

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLEMORTON C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Malvern

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116791

Headteacher: Mrs M C Worthington

Reporting inspector: Mr C Parker
11897

Dates of inspection: 5th - 7th February 2002

Inspection number: 196716

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Castlemorton Malvern Worcestershire |
| Postcode: | WR13 6BG |
| Telephone number: | 01684 833282 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr M Lister |
| Date of previous inspection: | 9 th July 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 11897 | C Parker | Registered inspector | Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design technology Physical education | How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed? |
| 9510 | C Murray Watson | Lay inspector | | How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 19387 | M Powell | Team inspector | English Art and design Geography History Music Religious education Foundation Stage curriculum Special educational needs Equal opportunities | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castlemorton is a Church of England primary school for pupils aged four to eleven years. It is smaller than average with 76 pupils on roll. Nearly half of the pupils come from outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is broadly average. There are no pupils with statements. Currently, the number of pupils taking free school meals is well below average. However, there is no hot meals service so it is likely that more pupils are entitled to this benefit than actually take it up. All of the pupils are of white UK heritage and speak English as their first language. The pupils have diverse pre-school experience. Their attainment when they start school is wide ranging, but taken overall it is broadly average. The pupils are taught in four classes, and all are mixed age groups except for the reception class. At the time of the inspection, the pupils in Key Stage 1 were taught by a temporary teacher pending a full time appointment. In 2000, the school gained an achievement award and in the following year achieved further distinction by being designated as a Beacon School.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Castlemorton is a very effective school where the pupils attain well above average standards by the end of Year 6 because they are very well taught and have access to an interesting curriculum. The headteacher provides strong leadership and creates a very positive climate for learning. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above average by the end of year 6.
- The teaching is very good in Key Stage 2, and as a result the pupils are learning effectively and achieving very well.
- The school provides a rich, varied and interesting curriculum for its pupils.
- The parents are very well informed and greatly value the work of the teachers.
- The pupils' progress is carefully monitored through comprehensive and regular assessment.
- The headteacher's leadership is strong and determined. Consequently, the school is very effective.

What could be improved

- The impact of school improvement activities is not formally evaluated.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in July 1997. The number of pupils on roll continues to grow steadily. There have been improvements in the curriculum, the quality of the teaching and the standards that the pupils attain. The school responded well to issues raised in the last report and, as a result, the assessment systems are now very comprehensive, policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and the governors have established an appropriate committee structure. The school development plan now has clear priorities, but there are no procedures to evaluate the impact it has on the school provides for the pupils or the standards they attain. This remains an issue to be addressed.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | A | A | A | A |
| mathematics | B | A | B | B |
| science | A* | A | C | B |

Key

Very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The youngest pupils are learning effectively and attaining the goals expected of them by the end of the foundation stage. In the national tests taken at the end of year 2, the results have risen steadily over the last few years to a point where they were in the top five per cent nationally in reading and writing, in 2001. The results in mathematics were well above average. When compared to similar schools the results are very high. The results the pupils attain at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above and often well above average in English and mathematics. Last year the results in English were well above average for the fourth year in succession. In mathematics the results were above average. In both cases they compare very favourably with those of similar schools. In science, the teacher assessments show that standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average last year. However, in the national tests in science at the end of year 6, the results were average compared to the very high results that had been achieved in previous years. Further analysis shows that all of the pupils attained the expected level and a third reached the higher level. The dip in results reflects a small fall in the number of pupils attaining the higher level within a relatively small cohort.

The inspection evidence indicates that standards, across the curriculum, are above average. The pupils are making very good progress and achieving well, notably in Key Stage 2, where the teaching is very strong. The pupils on the special educational needs register are well supported and as a result are making steady progress towards the clear targets that are set for them. The school sets appropriately challenging targets and is successful in achieving them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | The pupils' confidence and application have positive effects on the standards being achieved across the whole curriculum. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Throughout the school, the pupils' behaviour is very good. Their lively response to the good teaching is well channelled into concentrated effort, so that there is neither the time nor the inclination to misbehave. |
| Personal development and relationships | The very good relationships between pupils and staff, and the way the pupils are encouraged to care for each other and the school environment positively influence the way the pupils behave. |
| Attendance | Attendance is well above average. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching was very good or excellent in half of the lessons seen. In the remainder it was frequently good and never less than satisfactory. The teaching is consistently very good in Key Stage 2 where a number of part-time teachers combine very effectively to use their complementary skills to the benefit of the pupils. In the foundation stage, the teachers provide a good range of carefully planned activities through which the children learn effectively. In Key Stage 1, the pupils are currently taught by a temporary teacher. The teacher had only been with the pupils for a very short time prior to the inspection and was still getting to know them. Nevertheless the teaching in the lessons seen was entirely satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 the teaching of the important skills of literacy and numeracy is very good and sometimes excellent. The teachers plan their lessons and modify the tasks and activities to take account of the needs of all pupils. The well-briefed teaching assistants are particularly effective in working with pupils and supporting those with special educational needs. Throughout the school, relationships between the teachers and their pupils are positive and constructive and as a result the children are learning effectively and achieving very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides rich and relevant experiences for all the pupils. The National Curriculum requirements are met in full. The curriculum for the youngest pupils provides a good range of experiences across all the areas of learning. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Careful provision made for various groups of pupils. As a result, those with difficulties in some areas and others who require challenging extension activities are very well catered for. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Overall, the provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good. The teachers consistently promote the pupils' self-esteem and foster a clear understanding of right and wrong. They trust the pupils to conform to the high standards of moral and social behaviour expected in the school. A strong cultural strand is built into many aspects of the curriculum. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The pupils are very well cared for within the school. There is a strong commitment to the well being of each pupil and very effective encouragement for both personal development and academic achievement. |

The parents are strongly supportive of the school and the greatly value the work of the teachers.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully implemented through a wide range of interesting activities. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support the pupils' learning right across the curriculum.

The arrangements for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are comprehensive and very effective. Assessment forms a natural part of many lessons, and the whole-class sessions at the end of lessons are used well to check how much the pupils have understood.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides very strong and determined leadership for the school. A part-time teacher supports her well and gives invaluable assistance in co-ordinating the curriculum. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors guide the work of the school very effectively. They recognise the school's many strengths and are alert to opportunities to develop its provision further. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The monitoring of the school's performance data is comprehensive and incisive. All the elements of the school development planning cycle are now in place except the necessary evaluation procedures. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school uses its available resources very well to provide the pupils with a very effective education. |

The accommodation for the pupils in the foundation stage is inadequate, but in all other areas it is good. The learning resources are sufficient in quantity and generally of high quality. The staffing arrangements meet the needs of the school. However, at the time of the inspection a temporary teacher was covering the post of Key Stage 1 co-ordinator because the governors have been unable to appoint a suitably qualified teacher.

