

INSPECTION REPORT

ESSENDON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Essendon, Hatfield

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117393

Headteacher: Mr R Woodhouse

Reporting inspector: Mr J A Sangster
20010

Dates of inspection: 29th April – 2nd May 2002

Inspection number: 196889

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Essendon Hatfield Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL9 6HD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Spragg
Date of previous inspection:	10 th – 12 th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Sangster 20010	Registered inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education Religious education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Margaret Morrissey, OBE 9769	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Malcolm Johnstone 21114	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Special educational needs Equal opportunities Mathematics Science Geography History Information and communication technology Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Assessment

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Essendon is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. It has 97 pupils on roll, ranging in age from three to eleven. This is smaller than most primary schools. There are 46 boys and 51 girls. 20 pupils (21 per cent) are not of white UK heritage. 15 pupils (16 per cent of the school) are from traveller families. Some of these receive outside support. Four pupils are of mixed race and one is Japanese. One pupil speaks English as an additional language, but he has a good command of the language. 22 pupils are eligible for free school meals (23 per cent) – this is above average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. There are 36 pupils on the register of special educational needs (37 per cent), which is above average. There is quite a high level of pupil mobility, with 10 pupils joining the school and 11 leaving in the last school year other than at the usual time. All classes have pupils from more than one age group.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Standards in mathematics, science and music are above average and in most other subjects pupils reach the expected levels. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons and around the school are very good. This is a result of the good standard of teaching throughout the school and the high level of care shown to pupils. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by the staff and governing body. Although costs are high, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards achieved by pupils in mathematics, science and music are good.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- The headteacher has created an ethos in which all pupils are valued.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- The school provides very well for the well-being of all its pupils. It successfully includes pupils from all ethnic and social backgrounds.
- There are good links with parents, who hold very positive views of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators.
- Systems of checking how well pupils are doing in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Since then its improvement has been good, better than would normally be expected in this period of time. The school has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection. It now meets all the legal requirements for the registration of pupils, performance management and the implementation of a charging policy. It has developed a framework for planning which provides good coverage of the curriculum. Although levels of attainment when children start school have dropped, the school has maintained the standards achieved by pupils. Teaching has improved. There is good provision for all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The governing body now has a committee structure which enables it to carry out its role more effectively.

STANDARDS

Because only a small number of pupils took the National Curriculum tests in Years 2 and 6 in 2001, it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons with all schools nationally or with similar schools. Over the last three years the school's results have been slightly below the national trend. However, in 2001 results in Year 2 showed a big improvement on previous years, particularly in mathematics and writing. Results in mathematics and science in Year 6 were well above what would be expected in the light of the same group of pupils' previous attainment in Year 2, indicating that very good progress has been made. In English, results were close to what would be expected from that group of pupils' previous attainment.

The standards being achieved by pupils in the current Year 6 are above average for their age in mathematics and science. They are average for English. Similarly, the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 are above average in mathematics and science and average in English, although reading is good. Standards of speaking and listening are good throughout the school, as are standards in music. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are as expected for pupils' ages in Year 2 but as yet below those expected for older pupils, as the good foundation being laid has not yet worked its way through the school. In all other subjects pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. Pupils make good progress in the early years class and most reach the expected learning goals before starting in Year 1. Their achievement throughout the school is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are enthusiastic about school and very interested in lessons and other activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school and in the playground is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good between pupils and between teachers and pupils. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory.

The school is making good efforts to improve pupils' attendance and unauthorised absence; progress is slow but consistent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. In the early years class the teacher and support staff understand the needs of children and work well together in planning a good range of activities. Teaching in English and mathematics is good. Daily literacy and numeracy lessons are used effectively, and teachers match tasks well to the range of age and ability in the class, enabling all pupils to make good progress. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach, although a lack of suitable software has meant that they have not been able to develop pupils' use of information and communication technology sufficiently in other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers plan lessons well. They evaluate what they have done and adjust subsequent lessons to take account of what has worked well and what has not. Teachers follow national guidelines in most subjects. They manage pupils well and work well with their classroom assistants, who provide good support to pupils. As a result, pupils concentrate very well and develop a good level of independence in their learning. The school meets the needs of all its pupils, whatever their age, ability, or ethnic or social background. As a consequence, pupils throughout the school learn well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers pupils a broad curriculum, covering all National Curriculum requirements. Provision for pupils in the early years is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans have realistic targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils who are at an early stage of acquisition of English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good in all aspects. The school values the cultures and traditions of pupils' families, but also encourages them to develop a respect for other cultures and beliefs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. It has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall, and good in English, mathematics and science.

The school has established a good partnership with parents. The school provides pupils with a good range of extra-curricular activities, including good opportunities to take part in inter-school sport. Teachers provide good opportunities from the early years onwards for pupils to develop the skills of independent learning and to begin to take responsibilities in the school community. The provision for pupils' welfare, care, health and safety is very good. There are very good procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality. Child protection procedures are very good and known well to staff.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good personal leadership to the school, and has the full support of parents, staff and governors. Subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient opportunity to fulfil their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors carry out all their legal responsibilities and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has satisfactory procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of its own performance by the headteacher and governors.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its financial and other resources well.

