

INSPECTION REPORT

BIERTON CE COMBINED SCHOOL

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110417

Headteacher: Mrs Irene Corns

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims
28899

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th November 2001

Inspection number: 196727

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Gibson
Date of previous inspection:	28 th April 1997

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09086	Mrs R Watkins	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
22856	Mrs K Campbell	Team inspector	English Art and design Music English as an additional language	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils Equal opportunities
27369	Mrs C Powell	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage	
20745	Mr D Williams	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education	Special educational needs The specialist Language Department

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Berton, close to the town of Aylesbury. It is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school, with 236 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11. It is similar in size to most primary schools. It is a popular school, which attracts a quarter of its pupils from outside the designated catchment area. The socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils are generally above average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and none have English as an additional language. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Around 18 per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. All of these figures are below the national averages. Twelve pupils are at Stage 3, most for a variety of learning difficulties and a few for emotional and behavioural difficulties. Ten pupils have statements of special educational needs, relating to a range of speech and language impairments. This is a much higher proportion than in most schools, but all of these pupils attend the authority's specialist Language Department, which is located in the school. Children start school at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday, and most of them have attended privately run playgroups or nurseries before they join the school. The attainment of children when they start school is generally above average. Since the last inspection, two new classrooms, an administration block, and an extension for the Reception class have been built. The local authority has changed the age of transfer to secondary school so that the school no longer has pupils in Year 7. The number admitted into each year group is increasing and, although most pupils are taught in single-age classes, there is now one mixed-age class for the oldest pupils in Year 1 and the youngest in Year 2.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Berton CE Combined School is a good school. It has improved since the last inspection and offers its pupils a good standard of education. Good quality teaching helps pupils to learn well and, by the time they leave school, pupils achieve above average standards in English and mathematics, and well above average in science. The headteacher provides the school with very good leadership, which has led to many improvements over the last few years. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science by the end of Year 6.
- The school caters very well for pupils with special educational needs. The provision within the Language Department for pupils with speech and language impairments is particularly good.
- A dedicated and enthusiastic team of teachers provides good quality teaching, which enables pupils to learn well.
- The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' work and keeping track of their progress.
- Staff provide a caring environment, paying good attention to the health, safety and well-being of the pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership, monitors all aspects of the school carefully and ensures that action is taken to remedy any weaknesses.

What could be improved

- The way the school helps pupils to become independent learners and take responsibility for their own actions.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage¹.
- The wider use of information and communication technology.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection in April 1997. The school responded well to its previous key issues and has worked hard to improve the quality of education, which it provides for its pupils. Subjects are now allocated an appropriate amount of time and good resources for learning. The headteacher has implemented regular monitoring of lessons, and feedback from these observations has been used to improve the quality of the teaching and raise teachers' expectations. Curriculum coordinators now fulfil their roles well, and the literacy and numeracy coordinators have been particularly effective in overseeing and supporting the introduction of new teaching methods. The school recognises the important role which coordinators have to play by allocating time for them to fulfil their responsibilities. Staff who are new to the school receive very good support, and close attention is paid to the professional development of all staff. Procedures for assessment have improved significantly. The school now complies with statutory requirements for recording and reporting absences. Other aspects of the school have also

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

improved. Resources for information and communication technology and the standards achieved by pupils in this subject are much better than they were, although staff could still make better use of computers as tools for learning in other subjects. The quality of the teaching is much better than it was. Overall, standards have improved at Key Stages 1 and 2 at a much faster rate than the national trend.

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			similar schools ²	Key	
	all schools					
	1999	2000	2001	2001	Very high	A*
English	B	A	B	C	Well above average	A
					Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
Mathematics	D	C	B	C	Well below average	E
					Very low	E*
Science	B	B	A	B		

The school's results at Key Stages 1 and 2 have improved significantly over the last four years and at a faster rate than the national trend. At Key Stage 1³, results in reading and mathematics were above the national average in 2001, and in writing they were well above the national average. The biggest improvement has been in writing. When compared to schools in similar contexts, the results were average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. The overall results at Key Stage 2⁴ were above the national average, and average when compared to similar schools. Pupils in this year group made good progress in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics, and very good progress in science, improving considerably on their results in Key Stage 1. Standards in science have risen more than in other subjects. The improvement in English has not been as marked. The school monitors pupils' progress very carefully and, as a result, sets itself appropriate targets. The school exceeded its targets in 2001.

Most children enter the school with above average levels of attainment and, by the time they start Year 1, they not only meet the expected goals in all areas of learning, but display above average ability in communication, language and literacy and their mathematical development. Although satisfactory, progress in the Reception year is not as good as in other parts of the school, because the curriculum offered to the youngest children is too formal. The inspection findings show that standards at the end of both key stages are above average in English, mathematics, art and design, and design and technology, and they are well above average in science. In all other subjects, standards are satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Overall, progress through Key Stage 2 is good, even though it varies from class to class. By the time they leave the school, pupils are numerate and literate and also display an increasing range of skills in information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress relative to their prior attainment as a result of the additional help they are given by teachers and assistants. Their progress in English is very good. Pupils who are supported by the Language Department make very good progress in dealing with their particular difficulties and in learning to become integrated members of the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and show enthusiasm for much of their work. The younger pupils show particularly positive attitudes. Older pupils display enthusiasm in many of their lessons, but some show an immature response in others. The school is a calm and orderly community with promotes learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. Standards of behaviour are generally good and are frequently very good, particularly in the lower part of the school. All pupils are well aware of the standards expected of them, but the behaviour of some older pupils is inappropriate at times and affects the learning of others.

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

³ Key Stage 1 caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

⁴ Key Stage 2 caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. Relationships are good, even though there is occasional immaturity when pupils work in groups. Most pupils show a good sense of responsibility when they undertake small routine duties or act as representatives on the school council. Some older pupils find it hard to work independently.
Attendance	Good. The level of attendance is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of the teaching is good. As a result, pupils generally learn well throughout the school. Not only does the school monitor teaching regularly but, this term, additional teachers have been employed to provide further training and models of good practice for other staff, and this is helping to make further improvements to the teaching. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and two out three lessons were good or better; this indicates the improvement there has been in the quality of the teaching since the last inspection. The formality of the school's curriculum for its youngest pupils means the teaching in the Reception is not always as effective as it could be. The school has identified the need to modify its curriculum for the Foundation Stage and, with the good qualities shown by the new Reception class teacher, is well placed to make improvements. The teaching is strongest in Years 2 and 3, but there are instances of very good teaching throughout the school. The teaching for the older pupils is generally good, and at times very good, and pupils learn well. In a few lessons, some of the pupils' immature responses and inappropriate behaviour affect their learning, and some teachers do not manage these situations as effectively as they should. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and the work undertaken in the Language Department for pupils with statements of special educational needs is having a very positive impact on their learning and helping them to become well-integrated members of the school community. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are also promoted effectively through work undertaken in other subjects. The school has been particularly successfully in improving the quality of pupils' writing at Key Stage 1, where the teaching of English is very good, but these improvements have yet to work their way through into Key Stage 2 to the same degree. The teaching of art and design is very good at Key Stage 2 and helps pupils to achieve good standards. The teaching of information technology skills has improved and pupils acquire good skills in using computers, but teachers do not yet make enough use of technology within the teaching of other subjects. The school works hard to meet the needs of all pupils. Improved procedures for assessment and setting individual targets for pupils help them to be aware of what they need to do next to improve. Classroom assistants fulfil their roles very well and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is too formal. Elsewhere, the curriculum is well balanced, very relevant to the needs of all pupils and provides good opportunity for pupils to acquire breadth and depth of knowledge. The school provides good opportunities in creative subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Work is matched to pupils' needs in class, and specific additional support is given to individual pupils. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs within the Language Department is of particularly high quality, and is helping these pupils to become fully integrated members of the school community.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for most aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Teachers provide good role models and promote a clear sense of right and wrong. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. More could be done to help pupils to become self-motivated, independent learners and to foster a personal sense of responsibility and self-discipline amongst some older pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school, which has good standards of pastoral care. Staff know their pupils well and manage all matters to do with pupils' health, welfare and safety competently. Procedures for assessment are very good and have improved significantly since the last inspection.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school keeps parents well informed about what is happening in school and the progress their children are making. Parents are generally very supportive of

	the school and appreciate its many good features. A large number of enthusiastic parent helpers regularly contribute to pupils' progress through helping in lessons and by listening to pupils read.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership, which is helping the school to improve. She receives very good support from the deputy headteacher. Subject coordinators generally fulfil their roles well and provide much better leadership than before. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those in the Language Department is managed very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors make a good contribution to the work of the school and fulfil their statutory duties well. They are involved with development planning and keep careful watch over the school's finances.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures for monitoring what happens in school are very good and help staff to identify areas of weakness and plan for improvement. The school's development plan identifies appropriate priorities for future development, and the staff show good commitment to making the school even better.
The strategic use of resources	Although more use could be made of computers within the classrooms, the school uses all of its other resources, specific grants and annual funding very well. The school pays good attention to the principles of best value, in comparing its performance to that of other schools and ensuring good value for money in its spending.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has a good number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. This term, two teachers without class responsibilities are having a good impact on improving the quality of teaching. The school's accommodation is adequate. The level of resources has improved and is now good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school and are making good progress. • The quality of the teaching is good, and the school is led and managed well. • They feel comfortable approaching staff, who are generally responsive to their views and concerns. • Parents with children in the Language Department are very pleased with the care and attention given to their children's needs. • Most parents feel that standards of behaviour are good. The school promotes the right attitudes and values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A third of the parents do not feel sufficiently well informed about their children's progress, and a quarter feel the school could work more closely with parents. • A quarter would like to see a greater range of additional activities. • A few parents express concern that there is some unruly behaviour.
[The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 21 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 85 parents (36%) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom also added their own written comments]	

Inspectors agree with most of the positive points mentioned by parents. Pupils generally have positive attitudes towards the school, where the quality of the teaching is good, and staff work hard to provide a caring environment and to respond to pupils' needs. Inspectors do not concur with some of the parents' concerns. The school provides parents with a good range of information about their children's progress. Annual reports are clear and helpful, and give indication of the steps needed for further progress. Staff are always available, within reason, to meet parents informally, in addition to the formal parents' meetings which are well attended. The school provides a good range of additional activities. Inspectors agree that there is validity in the seemingly conflicting views of parents on pupils' behaviour. For much of the time, behaviour is good, but there is some inappropriate behaviour, particularly in the upper part of the school. Parents' views on the work their children are expected to do at home differ widely. Although some parents feel that more productive homework could be set, and greater attention given to it when it has been finished, on balance, most parents are satisfied with the school's approach and the inspection findings concur with this view.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards at Bierton are improving. They are higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection, and pupils are achieving well. Over the last few years, the school has had a good awareness of the areas which need to be tackled and has worked hard, through its programme of monitoring and in-service training, to raise standards. With the very effective leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of the teachers to the principle of continual improvement, the school is well placed to continue raising standards.
2. In the National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1 for the year 2001, the school's results were well above the national average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared to the results of schools in similar contexts, they were average in reading, well above average in writing, but below average in mathematics. Nine out of ten pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 2 in all three areas. One in three pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics, and almost half of the pupils achieved Level 3 in writing, a higher percentage than in most other schools in the country. Standards in all three aspects are higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection. Although there has been some fluctuation in the school's results over the last four years, standards in reading have risen at a similar rate to the national trend. In mathematics and writing, the improvement has been greater than in most schools. The greatest improvement has been in writing, and this has come about because of the way staff have sought to develop this aspect of pupils' work after it had been highlighted as a priority in the school's development plan. There was a big improvement in mathematics following the implementation of the National Numeracy Project, but results have stayed at more or less the same level for the last two years.
3. At Key Stage 2, the National Curriculum assessment test results in 2001 were above the national average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. When compared to schools in similar contexts, the results were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. When compared to the results of schools whose pupils had achieved similar levels at Key Stage 1, the school's results were above average, indicating that pupils had made good progress through Key Stage 2 in all three subjects. Nine out of ten pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4 in English, and eight out of ten in mathematics. All pupils achieved the national expectation in science. Just over a quarter of the pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics, and half achieved this level in science. Although they are slightly better now than they were at the time of the last inspection, results in English have not improved as much as in mathematics and science, where the improvement has been greater than in most schools. Improvement has been greatest in science and the standards achieved now are very much better than they were.
4. Although the overall level of attainment of most pupils when they enter the school is above average, the results at Key Stages 1 and 2 indicate a good level of achievement. The 2001 results showed that pupils at Key Stage 2 had made more progress than in most schools. Pupils with statements of special educational needs, who attend the Language Department, take the National Curriculum assessment tests along with their classmates. Although these pupils make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment, their results are generally lower than others and distort the overall performance of the school. Last year, for example, 12 per cent of the pupils at Key Stage 1 either had a statement of special educational need or specific learning difficulties. At Key Stage 2, almost a quarter of the group taking the tests had identified learning difficulties and two pupils had statements of special educational needs. If the results of those with the severest learning difficulties were excluded, the school's results would have been well above the national average in every subject.
5. The school is very aware of the standards it achieves and keeps a careful track of pupils' progress. All staff are involved in setting targets for each pupil, and progress towards these targets is monitored carefully. The overall targets are also related to the performance management of individual members of staff. The headteacher maintains a careful overview of the whole process

and has high expectations with regard to pupils' achievement. As a result, all are aware of how well pupils should be achieving. The school's targets are appropriate, and staff work hard to achieve them. The school exceeded its targets last year. Coordinators analyse the school's results and pupils' performance very carefully, gaining a clear picture of what pupils need to do to improve, and then devise appropriate action to enable the pupils to improve. There are differences in the results achieved by boys and girls, but there is no marked trend of girls performing better than boys. In 1999 for example, the girls' results were significantly better than the boys', but the following year the situation was reversed. The school analyses its results by gender to ensure that all pupils are making appropriate progress.