The governors are using the available data to compare the school's performance with others, both locally and nationally. They consult the teachers and parents about developments, but opportunities to challenge the priorities for school improvement, for example, are limited by the absence of formal evaluation of the school development plan.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The good progress made by the children. The commitment of the teachers and their good teaching. The school's good relationships with parents. The information they receive about the progress their children are making. The wide range of opportunities offered to the pupils. The strong leadership of the headteacher. | |

The responses to the questionnaire, letters to the inspectors and comments made at the pre-inspection meeting were overwhelmingly positive. A small number of parents felt that their children did not get the right amount of homework, but the vast majority were very satisfied that the school had 'got it right'. The inspectors agree that the school strikes a sensible balance.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The youngest pupils are learning effectively and attaining the goals expected of them by the end of the foundation stage. Through a range of appropriate tasks and activities they gain increasing confidence. For example, they experiment with crates to construct boats, trains and aeroplanes and participate in role-play at the 'Baker's Shop'. The pupils' language development is being fostered across the curriculum. This was evident, for instance, when they commented on pictures of landscapes in winter. In mathematics, they are making a good start in their use of numbers and recognise various shapes.
2. The school's results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2 have risen steadily over the last few years, and in 2001 were in the top five per cent nationally for reading and writing. The results in mathematics were well above average. When compared to similar schools the results are very high. At the end of year 6, the pupils' results have been consistently above, and often well above, average in English and mathematics. Last year, the results in English were well above average for the fourth year in succession. In mathematics, the results were above average. In both cases, the results compare very favourably with those of similar schools. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English and mathematics remain well above average at Year 6 and that most of the pupils are on course to attain the expected level by the end of year 2.
3. In science, the teacher assessments show that standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average last year. However, in the national tests in science at the end of year 6, the results were average compared to the very high results that had been achieved in previous years. Further analysis shows that all of the pupils attained the expected level and a third reached the higher level. The dip in results reflects a small reduction in the number of pupils attaining the higher level within a relatively small cohort. The inspection evidence indicates that current standards in Year 6 are well above average and that most of the pupils in Year 2 are on course to attain the expected level.
4. The school sets appropriately challenging targets and is successful in achieving them. Although there are some variations in the results achieved by girls and boys these reflect the make up of the cohorts rather than any variation in provision. The school is making every effort to address the needs of both genders. This is particularly evident in the current Year 6 where almost all of the pupils are boys. As a result, all the pupils are achieving well. The children on the special educational needs register are well supported, and as a result are making steady progress towards the clear targets that are set for them.
5. Standards across the curriculum are above average and have improved since the last inspection. In information and communication technology, for example, the pupils are working competently and confidently at a high level. Similarly, in art they produce work that is often of very high quality.
6. The pupils are making very good progress and achieving well, notably in Key Stage 2, where the teaching is very strong.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The pupils are keen to come to school and there is a higher than average level of attendance. Consistently good teaching encourages them to contribute actively to their own learning and promotes an enthusiasm for the activities they are offered. As a result, the pupils display a willingness to ask questions and a confident approach to whatever challenges they are set. For example, in an art lesson they approached the difficult task of creating a three dimensional portrait, with the need for close observational drawing, experimentation and carefully mixed colours, in a sensible way. The pupils worked hard to achieve the best possible results. Their confidence and application have positive effects on the standards being achieved across the whole curriculum. The only exception to this is amongst some of the younger children where they do not have a permanent class teacher at the moment. These young pupils sometimes find it hard to settle at the start of lessons and can quickly lose concentration.
8. The children's behaviour throughout the school is very good. Their lively response to the good teaching and the rich and varied curriculum being offered is well channelled into concentrated effort, so that there is neither the time nor the inclination to misbehave. Moreover, the very good relationships between pupils and staff, and the way they are encouraged to care for each other and the school environment all influence their behaviour. On the playground, for example, even the youngest children were eager to ensure that empty crisp bags and milk cartons quickly found their way to the litter bin. The playhouses and new 'summer house' were amicably shared and the pupils organised ball games in a friendly and co-operative way.
9. The pupils are encouraged to assume increasing levels of responsibility as they progress through the school, so that by the time they reach the top year every child has a regular 'job' to do, such as organising the school milk, playing the music for assemblies or putting out chairs, etc. Everyone who was seen undertaking such a task did so with either little or no adult prompting and took pride in doing a good job with the minimum of fuss. There is a strong emphasis on the oldest pupils being helpful and supportive of the youngest ones. For example, there is regular 'paired' reading which not only supports literacy, but helps friendships to develop as well. As a result, there is a cheerful acceptance of the needs of the younger pupils and the responsibility the older ones have to be protective towards them. All of this contributes to the development of mature, caring and tolerant individuals who are a credit to the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. The teaching was very good or excellent in half of the lessons seen. In the remainder it was frequently good and never less than satisfactory. The teaching is very good in Key Stage 2 where a number of part-time teachers combine very effectively to use their complementary skills to benefit of the pupils.
11. In the foundation stage, the teachers provide a good range of activities through which the children learn effectively. These activities are carefully planned and modified for different groups; for example, whilst some of the youngest children were sorting and classifying objects related to the story of 'The Princess and the Pea' the older children were making shopping lists following a visit to a bakery.
12. In Key Stage 1, the pupils are currently taught by a temporary teacher. The teacher had only been with the pupils for a very short time prior to the inspection and was still getting to know

them. Nevertheless, the teaching in the lessons seen was entirely satisfactory. The lessons were well conceived and where the teacher was able to present greater challenge to the more able pupils, as in a mathematics lessons where they were comparing the weight of objects, there were good features.