The school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. Outside areas are being developed well. The school is committed to improvement. Financial management is good and the school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents are confident that the school is led and managed well.• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a complaint or a problem.• Their children like school and are making good progress.• Behaviour in the school is very good.• Teaching is good.• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A small proportion of parents do not feel that there is an interesting range of activities outside school.• A similar proportion do not feel that the school provides the right amount of work for their children to do at home.• A small minority do not feel the school works closely with parents.

The inspection team endorsed the positive views of parents. It did not agree with the negative views of a minority. For a school of this size, the range of extra-curricular activities is good. The amount of homework children have to do is about right. The majority of parents feel that the school has established good links and keeps them well informed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Because of the small numbers in each year group, there are variations from year to year in the results of National Curriculum tests which are not necessarily significant. At the time of the last inspection, for instance, there were only nine pupils in the Year 2 age group and six in Year 6 who had taken the tests the previous year. Results then were above average for pupils in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. At that time pupils' attainment on entry to the school was regarded as above average.
2. In 2001, there were 10 pupils in each of Years 2 and 6. This makes statistical comparisons unreliable, as one pupil represents 10 per cent. However, in Year 2 results in reading were close to average, in writing they were above average and in mathematics they were well above average. Each of these is a significant improvement on the previous two years, when results were well below average. In the teacher assessments for science in 2001, all pupils achieved the expected level for their age. Results in Year 6 in 2001 were below average overall but close to the average when compared with similar schools (having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals) and well above average when comparisons are made with this group of pupils' previous results in Year 2. The weakest subject was English, but it had been mathematics the year before and science the year before that, so there is no discernible trend in this. Nevertheless, the school has put in place strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing which are beginning to have an impact. There are no clear differences between the attainment of boys and girls or of pupils from different ethnic groups. The school has set challenging and higher targets for pupils in the current Years 2 and 6, and the evidence of the inspection indicates that pupils are likely to meet them.
3. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is now broadly average, with variations within each year group and from year to year because of the small numbers of children involved. By the end of the Foundation Stage, when they enter Year 1, the majority of pupils are achieving the early learning goals for their age, and about one third are exceeding them. They become confident learners. They make good progress in developing early reading and writing skills. They listen to others and take advantage of the opportunities they are given to talk about their experience at home and at school. Almost all of them can count to 10 and older pupils beyond this. They develop good skills on the computer and learn about the world around them through topics. They also develop creative and physical skills which are appropriate for their age.
4. The standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 2 are broadly average. They are above average in mathematics, science and music, and average in English and all other subjects. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are as expected for their age, except that they do not achieve the expected levels in ICT. Taking into account their attainment on entry and the overall good progress that pupils make as they move through the school, their achievement is good. Another significant factor in pupils' achievement is the mobility of pupils. Nearly half of the current Year 6 have joined the school in the last three years, so have not benefited from the continuity that the school is able to offer.
5. Standards of speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Pupils listen carefully both to teachers and to each other and they speak confidently in both informal and formal situations, such as school assemblies. Reading is good in Year 2, where the majority of pupils read fluently and with a good understanding of what they are reading. There is a wider range of attainment in Year 6, and standards of reading are broadly average. All pupils know how to locate information in library books. The school has identified writing as an area for development and is making good progress towards its goal of 80 per cent of pupils achieving

the expected level in Year 6. Literacy is also used well across the curriculum in pupils' writing in other subjects.

6. Standards in mathematics are good. In Year 2 pupils develop a good mathematical vocabulary. They organise their work well, know some of the properties of different shapes and also have a good understanding of place value. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils are able to explain their reasons for their conclusions, and they use mathematical skills well in other subjects, such as science and geography. Standards in science are also good, which is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils have a good knowledge of all areas of the curriculum. By the end of Year 6 they have developed a good scientific vocabulary, and there is now a greater focus in the school on scientific investigation.
7. Standards in ICT are satisfactory at the end of Year 2, and by the end of Year 6 most pupils have developed good word-processing skills. However, they have not yet had sufficient experience of other aspects of ICT, such as e-mail or using technology to control or monitor events, with the result that standards are still below the expected levels. Nevertheless, there has been good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below the expected levels throughout the school. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the local authority's agreed syllabus to which the school works. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding for their age of the major world faiths, including Christianity, and understand the significance of religious belief and practice in the lives of followers of the faiths.
8. Standards in music are above average both in Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average, and is largely a result of good specialist teaching from the music co-ordinator. In other subjects, standards are broadly average. Overall this represents an improvement on the last inspection, when standards were below average in design and technology at the end of Years 2 and 6, and in geography at the end of Year 2, although they were above average in some aspects of other subjects.
9. Pupils who have special educational needs receive sensitive and effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. In English and mathematics their work is matched well to their needs, and this helps them to achieve well. Many with relatively minor needs attain the standards expected nationally.
10. Traveller children are also supported well and make good progress in all subjects because of the sensitivity of teachers and the efforts they make to involve them fully, not only in lessons but also in extra-curricular activities, such as sports fixtures, and visits. A good example of this sensitivity was shown in a science lesson in Years 1 and 2, where pupils investigated the most appropriate material for the window of a trailer.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The school is succeeding in its aim to meet the individual needs of each pupil and foster the development of a positive self-image, independence and responsibility for themselves and for others both in the school and in the wider community. Pupils are polite, caring, industrious and, most of all, happy and enjoying their learning.
12. They have very good attitudes to learning and to their role in the school. In lessons even the youngest children are confident when expressing opinions and show tolerance and interest when listening to the views of each other. Children are keen to come to school; they settle quickly to lessons and are fully involved in their tasks; they sustain concentration and show clear enjoyment in their work and a thirst for learning.
13. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils understand and observe the code of conduct and absorb the values transmitted to them by teachers and other staff in the school. Their very good behaviour

contributes to the very good ethos of care and respect for all. No examples of bullying were observed and parents and pupils are confident that any issues would be dealt with swiftly and sensitively. The very good behaviour in the school contributes to the improved climate of learning and is increasing opportunities for pupils' personal development.