6. Observations made during the inspection and the school's own assessments of children when they start school show that their attainment spans a wide ability range. Overall, however, it is above average. This does not, however, represent a complete picture, as most year groups contain pupils with statements of special educational needs, who are allocated to the school's Language Department and whose attainment is lower than the rest of the year group. Most children have attended a private nursery or playgroup before they enter the school and, although many children have above average levels of literacy and numeracy skills, their development in other areas is not as good. Assessments show, for example, that the personal, social and emotional development of a sizeable minority of pupils is below average, and probably reflects the more formal nature of the pre-school education which some parents choose. The picture is complicated further, in the fact that the school admits children to the Reception class three times a year, in the term in which they reach their fifth birthday. By the time they start Year 1, some children will have had three terms in the school's Reception class and others only one. Overall, the children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and achieve above average standards in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical and physical development by the time they start Year 1. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, personal, social and emotional development children reach levels which are in line with the standards outlined in the Early Learning Goals⁵, reflecting the lower achievement in these areas when they enter the school. Children do not make as good progress in the Reception as in Key Stage 1 because of the formality of the school's curriculum for its youngest children. The formal environment does not do enough to foster children's ability to work independently, to make reasoned choices, to use their imagination and, hence, to lay important foundations for future learning. The school has recognised the need to reconsider its curriculum for its youngest children, in the light of government's guidance for the Foundation Stage. With the good teaching qualities shown by the school's new Reception class teacher, the school is well placed to bring further improvements in this area.
7. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the inspection findings reflect very closely the school's achievements in the 2001 National Curriculum assessment tests. In English, standards throughout the school are above average. Although some pupils in Year 1 are reticent to speak, pupils make good progress in developing speaking and listening skills throughout the school. Younger pupils enjoy using correct technical vocabulary and, by the time they leave school, older pupils are articulate and well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils make good progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 1, and almost half of the pupils achieve above the expected level. Because of the emphasis given to developing writing over the last two years, standards have improved markedly in this aspect of pupils' work. The pattern of progress in Key Stage 2, whilst satisfactory, is not as consistent as in Key Stage 1. Pupils at the beginning of the key stage make good progress in reading, and most leave the school as competent readers. However, some older pupils do not acquire the more advanced reading skills they need to develop further. Not all pupils, for example, have secure library skills and they do not use the small school library often enough to develop their independent research skills in any structured way. The enjoyment of reading, which is so evident at Key Stage 1, is much less in evidence by Year 6, where some boys express negative attitudes towards reading. In the development of writing, after a good start, pupils' rate of progress slows, and persistent basic punctuation and spelling mistakes hamper progress. Written work produced for other subjects reflects the same weaknesses, and the quality of presentation does not reflect pupils' ability. The

⁵ The Early Learning Goals are a set of standards which it is expected that most children will achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development.

quality of writing improves, however, in Year 6, where most pupils' writing is fluent and well organised. Pupils sustain ideas well, display maturity and capture the interest of their audience. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school as a result of the high quality support they receive.

8. Pupils attain above average standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Inspection findings reflect a more positive picture than the latest National Curriculum results at Key Stage 1. Last year, the only pupils who failed to achieve the national expectation at Key Stage 1 were pupils who had particular learning difficulties or who had a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who achieved a strong performance at Level 2 or Level 3 was well above the national average. The pupils' ability to handle numbers is a strength throughout the school, and has developed well through good mental mathematics sessions at the start of each lesson. As a result, pupils carry out calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division well, with older pupils showing the ability to carry out some quite complex operations in their head. However, pupils have difficulty throughout the school in applying their numeracy skills to practical situations or to problems, which are expressed in words. The school has identified this weakness, and teachers are making a conscious effort to develop this aspect of pupils' work.
9. Standards in science are well above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and have improved markedly since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 1, a high proportion of pupils achieve Level 3, and their understanding of physical processes is very good, reflecting teachers' confidence in teaching this aspect. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a very good range of scientific knowledge because of the broad curriculum and wide range of aspects taught. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and, consequently, also make good progress. Significant progress has been made in developing an investigative approach to science, although this still remains the weakest aspect of pupils' work, partly because some of the older pupils do not always work well independently.
10. There has been significant improvement in the school's provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection. Pupils are making good progress throughout the school and have caught up the ground lost because of the school's previously poor provision. Standards are at the expected level at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and, by the time they leave the school, pupils have an appropriate range of skills and are confident in using essential computer programmes. Pupils do not, however, use information and communication technology widely as a resource for learning in other subjects.
11. Standards in art and design, and design and technology are above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and pupils of all abilities make good progress. Pupils have ample opportunity to develop ideas, investigate and evaluate their own work and that of others. A particular strength is the depth of their knowledge and understanding. Pupils of all ages and abilities are impressively well informed about the work of famous artists, not just those from Western cultures. In design and technology, pupils have a good range of technical knowledge. Standards in this subject have improved significantly since the last inspection.
12. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. In geography, history, music, and physical education, pupils attain the expected level at the end of both key stages. Standards have been maintained at the same level noted in the previous inspection. Overall, pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in these subjects, although pupils in the upper part of the school do not always make as much progress as they could in some lessons because of the immature behaviour of some pupils, which results in too much noise and occasional disturbance. Such occurrences are rarely noted in English and mathematics.
13. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good levels of support and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and good general progress in their work. They achieve standards that reflect their ability. The work of the staff in the Language Department is particularly effective in helping pupils with speech and language impairment to make good, and in many cases very good, progress and in enabling them to integrate well with their classmates and follow a similar curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes to learning and their relationships are good, and this contributes to the way the school is a generally calm and orderly community. Pupils arrive at school keen to work, and their parents confirm that they are happy to come. Despite this, their behaviour and other aspects of their personal development, though good or even very good at times, are no more than satisfactory overall. This is because some older pupils cannot always be relied on to act sensibly when they are given room to take increased responsibility for their own behaviour.
15. Pupils' attitudes are good or better in seven out of ten lessons. When good attitudes prevail, pupils settle down quickly to work, listen attentively, try to answer questions and, on occasion, volunteer their own comments or suggestions. They cope calmly with changes of activity and are amicable and cooperative, both with each other and towards the teacher. Their response tends to be best when teaching is at its best. For instance, in a very good literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils were interested and mature in their contributions to discussion, listened well to what others had to say and showed a good level of independence in their work. The way pupils behave tends to relate to how well taught a particular lesson is, for instance, restlessness may creep in if a teacher allows an explanation to become overlong. However, there are, as well, noticeable variations between older and younger pupils.
16. In the Reception class, children are keen and eager to take part for most of the time, and readily follow routines and join in activities, both as individuals and as a group. For instance, they much enjoyed listening together to a lively reading of a story about Elmer the elephant. They become rather more passive, though still well behaved, when they are expected to attend as a class to extended explanations, as happens in their numeracy and literacy sessions. Generally, they do not have enough opportunities to develop their independence and acquire skills of decision-making and problem-solving. When, occasionally, they are given more independence and asked to organise themselves for a simple activity, they can mostly manage to work sociably with one another, though sometimes not for more than a short time.
17. In classes in Key Stage 1 and carrying over into Year 3, pupils show really high levels of interest and involvement at times. From Year 4 onwards, pupils' enthusiasm is rather less marked, and their behaviour in class, though satisfactory overall, wavers. In a few lessons, it is very good, in many lessons it is good, but in a few lessons, generally those in which pupils are given greater freedom to work on their own or in groups, it is unacceptable. They discuss school with enjoyment and are willing to learn. They know how they should behave but, at times, some pupils display a degree of arrogance and self-centredness, as they fail to conform to the standards, which they know are expected. Quite commonly, a trickle of brief reminders to correct low-level fidgeting or unnecessary chatter is needed even when the lesson presents a suitable level of interest and challenge. Pupils usually respond well when the teacher recalls their attention, but, nevertheless, the atmosphere for learning is diminished. There are instances where, despite the teacher's efforts, noise levels and inattention become far too high. Some pupils enrolled in the Language Department find it particularly hard always to act sensibly in lessons. However, they often manage to behave well because the very good strategies identified to manage and support them are, for the most part, followed effectively.
18. Around the school, pupils' behaviour is usually good. Pupils are generally pleasant and good mannered, though occasionally over-exuberant in the playground.
19. Relationships are good, even though there is occasional silliness when pupils work in groups. The attitudes of others to pupils with special needs are often very good. They show respect for their feelings, for instance, if they have difficulty in reading a text and, on occasion, real care and concern are apparent, as when others helped a pupil to become safely involved in a physical education activity. The few pupils drawn from differing ethnic backgrounds are accepted by others and thoroughly integrated into the community. The good relationships leave little room for bullying or other unfriendly interactions.
20. Pupils show a good sense of responsibility when they undertake small routine duties, such as returning attendance registers to the office. They also make sensible contributions to the organisation of the school community at a deeper level through their representatives on the school

council. For instance, the council was an important influence in the decision to install a bicycle rack for pupils to use.

21. Attendance is good. It is above the national average, and similar to the level at the time of the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is rare. The school does its best to discourage family holidays during term-time, but the number of pupils who miss school for this reason causes teachers some concern because of the interruption to the learning of the pupils concerned.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The overall quality of the teaching is good, as a result of which, pupils make good progress in their learning. Parents feel that their children are being taught well, and the inspection evidence endorses this perception. Two-thirds of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better, and over a quarter were very good or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching is strongest in Years 2 and 3, where thorough planning and rigorous teaching methodology, combined with the enthusiastic participation of the pupils, frequently result in very good progress in pupils' learning. For much of the time, the teaching for the older pupils is good, and pupils learn well. At times, the teaching is very good. In some lessons, however, the pupils' immature responses, unnecessary fidgetiness and lack of cooperation have an adverse effect on their learning, and the teachers do not handle these situations as effectively as they could. The school's curriculum for the youngest children is too formal and, as a result, despite some good skills shown by the school's new teacher for the Reception class, the children do not learn as effectively as in other parts of the school. The school has identified the need to modify the curriculum it provides for these children. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and the work undertaken in the Language Department for pupils with statements of special educational needs is having a very positive impact on their learning and helping them to become well-integrated members of the school community.
23. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection, and a much greater proportion of the teaching is good or better than was the case before. Positive aspects noted in the last inspection have been maintained, and most of the weaknesses have been rectified. Improvements have arisen because of the determined leadership of the headteacher, whose main priority has been to raise teachers' expectations and ensure high-quality teaching throughout the school. Considerable emphasis has been given to monitoring the quality of teaching, and perceptive feedback given to staff has helped to bring improvements. Some very good appointments in recent years have also contributed in no small measure to the overall improvement. The teachers are committed, very hard-working, reflect carefully on the quality of their teaching and are willing to take on board new initiatives. The improved quality of the teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' standards of attainment, as seen in the school's National Curriculum assessment test results, which are improving at a faster rate than in most schools. Another significant factor, which indicates the school's commitment to continual improvement, is the employment, during the current term, of additional teachers to provide further training and models of good practice for other staff. The teachers now have a much more secure knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is much more focused, and all staff are aware of the importance of having clear learning objectives for each lesson. Routines are more efficient, and time is used more effectively than before. Staff are much more aware of the importance of using information gained from assessment in order to plan appropriate teaching for different groups of pupils. The previous inspection report noted that insufficient opportunities were available for pupils to choose their own resources or to develop more advanced reading skills. These weaknesses still remain, and more needs to be done to encourage independent learning habits, particularly amongst the older pupils.
24. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, and the teaching of English in Key Stage 1 is very good. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very effectively, and the teaching methods advocated have had a positive impact on pupils' learning. The structure of lessons and the overall approach help pupils to learn well. The teachers are now very familiar with the National Literacy Strategy, and have a good understanding of how reading and writing activities can be taught most effectively to reinforce each other. Teachers also make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' reading and writing skills in other subjects. When necessary, for example, they pay careful attention to the introduction and explanation of new vocabulary. In some classes, teachers' expectations for the presentation and accuracy of pupils' written work, both in English and in other subjects, are not always high enough. The additional help provided by a

band of voluntary helpers has a positive impact on developing pupils' reading skills, although the timing of some of these sessions is not always ideal. The school has been particularly successfully in improving the quality of pupils' writing at Key Stage 1, but these improvements have yet to work their way through into Key Stage 2 to the same degree. Well-paced mental mathematics sessions at the start of each lesson have helped pupils to improve their ability to carry out calculations quickly and accurately in their head. The school has identified the need to place greater emphasis on helping pupils to apply their numeracy skills to practical and problem-solving contexts, and this aspect of their work is starting to improve. Although pupils' numeracy skills are developed effectively through other subjects, some opportunities are missed to develop their mathematical skills in other contexts. Basic skills in other subjects are generally taught well, such as the range of different techniques taught in art and design, and how to use maps in geography. There has been a significant improvement in the teaching of information technology skills, and most pupils leave the school with the ability and confidence to use a range of computer programs. However, not enough use is made of these skills to support pupils' learning in other subjects. An area for further improvement is the way the school helps pupils to become independent learners. The teachers frequently give too much direction, so that pupils rarely have the opportunity to make their own choices, for example, of resources, working methods, or ways to solve a problem. Opportunities for pupils to plan independently or conduct their own research are rare. As a result, some of the older pupils do not always cope as well as they should in some lessons and display an immaturity in their approach to work which hinders their learning and that of others.

25. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. Better resources, clearer guidance for planning and a range of training opportunities have all led to increased confidence and a marked improvement in pupils' information technology skills. All staff make good use of their sessions timetabled in the school's computer suite, but do not make enough use of the computers within their classrooms. Pupils learn a good range of skills and techniques and produce work of good quality. Apart from music, where the teaching is satisfactory, the teaching of all other subjects is good at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, the teaching of geography, information and communication technology, music and physical education is satisfactory. There is particular expertise in art and design, and the teaching is very good. The teaching in all other subjects is good.
26. The school works hard to meet the needs of all pupils. The system of grouping pupils by ability for English and mathematics in the lower part of the school is generally successful, in that it helps teachers to target their teaching more closely to pupils' needs. Improved procedures for assessment and setting individual targets for pupils help them to be aware of what they need to do next to improve. Classroom assistants fulfil their roles very well and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress, frequently helping the less able pupils to make progress, which they would be unable to make without additional assistance. Planning for the mixed-age classes has been considered carefully to ensure all aspects of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum for each subject are covered in a two-year cycle. The system generally works very effectively, although the inclusion of some units of study in the second year of the cycle for information and communication technology is inappropriate, as pupils have already progressed beyond the objectives taught within these units. Staff are now much more aware of the need to take note of their assessment of pupils' attainment and are successfully planning to meet pupils' needs rather than following a rigid formula. In Year 3, for example, objectives in a mathematics lesson may be taken from the curricular plans for Year 4 for the more able pupils, Year 3 for much of the class and Year 2 for the lower-attaining pupils. This attention to detailed planning ensures that pupils of all abilities have maximum opportunity to learn. The more able pupils, for example, have every opportunity to achieve standards which are above those expected for pupils of their age. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils have appropriate targets within their individual education plans, and teachers are aware of, and teach towards, these targets. The support provided by learning support assistants is crucial in helping these pupils to make progress. The teaching provided by staff within the Language Department is very effective and, as a result of the close, supportive and perceptive individual care and attention provided for these pupils, they make very good progress in their learning and, generally, manage to integrate very well.
27. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but children do not make as much progress in this key stage as in other parts of the school. The full-length literacy and numeracy lessons are frequently too long and too formal for these young children to sustain their concentration. In other activities, the children are not given enough opportunity to make reasoned

choices or to learn how to exercise a degree of independence. Some children enter the Reception class with below average level of maturity in their personal development and need a less formal curriculum, more attuned to the guidance currently provided for teachers in the Foundation Stage. There is insufficient emphasis, for example, on the development of free expression and social interaction through rôle-play and drama or on the development of children's creativity. The new teacher, however, interacts very well with the children and is successful in creating and caring environment in which the children feel secure. There are good qualities to the teaching, which, with further guidance, should enable to the quality of education for the school's youngest children to improve.