13. In Key Stage 2, the teaching of the important skills of literacy and numeracy is very good and sometimes excellent. A strong feature of the teaching is the wide range of opportunities provided for the pupils to use and apply their numeracy and literacy skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum, for example, in science and religious education. The teachers have high expectations and ensure that the pupils develop these skills very well. This was the case in an English lesson where the pupils were using 'Spaghetti Pigout' to explore humorous texts.
14. The well-briefed teaching assistants are particularly effective in working with pupils and supporting those with special educational needs. Where the teacher and the teaching assistant have an established working relationship, they move unobtrusively between groups supporting and guiding the pupils. The teachers mark the pupils work thoroughly and often make comments to help them to improve. In turn, the pupils respond to their teachers' high expectations; reply positively when questioned, enjoy the challenges they are set, and take considerable pride in the presentation of their work, notably in years 3 and 4. Throughout the school, relationships between the teachers and their pupils are positive and constructive.
15. In Key Stage 2, the teachers use a wide range of effective methods to ensure the pupils make rapid progress and achieve their potential. They plan their lessons carefully and set out what they want the pupils to learn. They make clear the purpose of the lesson and review it at the end. This worked particularly well in a Year 5 and 6 lesson where the pupils were investigating the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Towards the end of lessons, the teachers bring the pupils together to question and check their understanding. This is a strong feature of many lessons.
16. The activities are interesting and consequently the pupils listen attentively to their teachers' instructions. Furthermore, the tasks are usually carefully modified for different ability groups and the teachers support individuals and groups very effectively. They also make good use of resources to help the pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson the teacher made very good use of computers and programmable toys to develop the pupils' information technology skills.
17. The teachers praise the pupils appropriately for work of high quality, which is then often displayed to emphasise its value. They develop a high level of independence and self-sufficiency in the children. For instance, they set the youngest children tasks that demand thought and concentration, but are interesting and often fun. This was the case when the years 1 and 2 pupils were asked to find the most suitable location for a dormouse to hibernate. By the time they reach years 5 and 6, most of the pupils value each other's work and often collaborate very effectively in lessons.
18. The teaching has improved since the last inspection. The very good teaching, in Key Stage 2, and the interesting range of tasks that the teachers set are the main reasons for the high standards that are achieved by the end of year 6.

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

19. The curriculum provision was seen to be good at the last inspection, and is now very good. At all stages, including the foundation stage, it is broad, balanced and provides rich and relevant experiences for all of the pupils. In particular, the curriculum for Key Stage 2 ensures that there are very good links between subjects such as music and history, religious education and literature, art and geography. This adds an extra dimension and coherence to the pupils' learning. The programme of study for religious education ensures thorough coverage of the locally Agreed Syllabus and the statutory requirements are also fully met.
20. The school has up to date policies for all aspects of the curriculum. It has also responded to the perceived need for a comprehensive scheme of work for art. This is now implemented very consistently and is the foundation for the very high quality of work in this subject.
21. The curriculum planning is very good and ensures that the pupils' new learning builds upon their earlier experiences and attainment. In geography, for example, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 use and extend enquiry skills that they acquired through a study of their local area during Key Stage 1 to the study of an urban and a rural community in Kenya. The pupils' writing skills are also enhanced as they are encouraged, for example, to write empathetically in history, to write notes comparing aspects of life now and in the past and to write descriptively. The provision for information and communication technology is also very good. The pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to use this tool to support their learning in many areas of the curriculum, including art and language. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are fully implemented through a wide range of interesting activities.
22. The provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. There are clear, comprehensive policies for sex education and for teaching about the use and misuse of drugs. Aspects of citizenship are built into the work of various subjects. For example, in their geography lessons the younger pupils are made aware of people who contribute positively to the local community. The school has strong links with the local community, for example, with the church through the vicar's weekly involvement in school worship. Local artists contribute their expertise to enhance the art curriculum. Other local visitors support clubs such as football and after-school care provision. There are also good links with other local schools which allow the schools to work together to provide the pupils with interesting activities that would not otherwise be possible. The school has shown considerable sensitivity to the needs of the many boys in the older classes. In part, this is why there is a good range of sporting clubs, but they are also well attended by the girls.
23. The pupils with special educational needs participate fully in all aspects of the curriculum. An outstanding example was the musical production, 'A Star is Born', which involved the whole school and revealed hitherto hidden talents among some of the more diffident pupils. Careful provision for various groups of pupils ensures that those with difficulties in some areas and others who require challenging extension activities are very well catered for. The school takes very seriously the importance of ensuring the inclusion of all its pupils.
24. Overall, the provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good, reflecting an improvement on the already good picture seen at the last inspection. Through lessons in art, music and religious education, the school furthers the pupils' spiritual awareness, but there is still room for periods of reflection to enhance this aspect of their development.

The teachers consistently promote the pupils' self-esteem. The pupils' pride in featuring on the weekly 'Well Done' board is very obvious. The teachers provide very good role models for the pupils, and are consistent in fostering a clear understanding of right and wrong. They trust the pupils to conform to the high standards of moral and social behaviour expected in the school. During a science lesson, for instance there was an insistence that older pupils handled their soil samples carefully in order to preserve the minute insects within it.

25. Through visits, visitors, clubs and interaction with each other during their work the pupils acquire a very secure set of social skills. They know how to receive visitors courteously; the older pupils treat younger children appropriately and respond appreciatively to the interest shown by adults in their progress. The older pupils created a Victorian museum and then received and escorted their parents and other visitors to view their exhibits.
26. A strong cultural strand is built into many aspects of the curriculum. The school is aware of the many opportunities not only for developing a local identity, but also for fostering knowledge and understanding about other times and other cultures. During art lessons, for example, the older pupils have been learning about women's fabric producing co-operatives in Nigeria. The religious education curriculum is rich in opportunities to learn about Christian traditions as well as those of Sikhs and Muslims. However, opportunities for the pupils' to increase their awareness of the various contributions of many cultures to the traditions of this country are not as numerous. Residential experiences have also provided excellent opportunities for enhancing the pupils' social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The pupils are very well cared for within the school. All of the staff display considerable commitment to the well being of each pupil and encourage both their personal development and their academic achievement very effectively. The teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of the children. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and health and safety checks are regularly undertaken by the designated governor.
28. The close attention to personal development is a key elements in the school's very good provision for each pupil. The teachers have a good understanding of what their pupils know and can do, and the work they set provides a challenge for each pupil at an appropriate level. Effective use is made of the teaching assistants to support individual pupils and to provide small group tuition in lessons. Good classroom management and high expectations of good behaviour also make positive contributions to the standards being achieved. A common factor in all areas of school life is the determination of the staff to broaden the pupils' understanding of the world and of themselves. The additional support given to pupils on the special educational needs register is carefully planned to advance their progress towards the targets set out in their comprehensive individual education plans.
29. The arrangements for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are comprehensive and very effective. Assessment forms a natural part of many lessons, and the whole-class sessions are used well to check how much the pupils have understood. The teachers also test the pupils and keep an extensive range of samples of their work in portfolios. In this way, they build up a coherent picture of each child's achievements and a record of the overall performance of the class on which to base their subsequent curriculum planning. Each pupil is set clear targets that help to focus their learning. The headteacher undertakes wide ranging analysis of the results of each cohort's annual test results in order to assess the school's

performance and to set targets for the future. Taken overall, the assessment arrangements are very good.