14. Relationships across the school are very good; pupils have a genuine respect and affection for each other and for the staff, which is reciprocated. This creates an environment of care and security, where work and learning can progress. Pupils are confident to question and challenge and through this develop and build good relationships. Traveller children are well integrated into the life and work of the school; teachers and other adults work hard to ensure they are fully involved in all aspects of school life, including visits. They relate well to adults and other children and are readily accepted by their classmates.
15. The confidence built through the very good relationships promotes a good sense of humour. In a religious education lesson on marriage, when the vicar shared with the class the fact that she could no longer fit into the wedding dress she had brought along, the children shared her laughter whilst maintaining respect and affection for her.
16. Pupils have good opportunities to develop personal skills through their life in the school. For example, Year 6 pupils are very caring and supportive of younger children particularly during lunchtimes. All pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and, when issues arise, representatives from each year are brought together as a school council to make decisions on behalf of pupils. By Years 5 and 6 pupils are making a sophisticated and useful contribution to the school community. The two school captains and two sports captains elected by the pupils display good levels of maturity and social awareness in the way they exercise their tasks, and take a pride in the responsibilities with which they are entrusted. All pupils work together at raising funds to achieve better resources for the school and also to support others less fortunate; pupils choose a new charity each year to work for.
17. Pupils who have special educational needs have good attitudes to school and know their efforts will be valued. This gives them confidence and develops their self-esteem well. This is a key factor in their good progress. They respond particularly well to the sensitive support they receive from all adults in the school. They relate well to one another and are fully involved in the life and work of the school.
18. Attendance is close to the national average. Unauthorised absence is above average but the school is working hard to reduce this and is able to show an improvement. The majority of pupils arrive punctually at school but not all, a contributory factor being the distance some families live from the school. This is recognised and help is being sought to enable them to arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Four out of five lessons observed during the inspection were good or better, and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when 50 per cent of teaching was judged to be good or better and six per cent unsatisfactory. It also reflects the view of parents, who feel that teachers have high expectations of pupils and set them achievable targets.
20. In the Foundation Stage (the early years unit), teaching is good. The teacher and support assistants plan lessons well to meet the needs of the different age groups and abilities. All adults provide good role models and enjoy their teaching. They understand the needs of the children and promote positive attitudes to learning. They provide children with a good range of activities and experiences. Children are encouraged to listen when others are speaking, and they are given good opportunities to talk about their experiences.

21. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. The school has developed good systems of planning, on a two-year cycle, which are used by teachers to ensure that work is not repeated in the mixed age classes. This has contributed to the overall improvement since the last inspection, as has the implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. English and mathematics lessons are planned using the national frameworks, and this works well, with work being matched to the levels of above average, average and below average pupils in each of the year groups in the class. Sometimes, however, pupils are not able to undertake the tasks set for group activities sufficiently independently to enable the teacher to focus enough on the group she has targeted.
22. A similar structure to literacy and numeracy is used in science lessons, with an introduction to the whole class, group activities and a closing whole-class session to reinforce or extend what has been learned, but sometimes the group activities are not as closely matched to pupils' individual attainment. National guidelines for planning are followed in most other subjects, but these are not as yet sufficiently well embedded to ensure that there is a progressive development of skills in areas such as art and design, design and technology, history and geography.
23. Teachers know their pupils and manage them very well. As a result, pupils' interest and concentration are of a high standard. There are occasional lapses in Years 3 and 4, where there have been a number of changes, and the current teacher is new and so does not know her pupils so well. Teachers evaluate lessons well and adjust their plans to take into account which parts have been successful and which not.
24. Each class has a classroom assistant and in all classes the teacher and assistant work well together. They are able to offer good support to pupils, including traveller children and those with special educational needs. The needs of traveller children are met successfully and teachers and all adults make every effort to involve them in all lessons.
25. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and helps them make good progress and achieve well. Pupils' individual needs and personal targets are well known to teachers and teaching assistants have received appropriate training in the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well briefed about their roles and promote learning well by keeping pupils on task and involved in individual, group and whole class sessions. They also contribute successfully to assessments of pupils' progress and are involved in the planning of their work. Teachers are very sensitive to pupils' needs and ensure that they receive praise and encouragement when deserved.
26. The teaching of English is good. Teachers plan lessons well with a good range of activities. They teach phonics well, as well as the skills of handwriting and spelling. They have been focusing effectively on the development of writing, but reading is given due attention in additional sessions outside the daily literacy lesson. The teaching of mathematics is also good, although the continuity of pupils' learning in Years 3 and 4 has been affected by the changes of teacher there.
27. The teaching of science is good, and is made more effective by its being related to real-life situations. Although there has been good improvement in pupils' learning in ICT, this has not yet filtered right through the school. Because of a lack of software, teachers in Years 3 to 6 are not yet able to plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT in other areas of the curriculum. However, they are beginning to build on the sound base in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and teaching is satisfactory. It is also satisfactory in history and geography, where lessons are integrated well with other subjects and visits are also used well to raise pupils' interest.
28. Teaching and learning are good in music and physical education. Some exchanges of class enable the two teachers' specialist knowledge in these subjects to be used well. In religious education teachers use the good range of artefacts and other resources to promote well

pupils' understanding of and respect for Christianity and other world faiths. There were insufficient opportunities during the inspection to judge the quality of teaching in art and design and design and technology.