28. Up to Year 3, relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. This helps to create a positive learning environment. Pupils are confident about making suggestions and sharing their ideas, and are secure in the knowledge that their views will be valued and respected. Good ongoing dialogue in English and mathematics lessons, good marking of set pieces of work, and target-setting arrangements enable pupils to have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in their learning. Most pupils have good levels of concentration and listen carefully to instructions. They take an active part in lessons and their learning is enhanced by their positive attitudes to school and to work.
29. These positive traits are evident in many lessons in the upper part of the school, but there are also occasions when some pupils lose their concentration far too easily, lapse into noisy chatter and fail to listen to what their teacher says. This has an adverse effect, not only on their own learning, but also on that of others in the class. Some teachers find it hard to deal with these situations when they occur. A few teachers are also inclined to give praise when it is not deserved, thereby giving pupils an inaccurate picture of the standards expected and leading to a complacency from which it is hard to emerge with high standards. Such attitudes are observed more frequently in lessons in which pupils are given greater freedom, such as in practical work or physical education lessons, and more attention needs to be given to helping pupils to develop a greater degree of self-discipline and to become more responsible for their own learning.
30. Although many parents are satisfied with the work, which the school expects their children to complete at home, some parental concern was expressed about the amount of homework, the consistency with which it is set, and the attention given to the finished product. The school has taken note of these concerns. Overall, however, the school has a sensible approach to homework, which contributes effectively in many instances to pupils' progress and provides a valuable complement to the normal school curriculum.

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

31. Overall, the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are good, and there are significant strengths within the school's curricular provision. The broad, well-balanced curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. It is very relevant to the needs of all pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, and provides good opportunities for pupils to acquire breadth and depth of knowledge across the whole curriculum. The curriculum for religious education conforms to the locally agreed syllabus. Sex education and drugs' awareness form part of a carefully planned programme of personal and social development. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in both the Language Unit and classrooms is very good.
32. At the present time, the children in the Reception class are not receiving a sufficient breadth of opportunities to form the foundation for their future learning. The curriculum is too formal and does not give sufficient emphasis to promoting independent learning skills. In many of the group activities, for example, the children receive too much direction and are not given enough opportunity to experiment or make choices of their own. Previous curricular planning has been linked to requirements of the National Curriculum, rather than the latest guidance provided for teaching children in the Foundation Stage. The school has identified the need to improve its curricular provision for these children and has sought external advice. The newly appointed teacher has already made some significant improvements by linking the existing planning to the Early Learning Goals, and there is a willingness to change in order to ensure that the needs of the youngest children are met in a more appropriate way.

33. Despite the heavy emphasis on teaching English and mathematics, the school has successfully ensured its more creatively talented pupils receive good provision. The school makes very effective use of teachers' expertise in subjects such as art. The deployment of extra teaching staff and learning support assistants is targeted very appropriately at areas of most need and has a significant impact on standards
34. The school has moved forward a long way since it was last inspected. Issues relating to the imbalance in curricular provision have been addressed thoughtfully, and all current priorities for development show the school's total commitment to raising standards. The flexible arrangements for grouping some years by ability and others by classes for particular subjects work well. Recent initiatives, such as the focus on improving standards of writing, particularly of the more able pupils, have been very successful in Key Stage 1. The quality of planning is much improved, and subject coordinators have developed their roles well. They now have a much clearer overview of provision and standards achieved. The governing body is well informed about curricular issues and gives good support. The school has been thoughtful in its approach towards making successful provision for its younger pupils in mixed-age classes by ensuring planned work matches ability rather than age. Although several strategies have been introduced to promote pupils' independent learning skills, further work remains to be done in this area. In addition, although provision for information and communication technology has recently improved with the introduction of a computer suite, computers do not form an integral part of daily work in most classrooms. In many lessons, computers remain switched off or underused.
35. The strategy for teaching literacy has been used particularly effectively to develop pupils' skills. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been used well to raise standards in mathematics. Several initiatives, such as literacy and numeracy booster classes, have been targeted accurately to raise standards of the less able. However, the timetabling of these booster classes could be improved. A few pupils do not receive their entitlement to subjects such as art and religious education, because they are withdrawn for booster lessons in English or mathematics at the same time each week. Some artistically talented pupils miss their favourite lesson for this reason. On other occasions, pupils who learn musical instruments miss their entitlement to the full curriculum when they are withdrawn for music lessons at the same time each week. Although the school is aware of the problem surrounding withdrawal for music lessons, it has not yet found a way of varying the timetable for tuition sufficiently to ensure these pupils do not miss the same lesson on a regular basis.
36. The teaching time allocated to individual subjects is well organised. Break times are staggered to ensure the most effective use of time. Additional English activities, such as 'Writers' Workshop' and reading with a partner have a purposeful place on the timetable. The time allocated to subjects other than English and mathematics is organised well to ensure pupils receive a rewarding, worthwhile learning experience.
37. Extra-curricular provision is very good for a school of this size, and further development is planned. There is a very good range of high-quality activities at lunchtime and after school. The school competes in many inter-school events, including football, netball, swimming, athletics and cross-country. Indeed, there is an impressive array of trophies to demonstrate the school's successes. Regular visits to places of local interest and further afield form an important part of the curriculum for each year group. Visitors are also encouraged into the school. In the recent past, Greek, Tudor and Roman days have enhanced pupils' understanding of history topics. Visits from artists such as printmakers and animators, in addition to themed music days, also make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school makes good use of residential visits to places such as Skerne Lodge to develop pupils' social skills, build their self-esteem and enhance their learning.
38. The curriculum is suitably adapted for pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements for the identification of pupils who may have special educational needs are very good. Policies and procedures meet statutory requirement. Pupils with special educational needs have appropriate individual programmes of work provided for them. The school has access to a range of specialist services, with whom it has very good relationships, and who offer support with adapting the curriculum as appropriate. The school is successful in its aim to give all pupils equal access to all activities regardless of their ability, gender, race or special educational needs.

39. Through its Language Department, the school caters particularly well for ten pupils with speech and language impairment, all of whom have statements of special educational need. Special attention is given to these pupils at the beginning and end of each day, and at individually arranged times during the week. These sessions have a noticeable impact and help to fulfil the Department's aim for these pupils to become fully integrated members of the school community. All ten pupils largely follow the same curriculum as other pupils, and the work of the special educational needs coordinator and learning support assistants is crucial in helping them to cope with their work and to make progress in their learning.
40. The school makes good use of links with the community to extend pupils' learning. Visitors from the local church, the police and various charities contribute and, from time to time, specialists such as artists, musicians and authors also work with the pupils. For instance, a mathematician came to help a group to plan and construct a 'millennium dome'.
41. The school has good links with its partner institutions. Links with the local playgroup, which most of the children attend before they join the Reception class, help to ensure continuity in children's learning experiences. There are good links with the local secondary schools to which pupils transfer. There is good pastoral provision to help pupils in Year 6 to move on confidently to the next stage of their education, and there is a wide range of curricular links which help to ensure continuity of learning. The most able pupils have the opportunity to attend master classes in mathematics and science at the local grammar school. With regard to pupils in the Language Department, there is good liaison with receiving schools to ensure continuity both in pupils' learning and in their care.
42. The school's commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is readily apparent as at the previous inspection and, overall, there is good provision to meet the school's aims.
43. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. An understanding of Christian values and ideas is developed very effectively through religious education. Pupils are also introduced to the values of other world religions. At the time of Diwali, for example, they learn how the lights described in the story of Rama and Sita symbolise the idea of goodness overcoming evil. In addition, teachers occasionally exploit opportunities that arise in other lessons. For instance, in the Reception class, children were led to wonder at the colours of the autumn leaves that they viewed through a magnifying glass.
44. The provision for pupils' moral development is also good. The clear expectations and good example of adults in the school community mean that a sense of right and wrong is promoted successfully in the daily life of the school, as well as through religious education lessons. Pupils understand the school rules and have a chance to help decide their own classroom rules. Good attitudes and good behaviour are promoted by praise and awards, and by the way 'golden time'⁶ is used to round off a good week. A few teachers, however, use praise excessively, and when it is unmerited, and this devalues the achievements of those who deserve to receive it. Pupils are also encouraged to consider the rights and needs of others in the wider community through joining in charity fund-raising events.
45. Arrangements for pupils' social development are satisfactory overall, though some of the provision is good. Pupils are encouraged to develop skills to help each other, as when older pupils guide younger ones during the regular paired-reading sessions. In 'circle time'⁷, they are encouraged to listen with care and respect to each other's perceptions, for instance when pupils in Year 2 shared ideas about 'a good week'. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for tasks in their classrooms and around the school. Through the school council, they have the chance to influence future changes and developments in the life of the school. However, a sense of personal responsibility is not fostered well enough among a number of rather immature pupils in Key Stage 2. They understand how they should behave and usually manage to behave well when

⁶ 'Golden time' is when pupils are given a period in which they are allowed to choose what they wish to do.

⁷ 'Circle time' is an activity where pupils are able to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

there is a strong structure to a lesson. However, they are not helped sufficiently to develop self-discipline to cope where there is an element of choice and when self-organisation is required.

46. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are helped to develop a sense of their own cultural identity, for instance through visitors from the local and wider community and when they take part in productions to celebrate Harvest Festival in school. Through links with an African school, they find out something of the lives of children in other lands. Overall, there is good use of opportunities presented by the curriculum to raise cultural understanding. In art, pupils look at the different styles of artists from a range of world cultures. In religious education, they learn to look respectfully at customs other than their own, for instance, when they compare Hindu and Christian wedding celebrations and are reminded that Hindu weddings take place in their own country as well as in places far away.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The good pastoral support noted at the previous inspection is still readily apparent in the good practical concern for pupils' welfare and happiness. As before, standards of care for pupils in the Language Department are particularly high, starting with the friendly greeting that, each morning, sets the scene for the day's work, and continuing until their carefully supervised departure for home.
48. Personal guidance is good, because teachers and other staff understand pupils well, as individuals. There is a strong framework of care and consideration. A good system of behaviour management is generally used effectively. There is good use of awards to encourage pupils' motivation to work hard and behave properly, and sensible rules are in place to ensure they understand what is expected. Training in anger management is given to a group of pupils identified as needing this help. However, there are instances, mostly amongst the older pupils, when teachers' skills do not manage sufficiently well a minority of pupils, not necessarily including those from the Language Department, who are liable to lapse into noisy or uncooperative behaviour. Teachers are well aware of any pupils with particular behavioural difficulties and, together with support assistants, for the most part, make successful use of the very good strategies specifically identified to support them.
49. Teachers' good understanding of pupils means there is little room for bullying to develop, but good systems are in place to respond to the occasional instances that arise, and pupils are confident that help is available if they should ever need it. Pupils are well supervised at playtimes. During a wet lunchtime, for instance, pupils were generally calm and sensible because the good organisation ensured that they had access to a good range of suitable games and activities in their classrooms. Lunchtime supervision levels have been increased in the past year in response to concerns voiced by parents.
50. Monitoring of attendance is good. A lack of distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence, noted at the previous inspection, has been remedied. Because the school does not have a fully computerised system, there is a degree of inefficiency in the way attendance is recorded, as teachers complete attendance registers manually and these records are then transferred manually into the computer. However, there are good routines for analysing the data after it is transferred onto the system, so as to identify any pupils with unsatisfactory attendance. The headteacher follows up with parents the concerns that occasionally arise about individual poor attendance. She has recognised an increasing trend in absences for family holidays during term-time and reminds parents of the difficulties that arise from these. The educational welfare officer is available to give further support when this is occasionally needed.
51. Proper attention is readily available for any who become sick or injured. Trained first-aiders are available. A good policy guides the response to any child protection issues that arise. Health and safety routines, to ensure the safe conduct of lessons and other activities, are generally well organised. However, the present arrangements for risk assessments in physical education need to be formalised, in order to improve routines for the identification and control of any potential hazards.
52. The school cares well for pupils with special educational needs, and provision for them is very good. Pupils' needs are assessed very carefully, and the information gained is used to set appropriate targets. Class teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' needs through the well-maintained files of information, which are available in every classroom. These are comprehensive and give clear indications of the difficulties of pupils and the action to be taken to meet these difficulties. The

learning targets in pupils' individual education plans are good and are taken account of in lessons. Targets are reviewed and updated very regularly.

53. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. They are comprehensive and are applied uniformly across the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when the lack of a consistent, whole-school approach to assessment was a key issue. Since that time, the school has worked thoroughly to establish a very effective system of assessment. The school continues to focus on an improvement in assessment procedures as a priority in the improvement plan. In the Foundation Stage, children are assessed soon after arrival at the school. The results provide useful information, but this is not yet used as effectively as it could be in meeting the needs of individual children. At Key Stages 1 and 2, a comprehensive range of tests enables the collection of data on the performance of individual pupils in English and mathematics. National tests in these subjects and in science are analysed; these include the performance of particular groups, such as boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs. Teachers compare their judgements with National Curriculum levels in order to maintain consistency.
54. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2. Following the tests in Year 2, the school sets individual targets for every pupil. The results are also used to guide and adapt curricular planning. Every teacher maintains a comprehensive assessment file detailing the standards achieved and the progress of all pupils in the class. Assessment is used very effectively to modify what is taught in the longer term, and lessons are varied to incorporate information from previous performance over time. On a day-to-day basis, teachers assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning following every lesson and modify the content of the next lesson accordingly. Assessment is used well to vary the composition of various sets or groups of pupils for literacy and mathematics. The very good improvement in the use of assessment information is reflected in the opinions of parents who are generally very happy with the progress made by their children. Many parents also feel that the needs of pupils across the ability range are now met very well.
55. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, is very good. This information is used to set targets in their individual education plans. The targets set for pupils are appropriate and aim to improve the achievement of the pupils. Targets are normally revised at the end of every term, but arrangements exist to update them more frequently as necessary. Arrangements for meeting the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are very good. Parents are kept well informed at all times. The school works closely with other agencies, such as the therapist from the Speech and Language Department.
56. Very good systems are used for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress. At Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers have a very effective system of recording against clear learning objectives. This is most helpful in identifying the support needed for different groups of pupils. Teachers' assessment files are kept fully up to date. Each teacher has a class assessment folder, which is handed on to the next class teacher at the end of the school year. Information is comprehensive and includes tracking sheets, phonic record sheets and assessments of key objectives. A further file is maintained for termly assessments in the core subjects. Samples of pupils' work are moderated and filed for future reference and to check on academic progress over time.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. The good relationships with parents noted at the previous inspection have been maintained. Parents have positive views of many aspects of the schools' work; for instance, they value the good teaching that helps their children to make good progress. They are generally very supportive of the school, and this results in a good contribution to the pupils' learning.
58. Communications between parents and teachers are good. The headteacher makes good efforts to inform parents about the work of the school before their children are admitted. Together with other staff, she is readily available to parents at the start and end of the school day to discuss any queries or concerns. There are regular, well-detailed newsletters. The prospectus is also helpful and informative, and the governors' annual report to parents gives a generally very full account of the

functioning of the school, for instance, there is a very good level of detail about progress with the action plan from the previous inspection and with the school improvement plan. However, it does not say enough about the arrangements for any physically disabled pupils who may wish to join the school.