30. The consistently good teaching, an interesting curriculum and positive relationships between the class teachers and their pupils are key factors in the school's success. They all contribute to the pupils' enthusiasm for school, their very good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning. Evident throughout the school day is the high value placed on what each child achieves and their importance as developing individuals. Everyone is encouraged to celebrate when something is done well, either in assemblies, in class or at the end of the day when parents are invited in to see some special achievement by their child. The high level of challenge built in to the curriculum is tackled with the confidence that each child has gained from feeling valued and appreciated, and has a positive effect on the standards being reached.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

31. The parents are strongly supportive of the school. Some live outside the immediate area, but especially choose this school for their children. There were very few concerns expressed either by the parents at the pre inspection meeting or by those who returned the questionnaires. They are particularly appreciative of the level of informal contact with the class teachers and of the way they are invited into the school at the end of the day to see anything special that has been achieved by their children.
32. The school provides a very good level of information about the day-to-day events and the progress of each child. The frequent opportunities for informal contact and the more formal consultation evenings are strong features of the school's links with the parents and carers. The small, village nature of the school 'family' also allows general information to be passed easily both ways. The newly established school website is a further strand in the very good level of information available to parents.
33. A number of parents offer regular and much-appreciated help with reading, craft skills and various clubs and sports. There is an active 'Friends Association', which raises valuable funds for the school and organises social events for both adults and the pupils. The local amenities in the surrounding area, such as the parish church, farms and older buildings, all contribute to the richness of the curriculum being offered. Following consultation with the parent body, the development of a new school homework policy has gained the approval of the great majority of the parents, who provide valuable help with the work done at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

34. The headteacher provides very strong and determined leadership for the school. She has a clear vision, sets an excellent example through her teaching and encourages a very positive climate for learning throughout the school. The headteacher manages the school effectively. Although three out of the four classes in the school are taught by combinations of part time teachers the situation is very carefully handled to give maximum benefit to the pupils. The curriculum is very well planned and managed. The headteacher is very well supported by a part-time teacher who provides invaluable assistance in co-ordinating the curriculum. The very efficient administrative support given to the headteacher ensures that the school runs smoothly and allows her to focus on the provision made for the pupils.
35. The governors guide the work of the school very effectively. They recognise its many strengths and are alert to opportunities to develop its provision further. The governors meet

their responsibilities in full and provide the school with a very good level of support. Collectively, they have a wide range of skills that are used to the benefit of the school. Following the last inspection, a committee structure was introduced. The committees now carry out much of the preparatory work for the regular meetings of the full governing body. Some of the governors take specific responsibilities for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs and link closely with the teacher who co-ordinates each of these aspects within the school. They are well informed and frequently visit the school to assess for themselves the quality of the school's provision.

36. The monitoring of the school's performance data is comprehensive and incisive. The results of the national tests are analysed to evaluate the school's performance in comparison to other schools and to set challenging targets for the future. In mathematics, for example, individual pupil's answers were analysed to identify potential areas of weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding and as a result the teaching programmes have been strengthened.
37. The school development plan sets out a programme of activities to improve resources, to further develop the teachers' skills and knowledge and thereby enhance the provision made for the pupils. Priorities are now identified and progress towards them is monitored by the governing body. However, there is no formal evaluation to assess either the success of these activities or the contribution they make towards the improvement priorities. Although all other elements of the school development planning cycle are now in place, the evaluation procedures have not been formalised. In order to sharpen the assessment of the impact of improvement activities, the governors should introduce procedures for formal evaluation into the school development planning cycle. **This is a key issue for action because it has not been adequately addressed since the last inspection.**
38. Despite the absence of formal evaluation procedures the governors are implementing many aspects of 'best value' policy. They are, for example, using the available data to compare the school's performance with others, both locally and nationally and consulting with the teachers and parents. They also use competition to ensure they get value for money in their spending decisions. Through the performance management committee of the governing body the headteacher is appraised and set targets.
39. The school is outward looking. It has very good links with the local cluster of schools that provide very worthwhile opportunities for both professional and curriculum development. The headteacher also makes good use of national initiatives, for example, to extend information technology resources and provide training for the teachers. The recent award of beacon status is having benefits not only for its partner schools, but also for the school itself. Even at an early stage, with specialist support the development of a school website is providing valuable opportunities for the pupils to extend their information technology skills and communicate the range of activities they undertake via the Internet.
40. The most recent audit judged the financial systems to be sound and all its recommendations have been acted upon. The current carry forward figure within the budget is earmarked to provide a contribution to the much needed improvements to the inadequate accommodation for pupils in the foundation stage. Otherwise, the accommodation is good in all areas. The learning resources are sufficient in quantity and generally of high quality. The staffing arrangements meet the needs of the school. However, at the time of the inspection a temporary teacher was covering the post of Key Stage 1 co-ordinator because the governors have been unable to appoint a suitably qualified teacher. The expenditure per pupil is well

above average. Nevertheless, the school uses its available resources very judiciously to provide the pupils with a very effective education. As a result, it gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) In order to sustain and further enhance the very good provision made for the pupils, the governors should ascertain the effect of their improvement activities on the curriculum, resources and the standards that the pupils achieve by carrying out a thorough evaluation of school development plan at the end of each cycle.
(Paragraph 37)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 24 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 9 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 4 | 7 | 9 | 3 | | | |
| Percentage | 17 | 31 | 39 | 13 | | | |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 76 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 16 |

| 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 | 3 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 7 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | Unauthorised absence |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| % | % |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.8 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | | | |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | | | |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | School | | | |
| | National | | | |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | | | |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | School | | | |
| | National | | | |

The results are not included because fewer than ten pupils took the tests in 2001.

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

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

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| | Girls | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| | Total | 12 | 11 | 13 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 92 (100) | 85 (100) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|--------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | Girls | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| | Total | 12 | 11 | 12 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 92 (80) | 85 (80) | 92 (80) |

| | | | | |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 65 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 0 | 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.