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

29. The school offers a broad curriculum, covering the Foundation Stage, all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. It meets all legal requirements. It is well balanced within each subject and good planning ensures that all aspects of each subject are taught. It is fully inclusive and meets the needs of all pupils successfully. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, in line with national recommendations. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and have helped raise standards. The range of learning experiences includes good provision for personal, social and health education and sex education. Issues about the dangers of drugs misuse are discussed in some science and personal, social and health education lessons, but there is no specific programme to raise awareness of these matters.
30. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, when key issues were identified in the school's curriculum. These centred on weaknesses in planning, a lack of policies and schemes of work in some subjects and a failure to meet all statutory requirements in the teaching of design and technology, ICT and geography. In response to these issues, the school has developed satisfactory policies for all subjects and has adopted national guidelines for the planning and teaching in all subjects except ICT, where a good commercial scheme is used. The provision of experiences in ICT has improved since the last inspection, although computers are not used enough to support learning across the curriculum.
31. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good and planned successfully to meet the needs of the nursery and reception age children. It is based securely on the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Planning takes good account of the 'stepping stones' that develop children's knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes as they move through the nursery and reception. It also provides for more able children to start work on the National Curriculum.
32. The curriculum is fully available to all pupils. There is an appropriate policy for equal opportunities and a strong commitment to the ideals of inclusion. This commitment is evident in the good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and the effective integration of the traveller children, pupils who have English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. At that time, there was a lack of clear documentation, and individual education plans were not tightly focused and were not always followed in practice or reviewed regularly. These weaknesses have been addressed successfully. Individual education plans are good and have realistic targets for pupils that develop their needs in small, achievable steps that boost their confidence. They are reviewed regularly and amended as appropriate.
33. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available to the pupils, which enhance the quality of provision in music, science, design and technology and a variety of sports, including netball, football, cricket, rounders and tennis. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in competition with other schools. The learning of French is available after school to pupils whose parents are willing to pay. Visits to places of interest by all classes, and residential visits made by pupils in Years 3 to 6, make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Visitors to school, such as an astronomer, the vicar and a sculptress, add further enrichment to pupils' learning experiences.

34. Links with the local church are good and the pupils attend major events and use the church as a learning resource. There are satisfactory links with the secondary schools to which the pupils transfer. A mother and toddler group uses the school, to meet weekly, and this lays a good foundation for the eventual entry of the children to the Foundation Stage. Good links have been established with a Japanese-owned golf club adjacent to the school. The clubhouse is used for some school functions and the ground staff look after the school grounds, where a Japanese garden has been developed.
35. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. Children in the Foundation Stage have good opportunities to learn about festivals and celebrations such as Christmas, Easter and Diwali. They listen to stories about special people such as Raksha Bandhan and Rama and Sita. Daily assemblies have a clear religious content, and concern for others and the environment are dominant themes. In a whole school assembly, for example, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the wonder of nature and the importance of preservation of the environment in a theme on spring flowers. Pupils' spiritual awareness is also fostered successfully in religious education lessons. In the wider curriculum, pupils gain a sense of awe and wonder in aspects of science when taking part in first-hand investigations, and in mathematics when exploring large numbers and number patterns. Pupils draw inspiration from listening to music and looking at the work of great artists, including Japanese artists and illustrators.
36. Moral and social development is promoted well. Children in the Foundation Stage are given good opportunities to work independently and in small and large groups. They are well motivated to learn and are provided with positive encouragement that develops their self-esteem well. These foundations are developed well throughout the rest of the school. Adults provide good role models that encourage good relationships in the school community and respect for the local environment. Pupils have a well-developed sense of what is right and wrong and respect the school and its property. This is exemplified in the care taken by pupils when working with the new computers. Opportunities to study environmental issues in geography and science and the creation of a Japanese garden promote a sense of care and understanding of the need for preservation. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to regulate personal behaviour and raise self-esteem. There are good opportunities in all lessons and in sporting events for pupils to work as part of a group in order to achieve a common goal. The residential visits to Dorset and a Hertfordshire outdoor centre provide a good opportunity for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to develop their social skills in a wider context. There are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities around the school; for example, they help with the organisation of assemblies, and collect dinner numbers and registers.
37. Pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory but with a weakness in opportunities for pupils to explore and reflect on the multi-cultural and multi-faith nature of society. This weakness has been addressed successfully and there is now good emphasis on cultural understanding and experience. The school values the cultures and traditions of the pupils' families, for example, in learning about the way of life of the traveller children and about life in Japan. Festivals and traditions associated with Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism as well as Christianity are studied and promote pupils' respect for other cultures well. Lessons in history develop pupils' understanding of how their own culture has developed and how ancient civilisations such as that of Greece functioned. Pupils learn of the contribution of famous Greek mathematicians and philosophers to modern thinking. The study of different cultures in geography extends their understanding of world cultures and different ways of life in the modern world. However, there are fewer opportunities to study the art and music of other cultures

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school cares very well for the health, safety, welfare and guidance of all pupils. Teachers and all the staff give appropriate emphasis to providing an establishment where pupils'

personal and academic development is a priority and is supported by a healthy and safe environment. Pastoral care is provided by the class teacher, supported by the headteacher and the whole staff. Pupils are well known to staff as individuals and are confident they will be given help and support if they need it.