59. There are good ongoing efforts to inform parents about the curriculum and about the progress their children make. Parents make special mention of the meeting held at the start of each year to explain what pupils will be learning. A number of parents have reservations in regard to the supply of information about how their children are progressing. However, annual reports give parents a good amount of information about what pupils have learnt, with helpful detail in each subject, as well as some indication of the steps needed for further progress. There are further very good routines for informing parents at the well-attended termly discussions, when the class teacher tells them of how their child is performing in English, mathematics and science in terms of national expectations. Many parents are keen to support children with their homework, and a number of them would like more feedback about their children's success with this. The school is looking for workable ways of bringing this about. Parents and children are prepared well for starting in the Reception class through the initial induction evening, and opportunities for them to visit the school and learn about routines. Parents are kept informed during the year, with meetings after children have had their initial assessment, written reports and opportunities for parents to learn about arrangements for school visits. Sessions have also been arranged for parents to explain how children are taught to read at school.
60. Parents are fully involved when pupils develop difficulties with their learning or behaviour. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited into school on a regular basis to review the progress of their children. The parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are invited in for the formal annual review. The school makes special transport arrangements if there are difficulties. This very good arrangement ensures that parents are always present.
61. The headteacher and governors are keen to consider parents' views. They regularly invite parents' comments on aspects of the school's work and try to resolve any difficulties that are identified. Particularly good efforts are made to fully involve parents of pupils in the Language Department in their learning, for instance, through their homework books.
62. A large number of enthusiastic parent helpers regularly contribute to pupils' progress by their help in lessons and by listening to pupils read. In addition, there is a very successful parents' association that makes a considerable contribution by raising funds that are used to purchase extra resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The quality of the leadership and management provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is very good. They not only have a clear vision of the way they would like to see the school develop, but have put good systems in place to bring about improvements. For example, by judicious use of savings accrued in the budget, the school has been able to release the deputy headteacher and fund an extra teacher to provide additional support and training for classroom teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching. There are good management systems, which help to promote an environment in which all pupils are cared for, and particular attention is given to integrating pupils who have statements of special educational needs and are cared for by the school's Language Department. The school is generally successful in fulfilling its aims, although further attention needs to be given to helping pupils to develop greater self-discipline and independence.
64. Leadership and management are effective at all levels. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. They receive good support from the key stage coordinators, although both have only recently taken up these responsibilities. Management tasks and responsibilities are delegated very effectively to other staff, who are provided with clear guidance on what is expected of them. The overall quality of leadership has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the way subject coordinators fulfil their responsibilities. The importance of their role is now recognised, and coordinators are now given non-contact time in which to carry out their duties. Most subject coordinators fulfil their roles well and, in the best cases, such as in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, they have been instrumental in making substantial

improvements in the provision for their subjects which have led to further improvements in the standards pupils achieve.

65. The management of the school's provision for special educational needs is very good. The special needs coordinator performs her role very effectively and ensures that all pupils with special educational needs receive the support they need. Her leadership of the Language Department is very effective. The school makes very good use of the funds available to support pupils with statements of special educational needs.
66. Strong leadership is very apparent in the headteacher's thorough approach to arrangements for monitoring the school's work and in the very effective systems for tackling any weaknesses that are identified. For instance, staff carry out a detailed analysis of the results pupils achieve in National Curriculum tests. Areas that are found to be relatively less strong, such as writing at Key Stage 2, are then targeted by adjusting the curriculum to give them extra time and attention in lessons. The same systematic approach is evident in the effective routines for monitoring teaching, with perceptive identification of development points so that teachers receive any support they need to enhance their performance. The cycle for improvement is completed by further monitoring to check that any intended gain in teaching skills has been achieved. In-service training for staff is carefully focused on ensuring that developmental needs, whether they arise from identified individual or whole-school requirements or from national initiatives, are met. The new arrangements for performance management are fully in place. In addition, there is now a very good induction programme for any teacher, either newly qualified or more experienced, who joins the school. There is suitable involvement of advisers from the local education authority to gain an outside view on the work of the school. Account is also taken of the evaluations of inspectors who have been appraising the school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
67. The governors make a good contribution to the work of the school and, generally, fulfil their statutory duties well. However, the annual report to parents omits required information about arrangements for disabled pupils. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about the strengths of the school and about areas for development. Governors ensure that the school improvement plan is an effective tool, calculated to help bring about intended developments. Financial planning, previously sound, is now good. Each year, governors consider different options for the budget, prepared by the headteacher, for spending in the coming year. Good care is taken to link spending to the developmental needs already included in the school improvement plan, as well as to meeting all the routine costs of the school. An over-large surplus of around 11 per cent was carried forward from last year's budget, a result of initial uncertainties about the size of the allocation from the standards' fund and of changes in staffing costs during the year. The budget for the current year makes good use of this balance, and includes a smaller, but still prudent, surplus of just over three per cent.
68. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing what it does, is seen in the good range of improvements, which have occurred since the last inspection. The school responded well to its previous key issues and has worked hard to improve the quality of education, which it provides for all pupils. Subjects are now allocated an appropriate amount of time and good resources for learning. Improved monitoring procedures have helped raise the quality of teaching and teachers' expectations. Subject leadership is better. Staff who are new to the school receive very good support, and close attention is paid to the professional development of all staff. Procedures for assessment have improved significantly. Resources for information and communication technology and the standards achieved by pupils in this subject are much better than they were, although staff could still make better use of computers as tools for learning. As a result of these improvements, standards overall have improved at a much faster rate than the national trend at Key Stages 1 and 2.
69. Well-judged spending results in staffing, accommodation and learning resources being good overall. A higher than average proportion of the budget is spent on staffing, so that, as at the previous inspection, the school has a good number of teachers. In a well-calculated move, the high level of funding is being used to free two teachers from class responsibilities for a term so that they can contribute to the monitoring and development of teaching and also give carefully focussed teaching themselves to selected groups of pupils. The school has a generous number of learning support assistants, an improvement since the previous inspection, and they are used very effectively to support pupils' learning, especially in literacy and numeracy, both in lessons and within smaller groups outside the classroom. Similarly, spending on resources for learning is carefully thought out.

Resources were previously inadequate in some areas and, on balance, no more than satisfactory. The school has tackled this situation by generous, well-considered spending, so that resources are now good overall. They are good in the majority of areas, including the core subjects of English and mathematics and are satisfactory in others. Resources for children in the Reception are satisfactory, but outdoor play equipment needs to be acquired, to meet the expectations of the Foundation Stage curriculum regarding arrangements for the children's physical development. Resources are generally used well. However, although the well-equipped computer suite is used effectively in lessons for information and communication technology, their use in other areas of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The use of information and communication technology for financial administration is good, but there is room to refine the way it is employed in some areas, such as in processing attendance data.

70. Accommodation has been expanded by the addition of two classrooms since the previous inspection, when it was found to be crowded, and is satisfactory overall for the present numbers of pupils. While pupils benefit from the good-sized hall and from having a classroom equipped as a computer suite, the library is inadequate. It is little more than a corridor area and is too limited in its capacity to facilitate independent research by pupils. The suitability of the accommodation for children in Reception is enhanced by the conservatory-style extension recently added to their classroom, but the fenced outside area designated for their use is rather small.
71. Income designated for the Language Department is spent to good effect, so that its pupils receive a very high standard of personal care and support and are helped to make good academic progress.
72. The very effective strategic use of the budget is backed up by very good routine management of finances. For instance, the bursar supports the headteacher very capably in ensuring that any extra grants, such as the standards' fund allocation, are fully spent for their intended purpose. The governors give proper consideration of alternative quotations where this is appropriate, for instance for the wiring for the computer suite.
73. The school successfully applies the principles of best value. Governors compare both the school's expenditure and also pupils' performance with what happens in other local schools. They have also looked at the school's patterns of expenditure alongside statistics for another school with a similar special needs' department. Well advised by the headteacher, they weigh up any differences in relation to the specific characteristics of their own school and pupils, and take due account of them. With the headteacher, they have regard to coordinators' views about development needs. In addition, they consider parents' views, both informally through the good everyday contacts between school, governing body and parents, and also by looking at the responses to formal consultations with parents about the strengths of the school and areas for development. The governors look for progress towards the targets set in the school improvement plan and consider whether the expected benefits are being gained from the projects they fund.
74. The funding allocated to the school is higher than that given to many other primary schools. When account is taken of all aspects of the school's work, including the good teaching, pupils' good progress throughout the school and good attainment by the end of Year 6, the effectiveness of the Language Department and the good systems in place to underpin continued improvement, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:
 - i. Help pupils to become more independent learners and to take responsibility for their own actions by;
 - ensuring that pupils develop the self-discipline to regulate their behaviour and the ability to work cooperatively with others;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to engage in independent research;
 - providing more activities which require pupils to direct the course of their own learning;

[Paragraphs 6, 7, 9, 12, 14-17, 22, 23, 27, 29, 34, 45, 48, 63, 87, 90, 91, 97, 100, 101, 103, 108, 113, 123, 128, 132, 143, 145, 146, 151, 161-163, 170, 172, 177, 178]

ii. Improve the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage* by;

- ensuring that greater attention is given to the published national curricular guidance for children in the Foundation Stage;
- matching learning tasks more closely to the children's needs;
- providing more opportunities for children to make independent choices.

[Paragraphs 7, 22, 27, 32, 69, 86-100]

iii. Make greater use of information and communication technology* as a tool for learning in all subjects by;

- ensuring that all subject coordinators identify appropriate software and opportunities for using computers within their subjects;
- making better use of computers within classrooms and fully utilising the computer suite when not required for formal lessons.

[Paragraphs 10, 24, 25, 34, 68, 69, 116, 124, 133, 139, 152, 157, 158-165, 172, 184]

* These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.

76. In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:

- The timetabling of additional lessons, such as booster sessions for English and mathematics and instrumental tuition; *[paragraphs 24, 35, 140, 168];*
- Improving the school's library facilities and making better use of them *[paragraphs 70, 103, 108;]*
- Improving the way pupils present their work *[paragraphs 24, 111];*
- Ensuring that the use of praise is always appropriate and merited *[paragraphs 29, 44, 152].*

THE LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

77. The Language Department, funded by the local education authority, provides for ten pupils who have speech and language impairments. All have statements of special educational needs. The catchment area for these pupils is much wider than that of the rest of the school population, and some pupils are provided with special transport. The school has a positive policy of inclusion. For much of the time, pupils are educated alongside other pupils of the same age. In many lessons, they benefit from additional support given by either the special educational needs coordinator or by learning support assistants. From time to time, pupils are withdrawn from their normal classroom to work on the targets in their individual education plan. This can be either on an individual basis or in very small groups. The Language Department has maintained very good quality provision since the last inspection and is very effective in meeting the identified special needs of the pupils.

78. Arising out of their special educational needs, the standards achieved by pupils in the Department are below those expected for their age. However, they make very good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In some year groups, pupils are grouped into sets on the basis of their prior attainment. This is beneficial to pupils, as it enables lessons to be planned to meet their needs and the needs of the other lower-attaining pupils with whom they are being taught. Progress is generally best in the lessons in which the pupils receive additional support, either from the special needs coordinator or from a learning support assistant.

79. Pupils' attitudes towards school, their behaviour and personal development are good. Pupils like coming to school. They have very good relationships with the special needs coordinator and the learning support assistants. Within the Department, they feel secure and happy. Most of the pupils are learning to relate well to adults and to other pupils. They enjoy being rewarded for achievement, good behaviour and remembering to complete their daily targets. For example, one pupil receives a credit for remembering to bring her glasses to school and using them. The standards of behaviour are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Most of the pupils behave well for most of the time. When working in class, individual pupils can be demanding, and their presence occasionally affects the progress of other pupils. Unsatisfactory behaviour normally arises directly from the special educational needs of the pupil. The attention span of some pupils is very short, and so they find concentrating for long periods difficult. When working in the Language Department in small groups, their behaviour is good and often very good. This reflects the high quality of the support given, the fact that tasks are appropriate and the very good relationships, which exist between staff and pupils. Pupils' relationships with other pupils are satisfactory overall. Within lessons, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils sit with the rest of the class, and most manage to listen and respond appropriately for most of the time. In some lessons, there is a minimum amount of contact between them and other pupils. For example, in a physical education lesson, one pupil being given one-to-one support, worked on his own for the most of the time.
80. The quality of teaching and learning in the Language Department is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The special needs coordinator has very good relationships with all teachers and support staff. All staff have information of very good quality, about the targets which have been agreed for each pupil for whom they are responsible. This enables teachers to plan very effectively to meet pupils' needs within lessons. Group objectives are generally challenging, but achievable. For example, in a religious education lesson at Key Stage 2, whilst more able pupils were completing a piece of extended writing, the special needs coordinator and a pupil worked on a pre-printed text together. The pupil had to illustrate the main elements of the story and write a short sentence about each. This strategy enabled the pupil to be fully involved in the lesson and to achieve at an appropriate level. Teaching support of excellent quality was observed in one Year 2 literacy lesson. The special needs coordinator gave support to two pupils from the Department. The excellent teaching enabled the pupils to take a full part in the lesson, despite their significant speech and language impairments. Throughout the lesson, the pupils were assisted with verbal and signed prompts. White-boards enabled the pupils to register their responses and so to participate with the rest of the class. The class teacher ensured that the pupils were fully involved. Relationships between the special needs coordinator and the pupils were excellent, and the response of the pupils, in terms of attitude, behaviour and concentration was excellent. As a result, they made excellent progress within the lesson. The lesson underpinned the significant benefits of the excellent relationships which exist between the class and support teacher and the excellent knowledge of the class teacher of the needs of the pupils with statements.
81. Strategies for the management of pupils are very good overall. Teachers have agreed procedures on the action to be taken when pupils misbehave or are not working. These strategies are used consistently. Pupils are aware of the action which will be taken should the need arise, and behaviour improves accordingly. The quality of teaching and learning is frequently enhanced through the support of the learning support assistants. Overall, this is good. However, on occasions the support they give is very good. Learning support assistants reinforce the learning expectations very well. They have a very clear understanding of their role within the classroom and the needs of the pupils they are supporting. They are very good at explaining tasks to pupils. They are encouraging and praise achievement appropriately. Learning support assistants make a significant impact on the progress made by pupils from the Language Department.
82. The curriculum offered to pupils in the Department is very good. Pupils have access to the good-quality, broad and balanced curriculum offered to all pupils in the school, whilst at the same time they are able to benefit from the very good quality additional teaching which supports progress towards the achievement of the targets in their individual education plans. Opportunities for pupils to use computers are satisfactory. There is appropriate software to enable pupils to practise their literacy skills, in terms of writing and spelling. Pupils are confident and able to work without direct supervision for extended periods of time. Provision for pupils' personal development, including that for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils in the Department are involved in all the activities of the school. This includes whole-school assemblies and acts of collective

worship. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. All members of staff, including those in the Department, emphasise the importance of behaving correctly and knowing right from wrong. The fact that pupils work alongside their classmates on a regular basis assists their social development. As some of the pupils have to be taken home by special transport at the end of the school day, there are, however, few opportunities for them to take part in the good range of extra-curricular activities provided. However, the special needs coordinator organises a cross-country club once a week, and a number of the pupils from the Department are involved. Provision for cultural development within the school as a whole is good. Pupils enjoy special visits and listening to visitors. For example, in Year 3, a visitor from Greece showed the pupils artefacts from Ancient Greece and pupils enjoyed handling these.