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

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 4.6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 16.5 |
| Average class size | 19.0 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 38 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | |
| | £ |
| Total income | 206 504 |
| Total expenditure | 193 146 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2 611 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 20 804 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 34 162 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 1.6 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 3.7 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 76 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 35 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 77 | 21 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 63 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 60 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 47 | 40 | 12 | 2 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 81 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 70 | 21 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 86 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 74 | 23 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 60 | 33 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 74 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 70 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 56 | 37 | 5 | 0 | 2 |

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

41. There are currently twelve children in the reception class aged between four and five years. All entered school in September 2001, but a few of them attended part time during the autumn term. Most of the children enter the reception class with the expected levels of attainment for their age. However, a few are beyond this level particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills. The good provision seen at the last inspection has been maintained because the two teachers liaise closely to plan the work and have ensured that recent curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage is being fully implemented. In planning their activities, they are careful to take account of the needs of the youngest as well as of the oldest children. They plan a good range of interesting, first hand experiences that provide the children with increasingly demanding tasks as their confidence develops. Taken overall, the teaching in the Foundation Stage is good.

Personal, social and emotional development

42. From the earliest stage, the school places social development high on its list of priorities. The children's records show that they settled quickly and confidently into school. They understand most of the basic requirements, such as how to sit still and listen, and have developed considerable confidence to speak in front of the class. A few are still struggling with the temptation to call out remarks and responses and have to be reminded by the adults that they need to put up their hands and await their turn. They understand the importance of sharing, for example, when they use the role play areas or look at books.
43. The vast majority of the children move confidently from one area to another, even during the afternoons when they join the Key Stage 1 class. This is because the adults are vigilant and ensure that the children know what they are meant to be doing. However, opportunities for exercising much independence in their choice of activities are constrained by the inadequate, cramped accommodation in which the children spend a considerable part of the day.
44. The older children in the reception class are helpful towards the younger ones, for instance, by ensuring that they can put on their aprons and that they clear away equipment. On a number of occasions, children were heard to thank each other either for help received or for handing over equipment. All the children are well on course to achieve the learning goals identified for this stage. A good proportion of the children will exceed them and develop a wider sense of what it means to be part of a school community.

Communication, language and literacy

45. A significant number of the children begin school with a well developed vocabulary and the ability to articulate their thinking clearly and logically. Their speaking skills continue to develop well because the adults are careful to provide many opportunities for them to talk. A good example was seen when an adult engaged in bakery role-play and joined in the dialogue with the shoppers. On another occasion, the teacher worked with individual four-year-olds to investigate the permeability of a range of fabrics.
46. The children clearly enjoy listening to stories and enthusiastically sing out repetitive sentences. This was seen, for example, during a story about a 'ridiculous' tortoise that insisted upon

coming out of hibernation on a snowy winter's day. The teacher's expressive reading provided a good role model for the children and allowed them to enter fully into the spirit of the story. Some of the older children have now developed sufficient self-confidence to make spontaneous remarks about stories they hear and to ask questions about the text. The adults also use the reading sessions to begin to develop the children's awareness of the sounds made by various printed letters.

47. There is good provision for developing the children's early writing skills. Many items in the classroom are labelled and role-play often includes opportunities to make lists and to record messages. A few children can now write their names while others are making marks on paper where the shapes are beginning to resemble letters in their name. Some still need more opportunities to use a range of equipment in order to develop the flow necessary to write legible letter shapes. This would be easier to provide if the 'writing' activity, for example, could continue easily outside so that the children could trace large letters in sand and use large pieces of paper to paint basic letters. All the children are well on course to achieve the early learning goals and a few will exceed them, especially in their speaking and reading skills.

Mathematical development

48. The children are making good progress in developing a range of mathematical skills and understanding. This is because mathematical activities are not only provided in their own right, but are also woven into other experiences. For example, the youngest children were able to count accurately the pots of water that were laid out for a science activity. Some of the older children successfully counted a considerable pile of 'blankets' which were used as a prop in the story of 'The Princess and the Pea'. They are making good progress in recognising various shapes because the language of shape, such as cuboid and pyramid, is an integral part of the use of construction material for model making. There is photographic evidence of children sorting items into variously numbered trays to match the written numerals either from 1 to 10 or from 1 to 20. When the weather permits, the outdoor area is well used for these activities.
49. Although the children are currently at different stages of their mathematical development, all are making good progress towards achieving the targets identified for them. A few will do so well before they transfer to the Key Stage 1 class.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

50. The provision for this aspect of the children's learning is good. They develop an awareness of their environment and are observant about what happens around them. When they joined with the Key Stage 1 class, several of the children were able to comment on pictures of landscapes in winter and relate them to views from the classroom windows. They know that there are people such as postmen and policemen who provide essential services to their community. They have noticed the special features of their immediate locality. Having observed a local farm, they returned to school and produced a large and detailed collage of a farm scene. The many construction activities in which they engage provide good opportunities for handling a variety of materials and using different methods of joining them. These activities enhance the children's social development and foster the skills of negotiation and collaboration, especially when the children are active in the outdoor area. Following a recent visit to a bakery, the children made models of breads and cakes from salt dough and designed money with which to shop. All the children were fascinated by the fact that the baker got up at 4 a.m. to produce his cakes and bread. They use the computer for various activities, including drawing. They

are all able to perform simple functions using the keyboard and the mouse. The children are also learning how to be sensitive and responsive to the feeling of people around them during lessons in religious education. They enjoy the variety of work they undertake to further this aspect of their learning. They are well on course to achieving the goals identified for them.

Physical development

51. The majority of the children are progressing well towards the expected targets. They move around the classroom quite confidently and with proper regard for safety within such a confined area. Some of the older children are developing good manual control; this was evident as they set up and handled a variety of goods in the baker's shop. They hold and use pencils and brushes with a satisfactory degree of control although a few of the younger children would benefit from being able to paint large pictures individually. Photographic evidence shows that by the end of the reception class, most have increasing control of their clothes and fastenings because of their many opportunities for dressing up. A number of children chose to wear saris for their visit to the shop. With their shopping baskets and their 'pretend' money to pay for their goods, they benefited considerably from this role play opportunity.
52. The designated play area for the reception children is not entirely adequate. It is well used for sand and water play and for constructing boats, trains and aeroplanes from crates, though these activities are dependent upon the weather. However, it does not contain sufficient, suitable climbing, tunnelling and balancing equipment to develop the co-ordination of the youngest children. Furthermore, there are no wheeled vehicles for them to steer and drive around, either individually or in tandem. Nevertheless, the children show a good awareness of space and regard for safety in the main playground. Through activities in the hall, most children learn to slither, roll, crawl, skip, slide and jump to the standard expected at this stage. They are on course to achieve the early learning goals.