39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. The school's code of behaviour is understood and used effectively and consistently by teachers. As a result, pupils behave well, and this helps create an environment in which lessons can progress without interruption. The school has suitable procedures in place to eliminate bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour. Parents say any such incidents are few but they are confident any problems will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively.
40. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Registers are checked regularly, and the system is well run and maintained. Time is given to ensuring pupils who do not arrive at school are safe and accounted for, although parents are mostly very good at following procedures to notify an absence on the same day. Every possible encouragement for good attendance is given. Punctuality is checked regularly; procedures are good and are gradually becoming effective.
41. Child protection procedures are very good. There is a clear policy that is well known to the staff. The designated teacher has a good working relationship with all relevant support agencies; overall, school procedures provide very good protection for all pupils.
42. Health and safety provision is very good and monitored by the headteacher for the governing body. The school's policy is comprehensive and provides a good basis for consistent provision for safety across the school. Risk assessment is up to date and all equipment is well maintained, with recorded checks. During the inspection no new health and safety concerns were noted. The very good work of the caretaker makes a significant contribution to the safe and well cared for environment, and adds to the good ethos of the school.
43. There are clear notices to support procedures for fire evacuation, and fire drills are taken regularly and logged. First aid provision is very good; training is up to date, and current first aid certificates are held by a designated officer and a number of other staff. Pupils understand who will help them and how this will happen. All serious accidents and head injuries are reported to parents and recorded.
44. The school promotes healthy and safe living through a programme for personal, social and health education, and across the curriculum. The school has good relationships with a range of outside agencies and works successfully with them to secure pupils' welfare. This includes the very good work between the Traveller Support Officers and the school.
45. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall and have improved in key areas since the last inspection. They are used effectively to evaluate and develop pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science. The results of National Curriculum tests and assessments for seven and eleven year olds, together with optional National Curriculum tests in Years 3, 4 and 5, are analysed well to identify and target potential weaknesses in pupils' learning. Reading diaries and checklists of progress in other aspects of English are used satisfactorily to develop learning. In mathematics, end of topic testing highlights strengths and areas for improvement in particular aspects of the subject. Last year, the school introduced individual pupil targets based on National Curriculum levels in the three core subjects and assesses progress against these twice each year. Amendments are made to the targets as appropriate. This is a good development and enables the school to measure the added value it provides to pupils' achievements, and to assess individual pupil progress.
46. In other subjects, some teachers have developed their own good systems to record progress, but there are no established whole-school procedures to assess how well pupils are doing as they move through the school. This makes it difficult for the teachers to track pupils' progress

in the development of key skills and knowledge, plan improvements in the curriculum and provide work that extends learning further for the different groups in classes. The school is aware of this and is beginning to work on it, using the experience gained from the development of systems in English, mathematics and science.

47. Assessment of children in the Foundation Stage is good. Assessment on entry (baseline assessment) is used well to group children initially. Individual tracking of children's subsequent progress is effective and used well to develop their knowledge and skills in all the areas of learning. Across the school, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs is monitored carefully, and appropriate and achievable targets are set to develop weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. These targets are regularly reviewed and amended as necessary.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents' views of the school are very positive. They believe that pupils are cared for well and given many opportunities to develop independence and confidence. They think the school is well run and friendly; children go in smiling and come out smiling. The inspection findings substantiate the views of the majority of the parents, which were also expressed in the school survey of parents taken at the end of the last school year.
49. Parents receive good information before their children come to the school; this contributes to their successful induction to the early years unit and to the reception year, helping both children and parents settle quickly into the school community. Parents feel a strength of the school is the good preparation of pupils for transfer to secondary school; inspection findings confirm this. The school feels it is particularly important to prepare children to move from a school of 90 pupils to a school of over 1000 pupils. The governors' annual report to parents gives good information and meets legal requirements. The school prospectus is well presented, with necessary and useful information for parents and pupils; this too complies with legal requirements. Parents are pleased with the improved feedback from teachers on pupils' progress. They receive yearly written curriculum information, but would appreciate more information each term to enable them to support children at home better. Overall, the written information provided for parents is satisfactory. The results of the parent survey undertaken by the school in July 2001 were mostly very positive, but there were areas for the school to improve communications, including termly curriculum information, which have not yet been acted on.
50. The school's links with parents are good. Parents sign a home-school agreement and through this fully accept that they will support the aims and policies the school has in place. Both staff and governors visit the traveller site to establish good relations with parents there. Parents and grandparents contribute positively as classroom helpers; parents accompany visits and trips and are always prepared to support the school when there is a need. The recent work of parents has provided the children with a very exciting adventure play area. The Essendon School Association works hard for the school and through its good efforts of fundraising a number of subjects have benefited from additional resources; they have also designed and constructed the Japanese garden.
51. There are good systems to inform parents of initial concerns about pupils with special educational needs. Parents are involved at all relevant stages in the drawing up of individual educational plans for pupils and reviews of progress. Information about pupils' needs is discussed with parents at the two parent/teacher consultation meetings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher provides good personal leadership for the school. When he was appointed three years ago, he set out his vision for the school for the next five years, and has gone a long way to realising this already. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and

