faiths. Younger pupils are taught the significance of sharing, and the importance of the Last Supper and Easter to Christians, through a visit to the parish church. They met the vicar and recalled the events of Holy Week together. They were able to remember the symbolism of bread and wine, and understood why it was the vicar who told them about what happened. The quality of learning in that particular lesson was above average because of the good

teaching, and the impact of visiting the church and sharing a symbolic meal. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good knowledge of major stories in the Old Testament. Older pupils have also studied several key aspects of Islam and are familiar with the important events in the life of Jesus.

88. The quality of teaching is sound overall. It was particularly good in the lesson taken jointly by the vicar and Class 1 teacher because the material was presented in such an interesting way by staff whose personal knowledge and faith impressed the children. The quality of learning was high because the children were so interested and enjoyed the practical way in which the material was taught. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge, and create a purposeful atmosphere in their classes so that pupils can talk easily about matters of faith. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by voluntary staff, and make good progress because they have an adult 'partner' to encourage them in their work. Marking often focuses on the written language, which makes it harder for pupils to know how well they are achieving in religious education. It is hard to measure progress over time as many pupils' written work since September is based on work sheets and is of a similar nature. Some activities, such as putting pictures of the events in the life of Samson in the correct order and adding captions, do not provide enough challenge for older pupils or those of higher ability.
89. The school has maintained the standards reported during the previous inspection and continues to benefit from the contribution made by the vicar to their assemblies. A very effective assembly on the theme of the Creation was observed during the inspection. Assemblies and religious education lessons continue to contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.