Creative development

53. The planning for this aspect of the children's learning is very imaginative. The use of puppets, dolls and other materials to accompany story-telling sessions encourages the children to respond imaginatively. For instance, the story of 'The Princess and the Pea' inspired a wide range of activities, not least of which was the construction of a castle for the princess, complete with a bed stacked with quilts. A group of children then went on to set up a table for a wedding feast. The older children are already able to link imaginative ideas to marks they make on paper. They talk convincingly about the 'letters' they are writing and the various lists they are making, for example, in preparation for making cakes. Much of the art work is very creative. A large collage based on the story of 'Borka' has many interesting details created from twigs, grasses and feathers. The children are acquiring an appreciation of how different media can be effectively combined that is well above average.
54. The planning of work and record keeping in the Foundation Stage is very detailed. This ensures that activities are well matched to the children's needs at any given stage. The teachers assess the children's progress regularly and in detail. They are now poised to ensure that the records will provide information about the children's progress that is more closely linked to the different stages of achievement of the early learning goals.

ENGLISH

55. Standards in English are well above average by the end of Year 6 and much higher than those reported at the last inspection, particularly in writing. In year 2, most of the pupils are on course to attain the expected level.
56. The teachers have very high expectations, consequently their pupils achieve very well. The lessons are very well planned and the work is appropriately challenging, notably so in Key Stage 2. The objectives outlined in the national literacy strategy provide a very sound foundation for all aspects of the teaching of English. However, it is the teachers' own expertise in the development of children's language that lies at the heart of the school's success. Throughout the school, the pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of good support and very perceptive assessments of their needs.
57. The pupils' speaking skills are generally just above average when they enter school. However, their vocabulary is skilfully developed so that many rapidly become fluent and articulate speakers. The younger pupils, for example, confidently refer to fiction, non-fiction, author and illustrator when talking about books. Their listening skills are very well developed so that they quickly pick up the technical language that the teachers unhesitatingly use. Older pupils confidently refer to features of text such as alliteration, simile, metaphor, and onomatopoeia. When discussing the qualities of 'Spaghetti Pigout,' the pupils spontaneously mentioned caricature and slapstick comedy.
58. Reading is given a high priority. The teachers use a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts not only to develop the pupils' reading skills but also to improve the quality of their writing. There is a very clear link between the types of books made available for reading and the styles of writing introduced to the pupils. For example, the older pupils have studied and used archive material from the Victorian period as a basis for writing some very effective letters in the manner of a lady taking a cure at Malvern. The teachers provide good role models for reading. In a Key Stage 1 class, poems about weather were expressively read and resulted in the pupils' quickly spotting phrases that reflected the mood, such as 'dustbins clatter' and 'leaves flutter'. Many read expressively and fluently. Occasionally, however, the texts being read by some of the more advanced readers do not fully match their ability. Some children have struggled with their reading but are making good progress because of the regular and thorough teaching of phonics and the high level of involvement of their parents in hearing them read.
59. By the time they leave the school, the pupils' writing is of very high quality. It is expressive, well structured and interesting to the reader. One pupil, describing a character wrote, '...that George is full of bad manners. His mother and father took a wrong turn in his upbringing. Too soft.' The approach to writing is rigorous and ensures that the pupils plan, draft and then critically edit their work. They are familiar with many different styles of writing. For example, they can write factually when recording the lives of Victorian children, but they are equally successful when writing poetry. A multi media display on the theme of water contained a well crafted and reflective poem entitled 'A tornado of blue bubbles'. The first verse ran...
- 'A spiral of blue fog
Steady and peaceful
Like stalactites making their journey
From the misty blue sky.'

60. The younger pupils are developing a sound grasp of the basics of writing such as the use of capital letters and full stops and how to form basic letter shapes. They now need more opportunities to write at greater length and to begin to use a joined hand more consistently.
61. The pace of learning accelerates in Key Stage 2 because the teaching is consistently very good and often excellent. The objectives for all the lessons are very clear and include appropriately challenging activities for all groups of pupils. The resources, especially those for developing writing, are used very effectively. For example, they take account of the fact that the oldest class of pupils is predominantly one of boys. They are, nevertheless, enthusiastic and mature writers, who approach their learning with a high degree of pride. However, this is reflected more in the content of their work than in their presentation! The pupils in Key Stage 1 respond well to the help given by the teacher and the teaching assistant, but more should be expected of the higher attaining pupils when the temporary teacher becomes more familiar with their abilities. The assessment of the work in Key Stage 1 is regular and helpful. This is why, for example, spelling weaknesses are spotted early and remedied.
62. Overall, the pupils' relationships and behaviour are very good and provide a positive climate for learning. At times, however, the pupils in years 1 and 2 do not settle quickly to work and as a result they are not always being as clear as they should be about what they are expected to learn.
63. The available resources are of good quality and are used very skilfully. This includes the computers to which all the pupils use to retrieve information and to record their work. At times, the pupils also enjoy and benefit from listening to stories recorded on tape.

MATHEMATICS

64. Standards in mathematics are higher than those reported at the last inspection. They are now well above average by the end of year 6, and most of the younger pupils are on course to achieve the expected level by the end of year 2.
65. The teaching of mathematics is very good. It is well organised and effective. The school makes very good use of specialist teaching for the oldest pupils. In some of the lessons, the teachers work very effectively in pairs so that the most able pupils can be stretched and the least able given extra support. In other lessons, for example in years 3 and 4, the teaching assistant works alongside the teacher to provide valuable support to all groups of pupils. The teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly in order to develop numeracy skills in a manner that builds through challenging tasks and at a good pace on the pupils' existing knowledge and competencies.
66. In Key Stage 1, the pupils are provided with a range of practical experiences that allow them, for example, to compare the weights of various objects. Through these activities and more formal tasks the pupils are developing a good mathematical vocabulary. They use appropriate symbols and most of the pupils have a secure knowledge of place value to 100. The most able use a range of methods and are beginning to apply them to find solutions to simple written problems. Scrutiny of the assessment books shows that over the course of Key Stage 1 the pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills have advanced at a good rate.
67. In Key Stage 2, the pupils make very good progress in their knowledge and skills. Children of all abilities develop a good understanding of the four rules of number and can calculate very competently. They are able to order fractions, decimals and percentages and recognise

equivalent values, and by the end of year 6, most are handling challenging problems with confidence. In Year 3 the pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of symmetry and most can identify the lines of symmetry in different shapes. In year 4 the pupils are able to recognise the relationship between faces, edges and vertices of pyramids and prisms. In Year 6 some of the most able pupils use a spreadsheet to convert the cost of items in sterling into other currencies.