science are starting to rise. The provision for ICT has improved greatly, although pupils are not yet able to use it confidently across the curriculum. The early years unit has been established and is providing well for younger children. The school cares very well for its pupils, regardless of background or attainment, and there are good links with parents, the church and the local community. The school's aims, as set out in its prospectus, are reflected clearly in its work.

53. All teaching staff are regarded as part of the senior management team and work well together. The senior teacher has specific responsibilities, for instance for support staff, and provides good support for the headteacher. In a small school all teachers have to take on a role as co-ordinator for several subjects, and this role has yet to be fully developed. Co-ordinators do not yet have sufficient opportunity to monitor what is going on in their subject areas, to see what works well and what does not, and to share good practice between colleagues. However, provision for this has already been built into the school's development plan.
54. The governing body fulfil all their legal responsibilities. They know the school well and provide good support to the headteacher and staff. They now have an effective committee structure, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection. The governors with specific responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs make important contributions in these areas, and governors, with the headteacher, have played an active part in establishing good relationships with the traveller community, helping to integrate pupils from the community fully into the life of the school.
55. The management of special educational needs is good and has improved since the last inspection. Individual educational plans are more focused and contain more appropriate targets linked to the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The co-ordinator and governor for special needs have attended recent training on the new Code of Practice and have fed relevant information back to all staff.
56. The school has put in place an appropriate system of performance management. The headteacher carries out his own observations of teaching as part of the school's performance management, as well as monitoring informally what is going on in the classroom. The school recognises the need to put its own self-evaluation onto a more formal basis.
57. Since the last inspection, the school has devised its own development plan, which identifies appropriate priority areas, as well as looking at the longer term. All subject co-ordinators contribute their own maintenance plans, developments are costed and sources of funding identified. Governors regularly review the progress on the plan, and all members of the school community share a good commitment to improvement.
58. The school manages its finances well. It is adept at obtaining funding and uses the grants it receives well. It has maintained a high level of contingency over recent years, in case the funding for an additional teacher to maintain the present four class structure of the school was not forthcoming. This had a clear educational purpose, as it meant that there would be no more than two year groups taught together in Years 1 to 6. The school has also been able to maintain a favourable ratio of teachers to pupils, which in its turn has had a positive effect on the very good attitudes of pupils and on relationships within the school. The school shows a good awareness of the principles of best value in its spending decisions. Spending is monitored well by the headteacher and governors and the school's financial management is good.
59. The school has a good number of teachers and support staff and they work very well together, along with the school secretary, caretaker, and catering and mid-day assistants. All of the current teaching staff have been appointed since the last inspection, and during the current year there have been several changes of staff in the Years 3 and 4 class. This has been because of circumstances beyond the school's control, and a permanent appointment has

already been made for the next school year. New teachers are given a good introduction and support, and the school also supports the training of student teachers.

60. The school's accommodation is good. Classrooms are spacious, and there is now a separate computer suite. However, both this and the library could be used more fully by pupils for independent work. There is a large hall which serves well for assemblies, physical education and dining. There is an adequate hard area for outside physical education and recreation, and the school is currently developing a grassed area which will extend the facility. The grounds have been developed well, with woodland areas, a Japanese garden and outdoor play equipment. The school has plans to provide an outside play area for children in the Foundation Stage, which is at present lacking.
61. The school has built up good resources for learning in all curriculum areas. There is a good range and quantity of books and the provision for ICT has improved. ICT is used well in the school's administration. Its use in the classroom needs further development, and the software available at present is limited.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to build on the improvements already made, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- 1) raise standards in ICT by the end of Year 6 by:
 - building on the good work of the last 18 months and the good foundation laid in reception and Years 1 and 2
 - using computers more widely across subjects to promote learning
 - providing pupils with more experience of control and modelling technology
 - building up a better range of software, particularly to promote literacy and numeracy skills of pupils with special educational needs.

(paragraphs 7,27,30,108-112)

- 2) develop a more systematic and rigorous approach to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, as already outlined in the school development plan, with an emphasis on the analysis of what works and what does not, by creating a more influential role for subject co-ordinators.

(paragraphs 53,88, 93,107,112,117,126)

- 3) develop manageable whole-school procedures for the assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge, to enable teachers to match work more closely to individual pupils' needs in subjects other than English, mathematics and science

(paragraphs 46,99,105,110,126)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should also consider for inclusion in its action plan how it might:

- continue the development and implementation of strategies to improve writing (paragraphs 5,78)
- devise a policy on teaching about the misuse of drugs (paragraph 29)
- develop a specific play area for the development of learning outside the classroom by children in the nursery and reception class (paragraphs 60,73)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

26

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

27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	18	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	70	19	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 about four percentage points.