83. The quality of assessment continues to be very good. On entering the Department, all pupils are thoroughly assessed, both in speech and language and basic cognitive skills. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. The special needs coordinator maintains detailed files on each pupil. These files contain the results of a battery of tests on, for example, reading and spelling. Staff keep daily records on all aspects of the pupils' individual education plans. Class teachers complete weekly monitoring sheets, noting whether class objectives have been met and raising any concerns about a pupil's progress. The Department teacher meets with class teachers at least once a term to monitor the progress of pupils in all National Curriculum subjects. The special needs coordinator and learning support assistants keep a weekly diary, noting any particular problems or successes with the integration timetable. All pupils take the National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils do not take the national tests. However, their abilities are assessed by the teachers. Very good systems are used for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress. Each class teacher has a special needs file, in which records, test results and targets are kept. These files are regularly updated and monitored by the special needs coordinator. Teachers and the special needs coordinator make very good use of the assessment to guide curricular planning to review the targets set for individual pupils. The school has very good procedures for monitoring bullying, and staff within the Department have many opportunities during each day, for example, during registration, to inform themselves if pupils are experiencing problems in this respect.
84. The school's procedures comply with the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements for the annual review of statements are very good and follow the policy and advice of the local authority. Parents are invited to attend, together with other professionals and, where appropriate, social workers. Parents always attend and, if there are difficulties, transport is arranged. This is very good practice. Targets for each pupil are agreed. Each pupil's targets for learning are determined through individual education plans. These are normally reviewed termly, but there are procedures for more regular updating if required. The speech and language therapist assesses the needs of all pupils. She works closely with the special needs coordinator and teachers, who follow her recommendations.
85. The Language Department's partnership with parents is very effective. The work of the Department was praised very highly in the previous report, and parents continue to have a very high regard for its work. The special needs coordinator has very good links and relationships with parents. Parents greatly value the very good information with which they are provided and the support, which the school provides. Parents work very closely with members of staff. For example, they ensure that pupils complete homework on a regular basis. Regular opportunities are provided for parents to come into school to discuss the education of their children. The Department also organises a number of social occasions each year, for example, a barbeque for families and staff. When the time comes for pupils to transfer to secondary schools, the special needs coordinator works closely with parents and carers to minimise problems and to give general advice and support. She has close links with secondary schools and ensures that the staff have all the necessary information to enable pupils to settle in as quickly as possible. She follows up secondary placements in the term following transfer. This is very good practice.
86. The coordinator provides very good leadership and very clear educational direction for the Department. This ensures that very good relationships exist between the staff of the Department and teachers. There is a shared commitment amongst staff to ensure that the needs of the pupils from the Department are met. Working on a regular basis with teachers within classrooms provides the coordinator with frequent opportunities to monitor the provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs. Arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation and development of

teaching are, therefore, good. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are very good. Opportunities are provided for work-shadowing. The staff handbook provides much useful information regarding day-to-day administrative and organisational arrangements. The governing body gives good support to the work of the Department, and the governor responsible for special needs has clear understanding of the areas for development. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the Department. Learning support assistants are very skilled and knowledgeable. The quality support they give contributes to the very good progress made by pupils. Resources are good and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The Department acts as a resource for the school. The room used by the Language Department, although small, is adequate for the purpose. Teachers make good use of new technology, both for teaching pupils and for administrative purposes.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

82

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

[In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]

41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	18	33	27	0	0	0
Percentage	5	22	40	33	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	–	236
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	–	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	–	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	–	31

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
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	20	23	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	17	18
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	38	37	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (91)	86 (94)	91 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	18
	Girls	20	21	22
	Total	37	39	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (94)	91 (94)	93 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	19	12	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	27	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (80)	81 (83)	97 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	12	10	12
	Total	28	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (80)	81 (80)	97 (86)
	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	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	202
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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	4	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)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4
Average class size	26.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	192

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	496,009
Total expenditure	484,839
Expenditure per pupil	2,029
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,508
Balance carried forward to next year	55,678

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	239
Number of questionnaires returned	85
Percentage of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category⁸

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	46	44	6	1	4
My child is making good progress in school	46	47	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good	46	45	5	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	32	55	8	2	2
The teaching is good	46	53	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	23	39	31	1	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	51	36	6	6	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	52	45	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents	20	55	15	7	2
The school is well led and managed	42	49	5	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	39	54	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	29	42	15	6	7

⁸ Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

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

87. There have been a number of improvements for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Staffing has increased, and the accommodation, both indoor and outdoor, has improved. However, the teaching for the school's youngest children is still focused on the methods advocated for teaching the National Curriculum and not on the suggested curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. Children enter the Reception class with an above average level of attainment. Overall, they make satisfactory progress towards the Early Learning Goals, but there are some aspects of learning where progress is unsatisfactory because of the inappropriate curriculum provided for these children. There are, for example, insufficient opportunities for children to practise linguistic skills, and creative activities are still over directed, limiting opportunities for children to use their imagination. The initial assessments made when children start in the Reception class are thorough, and there are good procedures for setting targets. However, not enough use is made of the assessments to plan an appropriate range of activities at the right level for each child, and some of the targets set are not appropriate for the specific needs of the children. Children who are identified as having special educational needs receive good support, particularly from the teaching assistants, during their time in the Reception class and make good progress.
88. The quality of the teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but there are also good aspects to the teaching. The newly appointed teacher and her colleague have worked hard to organise the Reception class quickly and efficiently. At present, there is no early years' policy to guide the planning for these children, but the teacher has made significant improvements to the existing planning by linking it to the Early Learning Goals. The teacher and support staff manage the children well and use praise and encouragement to build the children's confidence. As a result, relationships between children and adults are good, the children are keen to learn, and standards of behaviour are good. The staff encourage the children to think about what they are doing and ask careful questions to promote children's learning, develop their ideas and increase their understanding. However, there is over-direction in many of the group activities, with the result that children do not learn to make choices for themselves, and do not have enough opportunity to experiment for themselves and build important foundations for future learning. Sufficient, good-quality resources are carefully prepared for each lesson, but children are not given enough choice in which resources to use. There are not enough books and activities, which reflect the multi-cultural nature of society, although the lack has been noted by the school. Support staff make a good contribution to children's learning, but have few opportunities to be involved in activities such as rôle-play or telling stories in the library areas.
89. The school has worked hard to establish improvements in the accommodation for children in the Reception class. The classroom is bright and attractive, with a useful, recently built extension for activities. The newly fenced area for outdoor activities is attractive, but small. There is sufficient room for only a small number of children to ride bikes and use wheeled toys at any one time. Climbing apparatus is still to be purchased. Further development of the opportunities provided for children in the Foundation Stage remains a priority within the current school development plan. The school has already sought external advice with regard to the organisation of the curriculum and, with the newly appointed teacher, a new coordinator for Key Stage 1 who also has responsibility for overseeing the Foundation Stage, and the willingness to make changes, the school is well placed to make further improvements in the future.

Personal, social and emotional development

90. Most children have well developed personal, social and emotional skills on entry to the Reception class, although initial assessments show that some children still have significant needs in this area. The children make satisfactory progress, so that, by time they reach Year 1, many will have achieved the Early Learning Goals and beyond. Children feel safe and secure and display a good level of trust in the way they arrive at the start of the day, confidently leaving their parents and carers. They behave very well and are clear about what is expected of them during the day. They concentrate, show interest and work hard, particularly when the activities are relevant and interesting. For example, children showed great absorption in an activity in which they grouped

babies, toddlers and children using their own toys. Many children answer their teacher's questions confidently, although some are still hesitant to speak in front of others and do not respond appropriately to questioning.

91. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is satisfactory. The warm, positive relationships promoted by the staff help children to feel secure and generate positive attitudes to school. In 'circle time' and religious education lessons, the children learn to be aware of their own feelings and to listen to the feelings of others. However, they are not given enough opportunity to develop a good level of independence within the classroom and in the selection of resources.

Communication, language and literacy

92. Although children make satisfactory progress overall in communication, language and literacy, progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills is unsatisfactory. Since the previous inspection, literacy has been the main focus for this area of learning. For many children, this structure is inappropriate, as they have not yet achieved many of the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Children enjoy listening to stories. Although they are encouraged to talk and to listen to each other, for example, in circle time or history lessons, the time allocated for speaking and listening is very short. There are insufficient opportunities for children to take part in activities such as rôle-play, or to develop their skills through interaction with others during play experiences.
93. By the end of the Reception year, many children know their initial sounds, and more able children blend sounds to create words. They place the letters of the alphabet in the correct order and understand and recognise rhyming and other familiar words. Children make satisfactory progress and many exceed the expected goals. However, some less able children are still to reach the goals in this area of learning. Although children take their reading books home regularly, books are not used enough during activity sessions. A book trolley and racks of books offer a variety of choice, but there is no designated library area where children can sit and enjoy reading.
94. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for the development of children's writing. Children practise their writing competently following literacy sessions and in handwriting sessions following phonic lessons. They write their names accurately on their work, but use the 'writing table' infrequently. More able children form simple words and copy words using letters which are well formed. Children use the computer, which helps them to develop their literacy skills.

Mathematical development

95. By the time they reach Year 1, many children have achieved the expected goals, and beyond, in this area, having made sound, and sometimes good progress. Children sort out number problems as they confidently count on to 20, and beyond, in a circle, taking turns. Mathematical language is developed effectively through subjects such as physical education and history.
96. The quality of teaching and learning during the designated numeracy session is satisfactory, although the teaching of numeracy for an hour at a time is inappropriate for some, because they are unable to concentrate for that length of time. These children need to experience mathematics in a less formal way that includes more opportunities for structured play. Children play with sand, but this makes little contribution to their mathematical development because staff do not ask the sort of questions which help to develop their mathematical understanding. The staff do not grasp enough everyday opportunities to develop children's mathematical experiences.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

97. Children come to school with developing ideas of the world around them and are aware of their own environment. From this good start, they make satisfactory progress through the Reception year. Children are developing good skills in their use of the computer and work confidently to a good level. Children learn about growing and changing as they focus on the topic of 'Ourselves'.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children's understanding of the world around them is developed through activities, which are planned around a central theme. Specific lessons are devoted to religious education, but insufficient emphasis is placed on developing children's awareness of other cultures and the beliefs of other people. There are very few pictures, books and

items of play equipment to represent this area of learning. There are too few opportunities for freely investigating in their activities.

Physical development

99. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development and, by the end of the Reception, they reach levels that are above those expected for children of this age. Children run and skip with confidence as they move with control and coordination in a range of ways in response to a signal given by the teacher. They understand that exercise causes them to breathe more quickly. They display self-assurance when playing outdoors and use a range of tools confidently.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The new outside area is an important addition which will provide children with opportunities to control their wheeled toys, share games, climb and balance, but for only a few children at a time. The development of an outdoor curriculum is being discussed, and there are plans to develop the area in the near future. Children learn to use tools, such as scissors and paintbrushes in organised lessons, but have few opportunities to use them of their own volition on a regular basis.

Creative development

101. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their creative development. Although they achieve most of the Early Learning Goals for this area by the end of the Reception year, they do not reach some of them in the development of their imagination and creativity, especially in art and music. They experience a range of media but, on occasions, these activities are too closely directed by the teacher, and the children do not have the opportunity to experiment for themselves. There are insufficient opportunities for them to make, draw and paint, or the freedom to try different colours and use a wide variety of materials to make pictures and models. There is no singing of songs or rhymes throughout the day, and musical instruments are not available for children to experiment or use independently or imaginatively, for example in rôle-play. The taped music lesson, although providing opportunities for children to sing together, limits the use of their imagination.

ENGLISH

102. In the 2001 National Curriculum assessment tests, the school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average in reading and in writing, and almost all pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 2. When compared to the results of schools in similar contexts, they were average in reading and well above average in writing. At Key Stage 2, the results were above the national average and were average when compared to schools in similar contexts. Nine out of ten pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4, and just over a quarter achieved the higher Level 5.
103. Inspection evidence indicates that, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress, and approximately half achieve higher than average levels in both reading and writing. Nine out of ten pupils achieve nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6, and just over a quarter reach higher levels. However, evidence taken from examples of current and previous work shows that the pattern of progress in Key Stage 2 is not as consistent as in Key Stage 1. All pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 in developing their speaking and listening skills. Pupils at the beginning of the key stage make good progress in reading, and most leave the school as competent readers. However, some older pupils do not acquire the more advanced reading skills of which they are capable. In the development of writing, after a good start, pupils' rate of progress slows, then recovers well in Year 6.
104. The school has made good improvement since the time it was last inspected. High quality monitoring of class lessons has made a significant contribution towards the improvement in standards of teaching. Teachers use assessment very effectively to chart progress, and pupils know very clearly what they have to do to improve. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress as a result of the high quality support they receive. Areas targeted for improvement, such as writing at Key Stage 1, have also shown notable improvement. However, some areas still need further attention. Although the library is well organised, it is small and its layout does not invite pupils to use it. Not all pupils have secure library skills. Although pupils borrow books, they do not

use the area often enough to develop their independent research skills in any structured way, and some younger pupils do not have enough knowledge of how a library works.

105. Although most pupils have adequately developed speaking and listening skills when they start Key Stage 1, some lack confidence when answering questions or reading out loud. This reticence is most noticeable in the younger pupils in Year 1 who have only been in school for one term. Teachers use registration time and the oral part of the literacy hour particularly well to promote speaking and listening skills. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher skilfully built pupils' self-esteem. She used a seashell very effectively to create excitement when discussing the poem 'Down by the Sea'. She carefully phrased questions so that individual pupils of all abilities answered in sentences. At the same time, less able pupils sought the reassurance of support staff as they talked over their answers. The whole structure of the lesson ensured every pupil had enough confidence to contribute fully.
106. Pupils enjoy using correct technical vocabulary from an early age. They talk about 'paragraphs' and refer to 'connectives' in their literacy lessons. Pupils' involvement in plays, concerts and assemblies provides further effective development of skills. Older pupils are very articulate when discussing written work; some convey considerable maturity. In discussion about reading habits, boys and girls of all abilities expressed very clear preferences and voiced strong opinions about their likes and dislikes. Pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.
107. Most pupils enter the school with an enjoyment of reading. They have access to a wide range of good quality books, read regularly with an adult or other pupils and make good progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 look forward to the time when they read to their partners in Key Stage 2. The arrangement is rewarding and purposeful for both age groups. By Year 2, pupils discuss their likes and dislikes confidently on a simple level. They respond well to humour. Even pupils who are not yet able to read without help are well motivated. The level of support, particularly from parents, makes a very positive contribution to the good standards achieved. The school's consistent approach towards teaching strategies for reading unfamiliar words is very successful. Pupils regularly take books home, and teachers maintain detailed records of progress. Many staff use these records very effectively to help pupils develop further.
108. Pupils move into Key Stage 2 with very positive attitudes towards reading. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress overall, and most leave the school as confident and fluent readers. However, there are noticeable differences between the rate of progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils in Key Stage 2 did not have home-school diaries, and more advanced reading skills were not fully developed. These pupils now have a clear record of how much they read, although information is of variable quality. Whilst reading diaries in Key Stage 1, and some in Key Stage 2, contain valuable information for parents about how they can help their children improve, others, in particular those of pupils in Year 6, contain no more than a list of books. In addition, more able pupils who are very fluent readers do not acquire the advanced skills they need to develop further. The school is very aware of its need to motivate boys more in order to maintain their interest throughout the key stage. Although competent readers, some boys in Year 6 expressed negative attitudes towards reading and said that they hardly read at all at home or at school.
109. There are many isolated examples of high quality research work, particularly in subjects like history. However, although most pupils understand the language of reference books and talk about contents and index with confidence, they do not have sufficient access to books for lending and research because the library is currently located in the main corridor. It is impossible for pupils to use the library in a large group to develop independent learning skills.
110. Pupils have good basic writing skills when they enter Year 1 and, overall, progress throughout the key stage is good. In literacy lessons where the quality of teaching is very good and there is a high level of support, pupils make very good progress. Teaching in Year 2 is excellent, and pupils of all abilities, but particularly the more able, achieve very well indeed.
111. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching in literacy lessons for the more able pupils is of the highest calibre, and a good proportion of these younger pupils achieve above average standards. In one lesson, pupils read difficult texts with total accuracy and, although they found the text demanding, they understood the language of non-chronological report writing and already

presented their work in a style to suit their audience. They used 'have a go' books well to attempt unfamiliar spellings, and their dictionary skills were very secure. Strategies designed to improve standards have been very successful because they have given pupils greater confidence to write.