68. The mathematics curriculum is very well managed. It reflects the demands of national numeracy strategy, and is extended by developments such as the local mathematics trail that the school devised with the help of members of the community. This gives the pupils opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and skills in interesting and different contexts to solve a variety of problems.
69. The school has a good range of resources to support the teaching of mathematics and makes particularly good use of information technology to provide the pupils with interesting tasks.

SCIENCE

70. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection and are well above average by the end of year 6. The pupils experience an increasing range of challenging activities and tasks as they move through the school.
71. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils use appropriate scientific vocabulary, for example, when drawing and labelling simple electrical circuits. They recognise the important features of plants and animals and can describe the conditions for growth and the stages of human life. They are making steady progress through interesting tasks and investigations because the teaching is good. During the inspection, the teacher challenged the pupils to find the best place for a dormouse to keep warm during hibernation. She had prepared small plastic containers full of warm water and discussed with the pupils the notion of insulation. The children enthusiastically used leaves, twigs, plant pots and pipes to create hibernation sites within the school grounds. When the containers were brought back to the classroom, the pupils recorded the temperatures and the teacher then required them to explain why there was such variation in the results.
72. Scrutiny of the pupils' work in Key Stage 2 shows that there is a heavy emphasis on experimental science. For example, in Years 3 and 4 the pupils investigate how sound is generated and to what extent it travels through liquids, solids and gases. In addition they research information about the planets in order to extend the knowledge they gained in previous years. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils present the outcomes of their investigations in considerable detail, making predictions, recording their observations and drawing conclusions. This was evident, for instance, in their investigations into solutions. The content of their work is often of a high standard, but it is not always matched by their presentation.
73. In a science lesson in years 5 and 6, when the pupils were investigating the components of soil, the teaching was excellent. The teacher aroused the pupils' interest and maintained a high level of challenge throughout a very well prepared and skilfully managed lesson, in which the pupils' knowledge and skills were significantly extended. The pupils were alert, curious and focussed on the task. They demonstrated their keen observations, the importance of fair testing and their ability to pose interesting and searching questions. Moreover, they showed a real enjoyment of learning.

74. The science curriculum is very well managed. A rolling programme of topics and themes is developed in a detailed scheme of work that ensures the school meets the requirements of the national curriculum and provides the pupils with a broad and interesting science curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

75. The pupils' work on display around the school is of very high quality and reflects the teachers' efforts in developing their aesthetic awareness. A portfolio of photographs of work in art collected over a number of years provides evidence that there is a long tradition of very high standards in this subject that have been maintained since the last inspection. Wherever possible, the school enhances its provision by calling upon working artists and craftspeople so that the pupils gain a very good appreciation of the whole artistic design process. This was evident in a quilted panel that the pupils had made, and also in the willow structures that resulted from the environmental sculpture project.
76. By the age of seven, the quality of the pupils' work is a little above average. This is especially the case in relation to painting because the pupils have been trained to observe the effects produced by various tones and colours, for example, when painting landscapes. They have also used a wide range of materials and different paint effects to make a collage of an autumn scene. The very stark, but effective, depictions of bare trees in winter provide evidence of their well-developed observation skills.
77. The art curriculum in Key Stage 2 is outstandingly rich. The work on display and in the school portfolios encompasses work in many different media and demonstrates that the pupils acquire a very broad range of techniques and skills. They have ample opportunities to encounter art from different countries and from different periods. An excellent example was seen in the oldest class where the pupils had studied fabric-printing techniques from Nigeria. They were then recreating the whole process by sketching the various pattern blocks, arranging them aesthetically and transferring their designs, using resist techniques, to large panels of fabric. The activity was not only challenging the pupils' artistic skills and enabling them to acquire a design vocabulary, but also promoting their multicultural awareness.
78. The school has devised an excellent scheme of work to guide the teaching. It ensures that the pupils apply and extend their skills year by year. This is very evident in the landscape painting and portrait work done at different times during their school life. The pupils' behaviour is irreproachable during these lessons because the work is challenging and the activities are very well organised, managed and resourced. The oldest pupils were totally engrossed during a lengthy art lesson where they responded with great interest to the advice provided by the teacher and a very knowledgeable and talented parent helper.
79. The pupils' appreciation of art is enhanced by the fact that their own work is often displayed alongside that of the professional artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. No lessons in this subject were taught during the course of the inspection. However, the pupils' finished products, their designs and evaluations and photographic records indicate that standards are above average and higher than at the last inspection.
81. In Key Stage 1, the pupils use simple drawings to plan their work, and they investigate ways of fastening and joining materials. In Key Stage 2, the pupils have many opportunities to design

and make artefacts that are sometimes linked to work in other subjects. For example, they used rigid materials to make mangonels (military devices for throwing stones and other missiles) and Tudor framed houses as part of their studies in history lessons. The pupils use a good range of materials, their designs become more detailed and they begin to carry out evaluations of their finished products. Good examples of these evaluations were seen in Years 3 and 4 where pupils had designed and made games. The oldest pupils have recently completed models of fairground rides incorporating motors that are controlled by a computer.