112. Pupils do not make consistent progress in the middle years of the key stage. In some classes, where teachers' expectations are high, pupils' grammar, spelling, punctuation and writing skills develop well. Most pupils use descriptive words and extend their imaginative vocabulary. However, in other classes, persistent basic punctuation and spelling mistakes hamper progress and the quality of presentation does not reflect pupils' ability. By Year 6, most pupils' writing is fluent and well organised. Pupils sustain ideas well, display maturity and capture the interest of their audience. There is a richness of vocabulary. Handwriting is generally of good quality, although there are examples of careless presentation. Additional activities designed to extend pupils' writing skills further also have a positive impact on standards.
113. Overall, teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching is higher in Key Stage 1 because teachers have higher expectations and develop pupils' independence more successfully.
114. There are many good features common to all teaching. Planning is of very high quality throughout the school, particularly for the mixed-age class. The teaching of basic skills is very good, and homework is purposeful and effective. The high level of support staff in lessons enables older pupils to work together with a degree of cooperation frequently missing in other lessons. Occasionally, however, some older pupils become too reliant on adult support and do not learn to work with enough independence.
115. On the whole, pupils' achievement is closely linked to the quality of teaching. Pupils make best progress in lessons where teaching is of high quality, and they have real enjoyment of their work. There is a nucleus of highly talented teachers and support staff within the school. In an excellent lesson in Year 2, the teacher and support staff used every minute of the lesson to aid the progress of individual pupils. Pupils had a high level of understanding about instructional writing because they were steeped in the vocabulary. Marking was thoughtful and provided excellent guidance for improvement. The room was a hive of activity; the quality of each part of the lesson was so effective that pupils produced their best work and enjoyed the prospect of homework. No wonder standards were high!
116. In a memorable lesson of equally excellent quality in Year 3, more able pupils persevered, although the work on report writing was difficult. They discussed with maturity, and cooperated very well with others in their groups. They subsequently succeeded, because the teacher had identified individual needs with total accuracy and offered exactly the right level of support. In less effective lessons, introductions are often too long, and pupils lose interest when they listen to a long list of instructions before they start their group work.
117. Teachers are very secure in their delivery of the literacy strategy, and funding has been used well to provide a range of well-organised good quality materials. Occasional use is made of information and communication technology but, as yet, pupils are not given enough opportunity to use the facilities of a word processor to help them develop and improve their writing skills. The coordinators manage the subject very effectively, and much of the improvement is directly attributable to their leadership. The school has a very accurate perception of its strengths and weaknesses and a very clear focus for future development. Priorities for improvement are precise. The range of assessment procedures and depth of analysis are impressive, and the school uses information very effectively to track progress.

MATHEMATICS

118. Since the last inspection, the standards achieved by pupils in mathematics have risen, and many aspects of the way the subject is taught have improved. Results have improved from below average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 to a situation in 2001 when they were above the national average. Standards have risen more rapidly than in most schools, and pupils are now achieving well at Key Stages 1 and 2. At the last inspection, it was considered that higher-attaining pupils were not always appropriately challenged. This is rarely the case now. Teachers have become much more adept at planning to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, and once pupils have achieved the

objectives set for their age group they move on to those normally set for older pupils, so that they continue to make progress. Doubts were expressed in the previous report about pupils' progress towards the end of Key Stage 1. The teaching here is now very good, and pupils are progressing well. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very much better, and the information gained is used effectively, not only to group pupils within the class or into sets in Years 2 and 3, but also to ensure that work is being set at the right level. Considerable emphasis has been given to monitoring the school's provision for mathematics, from evaluating teachers' planning, through analysing the school's National Curriculum assessment results, to monitoring pupils' work and the teaching within the classroom. The coordinator for mathematics has been given the status of 'leading mathematics teacher' within the authority, and has had a significant input into improving the quality of the teaching.

119. The inspection findings concur with the school's latest National Curriculum results and show that standards, overall, are above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and that pupils are achieving well. Although the school's results are only average when compared to those of schools in similar contexts, comparison of the current situation with pupils' prior attainment shows that they are making good progress. Apart from pupils who are receiving significant amounts of help because of their special educational needs, almost all pupils achieve the nationally expected standards and an increasing proportion of pupils are achieving higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs are also making good progress, although they do not reach the same standard as other pupils. The work undertaken by the coordinator, which includes working alongside teachers to model good practice, implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the commitment of the staff to improving their current practice are all factors, which have led to improvements.
120. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a good understanding of number. The lively teaching methods used during the mental mathematics sessions have helped pupils to learn important number facts and given them the ability to manipulate numbers in their heads. The teaching is thorough and helps pupils to develop different strategies to perform basic calculations. Pupils have a good understanding of shape, space and measure. They are good, for example, at devising questions to elicit which shape the teacher has hidden, and this shows a thorough understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils know how to collate data and produce simple tally charts and bar graphs. They tell the time to the nearest five minutes. The weakest aspect of pupils' work is their ability to apply their knowledge to practical situations and problems which are expressed as words, but here, too, pupils are making good progress. The school's analysis has already identified the weakness, and all teachers are placing a greater emphasis on this aspect of mathematics within their weekly planning which is thorough, covers all elements of the curriculum and is giving pupils a good foundation for the future.
121. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average, and pupils leave the school with good numeracy skills. Good teaching and secure subject knowledge are helping pupils to become more confident in handling numbers, to develop different strategies for carrying out calculations and to apply known facts to check that their answers are reasonable. In a very good mental session in Year 6, for example, pupils were able to explain how to identify whether a number is divisible by 2, 3 or 6, and they used this knowledge well to produce three-digit numbers from randomly generated digits which were divisible by these units. Analysis of pupils' past performance, carried out rigorously by the coordinator, helps to identify areas of weakness, and good teaching is helping to address the weaknesses. In an impressively well-prepared lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils were given a wide variety of practical activities to undertake in order to help improve their ability to interpret different scales of measurement. Although some pupils still struggled with the concepts, good progress was evident during the lesson. Similarly, in Year 5, weaknesses identified in pupils' ability to handle fractions was being covered systematically in a lesson devoted to gaining a better understanding of improper fractions. Although pupils struggled with some of the concepts, progress was, nevertheless, evident, and the school's own awareness of where pupils are experiencing difficulties is helping to raise standards.
122. As at Key Stage 1, the strengths in pupils' work in mathematics lie in their ability to handle numbers, and the weakest area is their ability to apply these skills to solving problems. Good teaching strategies and the use of different resources and techniques during the mental mathematics sessions at the start of each lesson are increasing pupils' confidence to manipulate numbers. By the end of Year 6, most pupils demonstrate the ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide using a

variety of different methods both on paper and in their heads. Standards throughout the school are improving, as these teaching methods are providing an ever more solid base on which to build in the future. Although many pupils can perform calculations quite quickly and accurately in their heads, most still find it very hard to work out problems which are expressed in words or which require them to work out which operations they should use. In a lesson devoted to problem-solving in Year 4, for example, some pupils had great difficulty in working out the cost of each ticket when given the total price paid by four people. Here, as in other aspects of mathematics, progress is being made because the school is aware of the areas in which pupils are struggling, and teachers are ensuring that their planning addresses these areas.

123. The development of mathematics has received a high priority since the last inspection, and the impact of the initiatives undertaken by the school has been positive. As a result, the teachers' confidence and expertise in teaching the subject has improved significantly. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been particularly beneficial in providing a clear curricular structure for teachers and in helping them to develop more effective teaching methods. Greater attention has been given to monitoring the way the subject is taught and the standards pupils achieve, and this has helped the school to gain a clearer understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of the teaching was satisfactory. Teaching and learning are now good throughout the school. Most of the lessons observed during the inspection, at Key Stages 1 and 2, were good, and there was one very good lesson. During their introductory sessions, the teachers give clear explanations, help pupils to think about what they are doing and to develop the ability to work things out for themselves. Lessons are well structured, providing pupils with a range of activities, which are well matched to their individual needs. Positive strategies have been identified and put into practice in order to improve teaching. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own understanding at the end of a lesson by indicating whether they have fully or partially understood the objective for the lesson or whether they are still having difficulty. Although not used entirely consistently, the system helps teachers to identify where further support is needed. Pupils have individual targets pasted into their books, and these help to focus their attention on what they need to learn. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to explain how they arrived at their answers, but in some lessons a failure to do this means that pupils do not always consolidate their learning as well as they might, particularly in situations where they have given an incorrect answer to start off with. Teachers' planning is very thorough, and there are clear links established to the overall scheme of work. As pupils move through the school, it is easy to see from previous planning what has been covered and what levels pupils are expected to be achieving. Homework is used effectively in most classes to reinforce the work undertaken in school.
124. Most teachers use time effectively, although they do not always make it clear to pupils how much they expect them to achieve in a given time. Whilst pupils' behaviour and concentration in mathematics is generally good, and better than in some subjects, restlessness and a lack of maturity is evident at times in some lessons, and impinges on pupils' learning. Although pupils made good progress in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, for example, the progress of a small minority of pupils could have been even greater if they had had the maturity and self-discipline to concentrate on their tasks throughout the lesson. In Year 3, the confrontational attitude and interplay between two pupils with special educational needs disturbed a lesson, which in many other respects was very good. Whilst other subjects offer opportunities to develop pupils' mathematical skills, these are not always exploited as effectively as they could be. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson in Year 6, pupils were learning to enter commands to control the movement of a screen turtle to create geometrical shapes. The lesson provided an ideal opportunity to reinforce pupils' understanding of angles, an aspect which previous analysis had shown to be a weakness. The opportunity was not taken, however, and pupils struggled in the information technology task, as they failed to understand the relationship between internal and external angles of regular shapes and the relation these bore to the degrees of turn they needed to use in order to make the turtle draw shapes, such as a hexagon or octagon.
125. At present, little use is made of information and communication technology within mathematics, although the school has recently invested in a new integrated learning program for mathematics, for which staff have undertaken training and which a few classes have very recently started using. It is too early to evaluate what impact this is having on pupils' learning. However, its introduction is indicative of the very good approach to developing this subject, which has been evident since it has been identified as a priority for development within the school development plan. The school is

moving in the right direction, and with its very good level of resources, improving confidence amongst the teachers and expert guidance available from the coordinator, the school is well placed to make even further improvements.

SCIENCE

126. There has been very good improvement in science, particularly at Key Stage 2, where standards were slightly below the national average at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in science is well above the standards expected nationally at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The percentage of pupils matching national expectations and above is very high. While pupils make good progress overall, they make very good progress in acquiring scientific knowledge, an area that had been identified for improvement by the school.
127. The teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2001 showed standards to be very high, with all pupils matching standards expected nationally. A high proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3, especially in physical processes, because teachers are particularly confident in teaching this aspect of science. At Key Stage 2, the National Curriculum assessment test results in the year 2001 were well above the national average. All pupils achieved Level 4 and half of them Level 5. The trend since the last inspection has been one of continuous improvement, with results improving at a much faster rate than the national trend. There was no difference in the attainment of boys and girls in science in 2001. Standards are much higher now than at the time of the last inspection.
128. The overall improvement in science is attributable to a number of considered strategies adopted by the school in order to raise standards. In Key Stage 1, mixed-age classes are taught successfully through a rolling programme of science units that provides for all ages and levels of ability. In Key Stage 2, pupils receive a broad curriculum that consists of a wide range of scientific aspects, resulting in a very good range of scientific knowledge by the end of the key stage. The time allocated to teaching science has increased, allowing pupils longer sessions in which to work. Pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons. They are well supported in lessons and, consequently, also make good progress. Higher ability pupils, especially in upper Key Stage 2, are presented with appropriate challenges in order to extend their thinking and help them learn how to solve scientific problems. The results at the end of Key Stage 2 are analysed by the coordinator, and areas of weakness are targeted for improvement.
129. Standards in investigating and exploring are good. Although significant progress has been made in learning how to conduct investigations, the planning and assessment of investigating and experimenting remains a focus area of the curriculum. The new system used by teachers for planning an investigation is very effective. It has strengthened teachers' confidence and is improving standards in this aspect of science. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are confident with the process of predicting and finding out in scientific terms. They investigate and test to discover, for example, the many ways of making sounds. Pupils record their conclusions by writing down their results, drawing pictures or tables and completing worksheets. Many pupils already have a good understanding of a fair test, even though they carry them out with some help. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make good written observations and work together in investigations requiring considered responses, both verbal and written. However, some pupils do not complete their tests in some lessons because of the disruptive behaviour and immature attitudes of a small number of pupils. Pupils give clear explanations of a fair test and understand that only one variable can be changed. They employ a wider range of ways for recording their results. They explain, in good detail, tests they have undertaken and use the necessary scientific language confidently. Teachers respect pupils' contributions, whatever their suggestions may be, which helps to improve pupils' confidence in science.
130. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils display a very good range of knowledge of life processes and living things. Younger pupils talk confidently about habitats and the results of varying temperatures, while older pupils explain the term habitat more fully, discussing environmental issues.
131. Standards of attainment in the area of materials and their properties are very good. Younger pupils talk confidently about different materials. Pupils in Year 2, for example, describe the properties of some materials as 'smooth', 'soft' and 'rough'. They understand how materials can be changed and that these processes can often be reversed. In Key Stage 2, pupils provide good explanations in

scientific terms of investigations they have undertaken in this area. Pupils in Year 5, for example, observe that a thicker liquid, such as tomato sauce, evaporates more slowly than a thinner liquid, and understand that the reasons have to do with the evaporation of water. Pupils in Year 6 are confident in their knowledge of materials and their properties.

132. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a very good breadth of knowledge in the area of physical process. Most pupils use an interesting range of scientific terminology in their explanations of physical phenomena. Pupils in Year 1 find out about sounds made by the human body, and use a tape recorder to record their results. Pupils in Year 2 know what is required to make a bulb light up and have extensive knowledge of sources of light. Throughout all lessons, pupils use the correct technical language with confidence. Standards achieved in physical processes by the end of Key Stage 2 are very good. In Year 6, for example, pupils talk confidently and with very good understanding about the reasons for night and day.
133. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some examples of very good teaching in Key Stage 1. Lessons are generally well planned, with clear objectives, which help pupils to focus on what they have to learn. In most lessons, teachers have good expectations of what pupils should achieve, and they challenge pupils to think and try things out for themselves, for example, when constructing a complete circuit and recording this using the correct symbols. Pupils apply a good level of intellectual effort and learning is good. In the very good lessons observed during the inspection, the teachers paid close attention to pupils' individual needs, planned their resources thoughtfully planned and successfully communicated their high expectations of pupils' learning. Interesting teaching sustained very good levels of concentration and enabled the pupils to learn very well. Most teachers place good emphasis on the consistent use of scientific language, as a result of which pupils increase their confidence in using the right scientific vocabulary. The school uses the government's suggested scheme of work, which has contributed to an increase in teachers' confidence with science and, as a result, pupils have a much clearer understanding of their work. However, further development is still needed in the area of investigation and exploration, as some teachers allow pupils insufficient opportunity to contribute to the planning stage. There is insufficient emphasis placed on the development of independent and mature attitudes of older pupils in Key Stage 2. The assessment procedures are good, but teachers do not follow the school's agreed marking policy consistently by providing clear comments on pupils' work to indicate how they could improve. For pupils in Year 6, the school provides a comprehensive revision programme, which consolidates and extends pupils' knowledge of all aspects of science.
134. Teachers develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well, for example by encouraging the use of graphs and tables to record the results of scientific investigations. Particular emphasis is given to developing pupils' technical vocabulary to deepen their understanding and help them to think scientifically. Little use is made of information and communication technology in science, and this is unsatisfactory. The school has included the need to develop the use of information and communication technology in the future planning for science.
135. The coordinator provides a good level of support for colleagues and has aims to raise standards further. Teaching and planning are monitored, together with test results in order to improve standards. Resources are adequate, although they would be more easily accessible if they were organised more efficiently.

ART AND DESIGN

136. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were above average at both key stages, the quality of teaching was good, and displays were described as vibrant. Steady improvement has taken place during the intervening years, and the school has successfully maintained high standards. Pupils exceed the expected levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The quality of teaching is consistently high, and pupils of all abilities make good progress. Displays demonstrate the breadth of pupils' knowledge across the whole art curriculum. However, although display work is carefully presented, its quality varies, and it does not always reflect the high quality of work produced in class lessons.
137. The scheme of work ensures skills are developed systematically. It relates well to other subjects and provides good, balanced coverage. Pupils in Year 3, for example, had linked work on moving figures very effectively to their topic about Ancient Greece. They integrated work in design and

technology and skills acquired in art well to create an imaginative range of good quality three-dimensional sculptures for the area outside their classroom.

138. As pupils move through the school, they explore an increasingly wide range of media. Pupils of all ages use sketchbooks purposefully. They have ample opportunity to develop ideas, investigate and evaluate their own work and that of others. A particular strength is the depth of their knowledge and understanding. In Year 5, for example, pupils used a wide variety of materials and techniques in their topics on masks. Some produced some high quality clay Aztec masks, whilst others put the finishing touches to their equally good papier-mâché versions. Pupils cooperated well and genuinely appreciated each other's attempts to create warlike features. They adapted and refined their own work with a sense of maturity.
139. Pupils of all ages and abilities are impressively well informed about the work of famous artists. Whilst painting in the style of Lowry, for example, a boy in Year 2 commented that he didn't like the dull colours in 'Coming From The Mill' as much as the bright colours used by Van Gogh. Pupils also acquire an appreciation of artists who are not from Western cultures.
140. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good. It was never less than good at any time during the inspection. The headteacher works alongside class teachers and offers invaluable insight and expertise. Her own teaching is of a high standard. As a result of good quality teaching that focuses very effectively on the structured development of skills, pupils approach their artwork with confidence and maturity. They are totally absorbed in their activities and produce work of good quality, because they have the skills to improve and refine. Teachers are well informed, and they promote literacy skills particularly well by using the correct technical vocabulary. They teach skills very effectively and encourage pupils to reach even higher standards by showing them examples of best practice. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils were highly motivated by the good range of photographs and posters that had provided the stimulus for their lesson on landscapes. One pupil sat separately sketching in perspective, whilst others experimented freely. The high quality input produced good standards of work. Occasionally, however, even where teaching is very good, teachers pay insufficient attention to safety issues, and pupils do not have securely established routines for working in an organised way. The school has a small number of computer programs, such as 'Colour Magic', but information and communication technology does not make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
141. Pupils enjoy art and design and, for many, it is their favourite subject. It is easy to understand the disappointment of some older pupils when they miss their lesson on a regular basis for extra mathematics tuition. These pupils miss valuable skills' teaching input and do not have time to refine and develop their ideas in as much detail as other members of the class.
142. Although the coordinator is newly appointed, she already has a clear sense of direction for the subject. Priorities for development are accurate and include re-organising the school's good range of resources, evaluating assessment procedures and providing class teachers with more helpful guidance on standards pupils can achieve. The school is well placed to maintain its high standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

143. Standards in design and technology have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are above the expected level by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils have a good range of technological knowledge.
144. By the end of Year 2, pupils know how to use tools and join materials to make a construction stronger. They use tools provided with good accuracy, but require more opportunities to make their own selection. Pupils make realistic plans for achieving their intentions and think ahead about the sequence of their work. For example, pupils measure and mark out the roof of a model house which they are making as they understand that measuring will make the model more accurate.
145. By the end of Year 6, pupils explain a simple mechanism, such as that used in a moving toy, knowledgeably and know how the mechanism can be used in different ways. Pupils provide, in detail, the characteristics of materials, which are suitable to make a simple shelter. They explain how they can change the design when they find a material or method of construction unsuitable. The development of skills is very evident in the confident way pupils explain the processes of joining

and strengthening a structure. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons, sometime supported by learning assistants who explain the processes in more detail.

146. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers prepare their lessons well and are confident in their knowledge of the subject, resulting in good learning. They are clear in their explanations, and objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lessons, enabling pupils to be clear about the learning expected. Teachers organise their lessons well, particularly in Key Stage 1, resulting in pupils learning at a good pace with no loss of time. They provide appropriate resources. In Year 2, for example, the good range of resources enabled pupils to undertake experiments successfully. Sometimes, however, resources are insufficient in quantity when a task requires all groups to work at the same time, such as in Year 5 when pupils were making their moving toy. Relationships are good, particularly in Key Stage 1, where teachers lead effective discussions and encourage pupils to share their views. Teachers in upper Key Stage 2 do not always demand sensible behaviour from their pupils and, as a result, some time is spent on maintaining the right standard of discipline. This slows the lesson and, consequently, the learning of some pupils.
147. Pupils are keen to develop their skills and knowledge. They work and behave mostly well, resulting in good progress. However, some pupils in upper Key Stage 2 behave in an immature way, especially when asked to find a partner or to work in groups. They are fussy and silly and do not always work well independently. Consequently, they fail to achieve the same high standards as other pupils. The curriculum for design and technology covers all the necessary elements including the stages of planning, design and evaluation, in addition to making articles. Pupils work with a good range of materials and handle tools carefully, with good attitudes to health and safety. This was particularly evident in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class as pupils prepared vegetables.
148. The subject coordinator has recently been appointed and has identified realistic priorities for future improvements, including the purchase and organisation of resources.

GEOGRAPHY

149. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are attaining the levels expected. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
150. Pupils in Year 1 are developing a sense of place in relation to home, school and places further away. They are able to discuss where they live and how they get to school. They can draw simple sketch maps to show the location of each. They learn about the differences between hot and cold countries. In Year 2, pupils go out into the locality surrounding the school. They observe specific features such as the Sports Centre. More able pupils draw good sketch maps of the locality and devise their own key, using their own choice of symbols. These pupils are able to express views and opinions about how the environment is influenced by people. All pupils are starting to use appropriate geographical language. Pupils in Year 2 make a large map of an island and use coordinates to plot the position of significant features, such as a farm or a jetty.
151. In Year 3, pupils study weather conditions around the world. Based on their research, more able pupils are able to compose a realistic weather forecast for a specific region, for example, Alice Springs, Australia. Pupils with special needs and lower-attaining pupils need much additional discussion and support to complete work set, for example, to mark the gradations on a thermometer. In Year 4, pupils make a detailed study of Bierton, using Ordnance Survey maps. More able pupils have an understanding of the symbols used and use this knowledge to locate specific features on maps. Pupils discuss current amenities and how these could be improved. One pupil, for example, suggested that the village would benefit from an athletics track. Other pupils used their knowledge to suggest where this could best be located. They considered issues such as suitability of the site, access and other related environmental issues. In Year 6, pupils make a specific study of the main features of rivers. On a field study trip to a local river, they record statistics relating to depth, width and speed of flow. They use terms such as 'spillway' and 'flume' with understanding. They use a digital camera to assist in their recording and follow-up work. They record the speed of flow of the river over a given distance. In subsequent lessons, they are keen to demonstrate a good use of their mathematical knowledge to work out the average speed of flow. They also record their other findings including the principle features on maps. Other elements of work include a specific study of the Lake District and a study of volcanoes.

152. The quality of teaching and learning in geography is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The lessons observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good. The teaching has a number of strengths. Basic skills are taught well, with teachers being conscious to enhance literacy and numeracy skills whenever possible. Time and resources are used well. All lessons are carefully planned, and the needs of all pupils are considered consistently. In group-work, the tasks set for the more able are more demanding than those for pupils of average ability. Further consideration is given to the needs of below average pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils often benefit from the guidance of a learning support assistant. These procedures enable all pupils to be fully involved in lessons at an appropriate level. Although at a much lower level of attainment, the progress of pupils with special educational needs is often good in relation to their prior attainment and knowledge. In Key Stage 2, whilst whole-class question-and-answer sessions are very quiet and orderly, potentially good or very good lessons are sometimes spoilt because pupils lack the maturity or self-control to work quietly in groups. Noise levels are frequently unacceptably high and teachers have constantly to call classes back to order and to remind them to work quietly. This is despite the fact that pupils are interested in their topic and are keen to succeed. Pupils find it difficult to work and apply themselves unless directly supervised. At Key Stage 2, teachers have a tendency to be generous with praise when it is ill-deserved. Pupils are likely, therefore, to have an inaccurate knowledge of their personal progress and achievement.
153. The management of geography is satisfactory. All necessary planning is in place. This enables teachers in each year group to plan their lessons in a sequential and structured way. In both key stages, good use is made of assessment, and detailed records are kept of individual pupils' progress. Work is marked regularly following the agreed school scheme. The quality and quantity of resources have improved since the last inspection. They are of a good quality and are used well to enhance teaching and learning. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology in the subject. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

HISTORY

154. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are attaining the levels expected. These standards are the same as at the time of the last inspection.
155. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed an awareness of the passing of time and the differences between the past and present. For example, pupils in Year 1 are able to complete a simple time-line marking significant events in their young lives between birth and starting school. In Year 2, pupils consider important events in history. More able pupils can give the date of the Great Fire of London. They know the name of the king at that time. Most pupils are aware of the differences between fire-fighting then and now. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are able, with support, to place a series of pictures in the correct sequence from the start of the fire to its end. Other pupils use their literacy skills well to write a short report of events. Their handwriting is well formed and sentences are well punctuated.
156. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed a deeper understanding of the more distant past. In Year 3, they make a detailed study of the Ancient Greeks. They use a range of secondary sources to discover some of the differences between life now and then. For example, they find out how education differed. In Year 5, pupils make a similar study of the Aztecs. In a very good class discussion, they gave serious consideration to the reasons, which might have motivated Cortes to invade Mexico. In Year 6, pupils study the Victorians, learning in particular about education, medicine and industry. They use the Internet to find out more about the work of Dr Barnardo and the need for his work with children.
157. Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory. Overall, they are good. The pupils are very interested, very attentive and work very hard. Their behaviour is very good. In one lesson in Year 3, teaching and learning were excellent. This lesson was characterised by excellent management of pupils and excellent relationships. All pupils across the ability range were fully involved throughout the lesson. The pace of learning was very good. The pupils were very enthusiastic and the quality of class discussion was very high. Pupils were able to apply themselves very well to the tasks set for their group. They worked together very quietly and effectively for the whole of the lesson. This lesson exemplified teaching skills of the very highest order. In all lessons, teachers ensure that their

planning considers the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The progress made by these pupils is good. Learning support assistants, when available, are fully involved in assisting both pupils and teachers. Tasks are appropriately set to be demanding to all abilities. Lesson planning is thorough. This contributes to the good pace of lessons and to good progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils' work is marked regularly using the school's agreed approach.