82. The design and technology curriculum is well planned through programmes of topics and themes. A scheme of work sets out in detail the knowledge and skills the pupils will be taught as they move through the school.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

83. Standards and geography and history are above expectations for pupils of seven and eleven years. This represents a consistently better picture than that reported at the last inspection. The time made available for both subjects is carefully calculated so that the coverage of the programmes of study is well balanced. No teaching was seen in history, but the wealth of evidence of past work confirms that standards are high. The pupils' attainment during the geography lessons seen in Key Stage 2 was also high and there were some very strong features. This was evident as the oldest pupils carried out a fieldwork activity and demonstrated their skills in asking relevant geographical questions about issues such as erosion, water flow and other landscape features.
84. The younger pupils have a sound knowledge of local features such as the prominent buildings, farms and leisure amenities. They also recognise different features of weather that they have further explored in their art lessons to produce seasonal landscape paintings. They are aware that the differences between older and more modern buildings in their area reflect the passage of time. The older pupils have built upon their experiences of collecting evidence from Victorian artefacts by considering a range of artefacts that provide clues about the lifestyle in rural Kenya. Over time, they have studied a wide range of historical topics covering not only the history of this country, but also that of the ancient civilisations of Egypt and Greece.
85. The teaching is very successful because the lessons are well prepared and the teachers have good subject knowledge. The experiences of the pupils have been greatly enhanced by visits around the local area as well as further afield to Conwy, to the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford and to Blists Hill. This 'first hand' experience has raised the pupils' interest level and generally enlivened the learning of geography and history. The pupils' skills in dealing with related issues have been considerably enhanced by the quality of discussion in these lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

86. By the end of year 6, the standards of the pupils' work in this subject are well above average. The pupils make increasing use of information and communication technology as they move through the school. By the time they are in years 5 and 6, they employ it competently and confidently in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. The above average standards at the time of the last inspection have been built on successfully.
87. In Key Stage 1, the pupils use software to enhance their learning in, for example, mathematics. Their skills are developed through interesting tasks that require them to communicate through both text and images. In their finished work, there are examples of simple weather maps and designs for a hat and scarf that have been created by moving icons around the screen and simple drawing programs. In Key Stage 2, the use of information technology broadens considerably and enables the pupils to communicate their ideas through poetry, for example. They create effective titles using different colours and fonts, and illustrate their work with pictures which they merge with the text to produce a very pleasing effect that makes an impact on the reader. These skills are extended through activities that require the pupils to create the front page of a newspaper that they enhance with images taken with a digital camera. The pupils also have good skills in data handling that are very well illustrated by their work on a pirate database. They also use data from science experiments relating to temperature change, for example, to create graphs that help them to evaluate their findings and draw conclusions. Some of the oldest pupils have successfully used

computers to control models of fairground rides they have made in design and technology lessons.

88. Standards are well above average because the teachers are aware of the value of information technology and use it very effectively in their teaching. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for instance, the pupils were challenged to use a spreadsheet to work out in different currencies the cost of items that they might have bought on a foreign holiday. In Year 3 and 4 the pupils were set the task of writing simple LOGO procedures to draw letters of the alphabet. The pupils are learning very effectively from these activities because the teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, are confident in their own use of the software and support the pupils very well. The teaching is very good.
89. The curriculum is well planned and the use of information technology is very well promoted by the co-ordinator. The standing of information and communication technology has been further enhanced by the creation of a website, made possible by the school's recent award of beacon status. All of the classes have added web pages which feature a wide range of work they have completed using information and communication technology.

MUSIC

90. At the time of the last inspection, standards in music were judged to be above expectations for seven and eleven year olds. No class music lessons were seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about standards at present. However, video evidence, instrumental playing, singing during school assemblies and the scheme of work provide evidence of a very well balanced curriculum and expectations of high standards.
91. At all levels, the pupils control their voices well. They sing in tune and can vary the pitch and dynamics of their voices. Older pupils know by heart many of the hymns used assembly and participate in the singing enthusiastically. Work of very high quality was seen when a specialist musician took all the classes to produce a Christmas rap musical. The pupil spoke and sang very well and responded with obvious enjoyment to the modern mood of the production. The boys, in particular, were enthusiastic participants in all aspects of the performance.
92. The assemblies are well used to provide performance opportunities for the instrumental players. A beginner group of Year 3 and 4 recorder players is making good progress in producing notes accurately and controlling their breathing. The teaching plans record the fact that the children frequently listen to music of various types and from many cultures. In lessons in art, for example, some pupils heard music from 'Pictures at an Exhibition' by the Russian composer, Mussorgsky, and older pupils have listened to pieces from the Tudor and Victorian periods. There are frequent opportunities for composition work such as that linked to the Victorian project where the pupils produced songs in the style of the period. The activities are always appropriately adapted for the different ages and capabilities of the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

93. Only one lesson was taught in this subject during the course of the inspection. In this lesson, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 displayed good movement both on the floor and when using the apparatus. They worked together very well refining their initial efforts and creating interesting sequences that incorporated both symmetrical and asymmetrical balances. The lesson was well planned and the teacher had high expectations. She praised the pupils and encouraged

them to demonstrate and evaluate their own performances and that of others. The pupils made good progress in the lesson because the teaching was good.

94. The school provides the pupils with a broad range of opportunities, including extra curricular activities such as the netball and football clubs. Local organisations like the Worcestershire County Cricket Club and Malvern Rugby Club also run coaching sessions for the pupils.
95. During residential visits, the older pupils have opportunities to pursue outdoor and adventurous activities, such as, climbing, canoeing and dry slope skiing.
96. The activities planned within the scheme of work ensure that pupils have a broad and interesting physical education curriculum covering all of the national curriculum requirements.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

97. The standards achieved in religious education are now better than those seen at the last inspection. It was not possible to observe lessons in Key Stage 1, but from the teachers' planning and the pupils' recorded work it is clear that the locally agreed syllabus is being very closely followed. In Key Stage 2, one lesson was seen and a good volume of the pupils' previously completed work was examined.
98. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are familiar with a range of stories from the Bible and are aware of the major festivals in the Christian calendar. During an assembly on the story of Moses' early years, it was clear that many of the children already knew about the unusual circumstances of his babyhood. The older pupils are acquiring a good understanding of what it means to be an adherent of a particular religion. They are aware of Terry Waite's ordeal in the Lebanon and of others who have suffered for their faith. They recognise that places of worship have different features. The good link with the local church has promoted an understanding of the significance of items such as the cross, the altar, the font and the overall shape of the building. The programme of work is rich in opportunities for the pupils to appreciate the characteristics of different world faiths as well as Christianity.
99. The current study of Islam has shown the pupils that, just as the Bible is special to Christians, the Qu'ran is hugely important to Muslims and therefore has to be treated with great respect. The older pupils were very interested when the teacher brought down the holy book from the highest place in the classroom and the whole class role played the essential hand washing ceremony prior to handling it. These pupils also recognise similarities between the practices of different faiths, for example, the Hindu naming ceremony and Christian baptism.
100. The pupils' interest level is high because the teaching is lively and varied. With the younger children, stories are often used to good effect and very good use is made of discussion and role-play. The school has access to a very interesting range of artefacts that are skilfully and sensitively used to bring the subject alive. The teaching and learning in religious education is very effective in promoting the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.