158. The management and planning of history are satisfactory. The newly appointed coordinator has appropriate priorities for the development of the subject. The use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress is very good. Resources are adequate and are used appropriately to support teaching and learning. Additional artefacts related to the topic being taught are borrowed from local museums. Very good use is made of these resources in lessons. Teachers make good use of educational visits to local sites of historic interest to give pupils first-hand knowledge. Although some use is made of information and communication technology, overall, its application in the teaching of history is unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

159. Good leadership from the subject coordinator, together with a sensible plan of action and the commitment of staff to improve their understanding of the subject, has resulted in very good improvement in the school's provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection. The installation of a new computer suite has had a major impact on the way the subject is taught. All classes now have weekly lessons for information and communication technology, as a result of which pupils of all abilities have made good progress in acquiring new skills and developing their ability to use a range of software. Standards have improved from the low levels noted in the previous inspection, and pupils are now achieving the expected levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. However, teachers are not yet making use of the skills pupils have learnt in wider contexts, as computers are rarely used outside the designated lessons for information and communication technology, and few subjects make purposeful use of technology as a tool for learning. The school has already identified this as an area for further development, and training for all staff is planned for the near future to develop the wider use of technology within the school.
160. By the end of Year 2, most pupils reach the national expectation of Level 2 in all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils acquire an appropriate range of skills which enable them to exchange and share information. For example, they type simple texts using a word processor and know how to alter the colour, size and appearance of the text. They develop their ideas well. For example, when producing drawings and pictures using a graphics program, they experiment with a variety of tools to create different effects. They are learning how computer programs can be used to find things out. They use a data-handling program to enter information and then represent it in the form of a graph, which they then use to answer simple questions, such as 'Which was the most popular party food?' in response to their survey of opinions within the class. Because technology is not yet used widely in other subjects, pupils have yet to understand fully how powerful a tool a computer can be for gathering information, for example, through the use of CD-ROMs or the Internet. Although pupils can make basic alterations to their work, for example by using the delete key or selecting portions of text to alter, the skills of reviewing, modifying and evaluating their work as it progresses are not taught as thoroughly as other aspects of the curriculum, and pupils are not critical enough of their own work.
161. Because they have weekly access to computers, pupils master the basic skills of using a computer at an early age. Throughout the school, pupils know how to start the computer, enter the appropriate password, locate and open programs, and save and print their work. Pupils in Key Stage 2 know how to retrieve work, which they have previously saved, in order to edit it. As they move through the school, pupils start to transfer skills, which they have already learnt, from one program to another. For example, having learnt how to change the colour and size of text in one program, they learn very quickly how to carry out the same operation within another program. In Year 1, pupils learn to type single words or short phrases but, by the end of Year 2, they produce longer pieces of text, which they are starting to format in different ways. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show a much greater awareness of audience as they produce longer pieces of writing, which are presented well by combining graphics and careful formatting of the text.
162. By the end of Year 6, pupils have gained the ground lost whilst the school's provision was poor, and now demonstrate sound achievement in all aspects of the subject. Over the course of the year,

pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, although in some individual lessons pupils could make better progress if they showed greater cooperation and attentiveness. To their skills in using a standard paint package to produce graphics, they have added the ability to use an object-based drawing program. They know how to communicate with others via e-mail and have a basic understanding of how to use formulae in a spreadsheet to produce simple calculations. They are developing an understanding of how computers and events can be controlled through commands, although some pupils have yet to learn how important it is to be precise in giving instructions. Some of the more able pupils demonstrate good skills in organising, refining and presenting their ideas through a multimedia booklet, incorporating images, text and links to different parts of the booklet. Whilst pupils now have a satisfactory level of skill in using computers, they do not have enough opportunity to put these skills to good effect by making greater use of information and communication technology within other subject areas. Pupils know how to access the Internet and use CD-ROMs, but do not consolidate or refine their skills in using such tools. Equally, although they are capable of producing well-presented text on a word processor, little use is made of these skills to help them develop and refine their writing.

163. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is satisfactory overall, but good at Key Stage 1, where lessons are more focused and pupils are managed more effectively. The teachers' confidence and expertise has improved considerably as a result of in-service training and the guidance given by the subject coordinator, and further training is due to take place in the near future. All staff are competent in using the computer suite effectively and giving pupils clear instructions. Lessons are generally well planned, although some of the learning purposes, which are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson, are expressed in somewhat confusing language for the pupils. In all classes, pupils show good motivation to learn. They are interested and keen to carry out the tasks they are given. At times, particularly at Key Stage 2, pupils are keener to start their work than they are to listen to the teacher's explanations, and this impedes progress as they do not fully understand what they are required to do. The teachers' ability to handle such situations varies considerably. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, the pupils' attentiveness, as they sat quietly for the introduction to the lesson, and the teacher's clear explanations ensured that pupils had a very clear idea of what they were aiming to achieve. In a lesson in Year 4, however, pupils lost concentration during the introduction, and the teacher needed to take time later in the lesson to explain what was required. Some pupils, particularly towards the top end of the school, display rather immature attitudes, making a fuss about the partner they are to work with and not always aware of the need to take turns. On such occasions, working in pairs can be frustrating for the passive partner, but the school has not yet considered other forms of organisation or timetabling of the computer suite so that pupils can have sole access to a computer. The pupils' motivation, nevertheless, ensures that they make good progress in their learning, but more could be achieved in some lessons with more cooperative and attentive attitudes.
164. In most lessons, pupils of all abilities are given appropriate opportunities to make progress. Occasionally, the teacher's instructions are too prescriptive and do not give pupils enough freedom to make their own independent choices, which can hold back the progress of those who learn or work more quickly than others. When available, the presence of teaching assistants is particularly beneficial to the learning of pupils with special educational needs or those who find it hard to grasp new concepts or techniques quickly. In a lesson in Year 4, for example, one pupil with a statement of special educational need made particularly good progress because the assistant helped her to concentrate and asked appropriate questions which helped the pupil work out what to do. Most teachers use the video projector very effectively at the start and end of each lesson. This enables all pupils to see what is being demonstrated very clearly on the large screen and to gain a much clearer understanding than is possible when peering at a small screen from a distance.
165. The school is following a recommended scheme of work in order to provide a sound structure for the curriculum. This generally works effectively, but more thought needs to be given as to how the scheme can be adapted to fit the school's requirements in a more profitable way. Because of the mixed-age class in Key Stage 1, the school adopts a rolling programme for the initial units of the scheme. However, by the time some pupils reach these units, they are no longer relevant to their needs, as they have already mastered the skills that are introduced. In Key Stage 2, skills are not always taught within a meaningful context, which could help pupils to make progress in other subjects. In Year 3, for example, pupils were learning about the structure of a database and how to search for information. The records used, however, did not relate to anything else the pupils were studying and, therefore, had little relevance, and apparently little interest, for them. At other times,

teachers fail to capitalise on opportunities to extend pupils' learning elsewhere. In a lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils were investigating the use of Logo to control the movement of a turtle on screen. The activity provided an ideal opportunity to consolidate pupils' understanding of angles, but because the mathematical concepts were not dealt with, pupils took much longer to get to grips with producing their geometrical patterns.

166. Although there are still weaknesses in the overall provision for information and communication technology, much progress has been made. The curriculum now has a clear structure to guide teachers in their planning, and helpful advice is available from the coordinator. Some good and perceptive monitoring of lessons has also provided development points to improve teaching. The school has some good procedures for assessing pupils' skills, and termly meetings to moderate pupils' work are helping to raise teachers' awareness of the standards pupils should be achieving. At present, however, the information gained from these assessments is not yet being used as well as it could be to influence teacher's planning. Resources and accommodation are good, and have improved significantly since the last inspection. All of these factors have contributed to the good progress now being made, and have provided a good platform from which to expand the use of information and communication technology in other subjects.

MUSIC

167. The last time the school was inspected, pupils achieved average standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average standards at Key Stage 2. Overall, pupils made satisfactory progress. Choir and recorder group members made good progress. Teaching was of good quality because teachers had good subject knowledge.
168. A number of changes have taken place since the previous inspection. The time allocation for teaching music has been reduced since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Currently, some non-specialist class teachers are not totally confident with the subject. Although they handle their insecurity well, they are not sure what standards pupils can achieve and do not always cater for the needs of more able pupils in class lessons. However, the school still manages to provide pupils with worthwhile learning experiences. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress and, although overall standards are not as high as they were by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement is similar to that found in other schools. The school has recognised the need to improve its provision for music and has recently appointed a member of staff with musical ability to share coordination of the subject. It is too early to assess the impact of the new organisation on raising standards.
169. The range of instrumental tuition is very good. Recorder work and choir are also of good quality, and all these activities have a positive impact on standards, particularly for the musically talented pupils, who achieve well. However, pupils sometimes miss their entitlement to other important lessons, such as religious education, when instrumental tuition takes place at the same time each week. Although teachers are careful to explain the content of the lesson on their return, these pupils miss valuable teaching input and discussion that leads to the development of skills in the subject they have missed.
170. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know an adequate range of songs and rhymes. Most know the names of familiar musical instruments, and they develop an awareness of mood when they listen to music. For example, pupils in a lesson in Year 2 identified musical instruments such as flutes and clarinets very accurately as they listened to extracts from 'Peter and the Wolf'. They used literacy skills well when they described their feelings as they listened to the music. Words such as 'scary', 'terrified' and 'petrified' sprang to mind. More able pupils contrasted these feelings with the calmer mood of a song that they had just learned. Younger pupils sing with great enthusiasm. One class was very amused by the limerick about the lady from Ealing and made swift progress because the humour of the song captured their interest.
171. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have developed a sound understanding of rhythm and pulse. A few more able pupils understand the difference between simple and compound time. Both boys and girls sing tunefully and contribute equally well in class lessons and whole-school singing practice. However, a few boys in Year 6 display inappropriate behaviour and sometimes adversely affect the progress of the majority.

172. The school uses an appropriate scheme for non-specialist class teachers. The scheme is organised effectively into topics that ensure balanced coverage of the whole music curriculum. Teachers also have a simple, but effective, system for recording pupils' progress.
173. The overall quality of teaching and pupils' rate of learning are satisfactory, although pupils do not always have enough opportunity to refine their work or develop skills in any structured way. In addition, although they know the names of many familiar percussion instruments, such as tambourines and triangles, they do not always know how to play them correctly, and there are no established rules or routines for group music-making. Pupils' level of confidence and expertise is totally dependent on class teachers' security with the subject. A few teachers who are accomplished practitioners in other subjects are very aware of their insecurity with music and know they are not giving pupils the same high quality input in music lessons. For example, in a lesson in Year 2, the teacher guided pupils carefully as they listened to tape-recorded extracts of music. However, pupils became restless because they were asked to listen for a long time without enough sense of purpose. In Year 6, the teacher used correct technical vocabulary very well and provided pupils with a difficult task when they were asked to compose and rehearse a short rhythmic phrase. However, some pupils took time to participate because the main activity did not interest them sufficiently. Others found difficulty in working together amicably. As a consequence, the inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils began to adversely affect the progress of the class until this small minority became more involved in the activity. In contrast, the same group of pupils enjoyed their whole-school singing practice and made good progress. They listened attentively to music from 'The Planets' as they entered the hall. Pupils sang confidently unaccompanied. They rose to the challenge and sang well in parts. The teacher taught a new hymn very effectively, using good techniques for developing pupils' vocal skills. Pupils responded by learning very quickly and producing singing of good quality. Although there is some evidence of information and communication technology being used to aid progress, computers do not form an important part of the music curriculum and do not make a strong enough contribution to pupils' musical development.
174. Pupils throughout the school have adequate opportunity to participate in assemblies and other collaborative occasions, such as Harvest Festivals and Christmas celebrations. Visiting musicians from the peripatetic music service perform regularly, and music days and composing workshops enhance provision well. The school has an interesting range of familiar and more unusual instruments, including a small selection of good quality multi-cultural instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

175. The school has maintained satisfactory standards in gymnastics, dance and games since the last inspection. Pupils reach the expected standards by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils are taken swimming in Years 3 and 4, and the great majority of pupils reach national expectations for the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity of a residential visit to Skerne Lodge, which provides well for outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils are fully involved in lessons, and those with special educational needs make the same steady progress as their classmates, sometimes helped by additional support from classroom assistants. Pupils who are unable to take part in a lesson observe and evaluate the performance of others.
176. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are satisfactory. Pupils in Year 1 successfully reproduce and explore simple skills and actions and show basic skill and control as they run, skip and jump. They participate actively. Through well-planned lessons and good teaching, pupils have a clear understanding of how to develop skills. For example, in a games lesson with pupils in Year 2, attention was paid to the skill of throwing a ball accurately and using a bat with control. Pupils began the lesson with a low level of skill but, through the teacher's encouragement and expertise, they made good progress and moved on to using bats with control while working in pairs.
177. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach a satisfactory standard. In dance, older pupils connect skills, techniques and ideas appropriately and apply them as they move to music with good awareness of their bodies. They link movements as they represent pinballs, meeting, parting and avoiding. They compare and comment on the skills, techniques and ideas in their own and others' work in order to improve their performance. Pupils are given time to plan and discuss their work as well as evaluate that of others, and this helps them to refine their own sequences of movement. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop appropriate skills in gymnastics, focusing on symmetry and points of balance. Pupils need to learn the effect of exercise on the body and its value to health and fitness.

178. Most pupils are well behaved. However, the lack of maturity shown by some older pupils affects the standards reached in lessons. Pupils in Year 5 were noisy in their planning of a dance sequence and some pupils in Year 6 were fussy and argumentative when working in groups, and a number of minor injuries occurred during these lessons. The teachers have to spend too much time with disruptive pupils and this affects the standards achieved. They pay insufficient regard to helping pupils develop greater maturity and independence in lessons. However, pupils behave well in the changing areas and between lessons. They generally use equipment sensibly and safely, having been taught to move apparatus with care.
179. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are examples of well-paced and active lessons, where teachers pay good attention to the effects of exercise and the importance of warming and stretching the body prior to a lesson. However, this is mainly in Key Stage 1 and is not always the case in lessons for older pupils. Pupils do not always have warm-up sessions, and not enough emphasis is given to the importance of cooling down following exercise. The teachers' expectations are lower, the pace of lessons slows, and there is a reduction in the level of activity demanded as pupils move through the school. Some lessons lack a clear teaching focus. This results in standards that are not as high as they could be by the end of Year 6. Some teachers display good subject knowledge, especially in games and, in these lessons, pupils make good progress. By linking symmetrical shapes made by body movements to mathematics, pupils are given a good stimulus from which to improve. Demonstrations by pupils are used effectively to consolidate the learning of new movements.
180. The coordinator has been appointed very recently and has had little opportunity to influence the subject. However, extra-curricular sport is very good, which is due to the enthusiasm, organisation and involvement of the coordinator. The school has had successes in netball, football, cross-country running and athletics. The school maintains good links with local sports centres and the swimming pool, and the use of these facilities enhances the school's provision for physical education. This all contributes to the enthusiasm shown by pupils. Both boys and girls are involved in all events. After-school clubs consist of netball and football for pupils in Key Stage 2 and dance throughout the school. Resources are satisfactory, although the quantity and quality of the small apparatus needs improving.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

181. Pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
182. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound understanding of major religious celebrations and special occasions, such as weddings and baptisms. In this respect, good use is made of the nearby church. The vicar regularly talks to pupils about the work of the church and the significance of its different features. Pupils also know a range of Bible stories, such as the story of the Prodigal Son. They learn the importance of apologising and forgiveness.
183. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have acquired a wider understanding of the world's great religions, including Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. They know some of the important accounts in the Bible, such as the life of Moses and the writing of the Ten Commandments. They discuss the qualities of the writing of important men of faith, such as Ghandi and Martin Luther King.
184. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, which enables them to give clear explanations. Lessons are well planned. This ensures that the pace of lessons is good. Teachers also ensure that the work set is planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, ensuring that learning is demanding and relevant to pupils' level of understanding. For example, in one lesson in Year 4, pupils were asked to record the events leading to the establishment of a national Bible society. More able pupils used recently learned literacy skills to write the story as a play-script. Pupils with special educational needs recorded the story through picture and sentence with the very positive support of the special needs coordinator. Pupils have good attitudes to religious education. They are very interested, and their behaviour in lessons is good. Work is marked regularly in accordance with the school's agreed scheme.
185. Religious education is led well by a newly appointed, but enthusiastic, coordinator. Appropriate priorities for the development of the subject have been agreed. Whilst teachers' plans are

monitored, there is no opportunity for teaching to be observed. Procedures for assessment are good. Teachers keep an on-going record of pupils' achievements. Resources are good and are used well in lessons to support the good quality learning. However, unsatisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support learning. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education through the consideration of a wide range of religious beliefs and related cultural influences. Pupils also consider how their personal behaviour impinges on the lives of others.