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)	8	89
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	36

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Because there were fewer than 11 pupils taking the National Curriculum tests in both Years 2 and 6, the tables of test results have been omitted.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	55
Any other minority ethnic group	16

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.25
Average class size	24.25

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0.8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	31.25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	269402
Total expenditure	272581
Expenditure per pupil	2963
Balance brought forward from previous year	20651
Balance carried forward to next year	17472

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	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	32	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	35	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	25	2	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	38	10	2	12
The teaching is good.	70	22	0	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	35	8	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	20	0	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	30	0	2	5
The school works closely with parents.	55	30	12	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	72	22	0	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	42	12	2	2

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. Children up to the age of six years are taught in the early years class. Pre-school children became part of the early years unit in January 2001 after it was decided that the separate pre-school group could no longer run independently because of continuing low numbers (four in the current school year). Pre-school children now attend for three mornings a week in the term after their third birthday, rising to four mornings in the term in which they are four. This increases to full-time attendance at the beginning of the autumn term for children reaching their fifth birthday between 1st September and the end of February, and at the beginning of the spring term for those reaching their fifth birthday between 1st March and 31st August. At the time of the inspection, there were ten five year olds (reception), 12 four year olds (nursery) and four three year olds (pre-school). There were five traveller children on roll.
64. With small groups of children attending, attainment on entry to the reception year varies, usually from above average to average. In the current school year it was average overall with wide extremes. A few children came in to the school, not having been in the nursery, with low attainment in all aspects of learning whilst a few came in with above average attainment. By the time the children are ready to start in Year 1, they achieve well and many attain the nationally recommended early learning goals in all the areas of learning. These are personal, social, and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. About a third of the children exceed these goals and are well launched into early work on the National Curriculum. Pupils' good achievements are the result of good teaching across all areas by the teacher and all adults who work in the unit. There is also a strong commitment and success in meeting the needs of all pupils, including traveller children and those children who have special educational needs. Planning is good and takes account of the needs of the different year groups in the early years unit. It is based securely on the early learning goals and stepping stones to learning, and also the first stages of the National Curriculum for more able children.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Teaching is good and all adults provide good role models for the children by adopting a quiet, sensitive but firm approach to learning. They enjoy their teaching and understand the needs of the children. This approach develops children's confidence, self-esteem and love of learning effectively. By the time they move into Year 1, most children are confident independent learners. The three, four and five year olds play well together and are beginning to show consideration for each other. Children were observed working happily as part of a small group where they shared equipment without fuss and also independently. Four and five year olds were observed working independently on a creative activity for up to ten minutes or sitting quietly looking at a book. Children are taught to respect different cultures and ways of life in activities where they play in a large model trailer and listen to children talking about what it is like to live in a trailer. Topics on nature and the seasons, stories from world religions and opportunities to listen to music and care for the class hamster provide good foundations for the spiritual development of the children.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Teaching is mostly good and children achieve well in these aspects of their learning. They are taught to pay attention when others are speaking and adults provide good opportunities for all children to tell the others about their experiences at home and at school. Care is taken to involve all the children in these activities. On some occasions, the older, more confident boys want to dominate discussions but the teacher is aware of this and is usually successful in

curbing their over-enthusiasm. The three year olds are involved in speaking and listening activities as part of short whole-class sessions. The nursery assistants, who encourage them to listen and speak by good questioning, support them well in small groups. All adults provide good opportunities for the children to learn new words in activities across all the areas of their learning. In a printing activity to make an illustration of the house of the three little pigs, for example, the nursery assistant was talking to children about brick patterns.

67. Four and five year olds are making good progress in developing early reading and writing skills. All children have many opportunities to access books and have stories read to them. The children enjoy being read to and know a wide range of traditional stories, rhymes and poems. Five year olds talk about their early reading books and have a good knowledge of the sounds made by letters. Reading and writing activities are linked together well by the teacher. In an activity for five year olds, for example, the teacher acted as scribe while pupils built up a complete sentence about what they had done that morning. In the activity, the children showed they knew that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. Good comments from the children such as “that I has not got a dot on top!” reveal a good developing knowledge of early writing skills. The teacher skilfully made deliberate mistakes that were quickly picked up by the children. The higher attaining children in the group know all the letter sounds and recognise them at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of words. Elements of the national literacy framework are used well by the teacher and the children are well prepared for later work on the National Literacy Strategy.

Mathematical development

68. Teaching is good and children of all abilities achieve well. Number rhymes and songs, such as ‘One, two, buckle my shoe’, are used well to develop understanding for all the children. Almost all the children can count to ten and the five year olds count well beyond this. They count in twos to 20 and work on early addition and subtraction problems. This was well taught in an activity using a programmable toy. In this activity, the children were programming a robot to move along a large number line to ten forwards and backwards from different starting points. Children’s understanding of subtraction is developed well by the teachers’ good questioning, for example, “if we start at nine and move back three what number will we finish on?”
69. All adults encourage the children to look for mathematics all around them and exploit children’s play activities in the class bakery, trailer and creative corner. For example in the bakery, adults act as customers and make payment and receive change from children. The three and four year olds are introduced to the names and simple properties of two-dimensional shapes while the five year olds experience working with three-dimensional shapes. They know cones, cylinders, cubes and cuboids and know that some shapes will roll while others will not.

Knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development

70. The teacher provides a good range of activities in these areas that develop children’s knowledge and skills effectively and help them to achieve well. Children have experiences of working on the class computer and have good basic keyboard and mouse skills that help them access and play simple number games and draw pictures. Four year old children, for example, drew a good computer-generated picture of the house of the three little pigs. Children learn about the world around them in topics on the seasons and are taught to look for simple patterns and change, and similarities and differences in the things they observe. They know, for example, that caterpillars change into butterflies and tadpoles into frogs. This provides them with a good foundation for work on science. Children have located where they live on a large-scale map of the school and surrounding area. They are beginning to recognise simple rhythms in songs and when playing musical instruments such as drums and tambours.

71. When working with paint, children show confident and bold use of colour. They have made collages of the houses of the three little pigs using materials such as twigs, straw and card. They use glue and scissors well in this activity. The four year olds are shown how to use scissors safely and use them to cut out mathematical shapes to arrange in a pattern. Children are encouraged to do things for themselves and make choices. In a painting activity for four year olds, the nursery assistant encouraged children to squeeze out their own paint and choose the colours they thought best for the task.
72. In a recent topic on light and dark, children learnt about various religious celebrations and were introduced to stories about special people in different religions. They learn about Christian festivals and events such as Christmas and Easter and birthdays and christenings.
73. There is no designated separate outdoor play area for the children in the early years unit. An area is set aside and has been temporarily fenced, although it is grassed and slopes quite steeply. The teacher has made the best of the school's general play areas and children have regular access to the playground where they use tricycles and scooters to develop physical and co-ordination skills effectively. They also have access to large fixed apparatus in the adventure playground. They move with confidence when climbing and show a good awareness of others around them. Some opportunities are missed to intervene more in children's free play activities in order to develop learning further. Children have regular opportunities to use the main school hall for physical education activities.

ENGLISH

74. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are satisfactory overall. They are good in reading at the end of Year 2 and in speaking and listening throughout the school. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in speaking and listening, in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and in reading at the end of Year 6. Writing at the end of Year 6, which was above expectations at the time of the last inspection, is now average, but overall improvement since the last inspection has been good.
75. In the national tests in 2001 the school had only ten pupils in each of both Years 2 and 6, which makes comparisons with other years and schools unreliable. However, results in Year 2 were close to the average for all schools in reading and above average in writing. In Year 6, although they were well below average for all schools, they were close to the average when compared with the results expected from this group of pupils' attainment in Year 2. Pupils' achievement, therefore, is satisfactory.
76. Pupils listen well, both to the teacher and each other, both in class and in more formal situations, such as assemblies. Listening is promoted well by the value teachers put on pupils' contributions. For instance, at the beginning of the week, in a lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher gave a pupil an opportunity to talk about her birthday while the memory was still fresh. In assembly the same class spoke clearly to the rest of the school about their work on a 'Katie Morag' story. Year 2 pupils are also able to talk confidently about the books they are reading. In Years 3 and 4 pupils of all abilities read their own writing aloud with confidence to the rest of the class at the end of a literacy lesson. In Years 5 and 6 they perform well to the rest of the class 'conversation' poems which they have prepared. The rest of the class respond by offering good feedback, showing how well they have listened.
77. Standards of reading are good in Year 2. All pupils are able to read with understanding and accuracy texts which are matched to their ability. Most pupils are able to talk with understanding about the book they are reading. The majority of pupils know how to use contents and index pages in non-fiction books, although they do not yet have the opportunity to use the school library regularly. In Year 6 there is a wider range of reading attainment. More able pupils read complex texts fluently and with enjoyment. Lower attaining pupils are more hesitant. All pupils know how to locate books in the library, and are able to locate information in

a non-fiction book. However, the school library is not used sufficiently to help pupils develop their research skills.

78. Standards of writing are as expected for pupils' ages. In Years 1 and 2 the teacher plans activities well to develop pupils' writing skills, and marking suggests good ways for pupils to improve. As a result pupils make good progress. They also work hard and produce a good amount of work. Higher attaining pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately. Their handwriting is joined and regular. Others do not always write and spell as accurately, but they understand some of the rules of spelling, for instance about doubling consonants. In Years 3 and 4 pupils present their work well, and teachers' marking suggests ways in which pupils can improve their vocabulary. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make good progress. They are able to write in a range of styles, such as writing a letter, writing a set of instructions, for instance for a game, or describing a character. Pupils use writing well in other subjects, for instance to report on an investigation in science, to write a playscript on the story of Esther in religious education or to write diaries from the different points of view of characters involved in Henry VIII's divorce for history. The need to develop pupils' writing further has been recognised in the school's development plan.
79. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn, although they do not always remind pupils at the end of a lesson to check that they have achieved the objective. They plan lessons well with a good range of activities to meet the needs of the range of age and ability in each class. Sometimes, however, teachers do not provide appropriate resources to enable pupils to work sufficiently independently at their activity for the teacher to focus for any length of time on a particular group, for instance when pupils have to find the significance of abbreviations without having any reference material to support them. Teachers work well with classroom assistants, who are able to provide good support to targeted groups. The school also plans additional sessions outside the daily literacy lesson to develop handwriting, spelling and reading, so that there is more time to develop writing skills in the literacy lesson. This has been effective, although its full impact has yet to be felt.
80. In response to the good teaching, pupils behave very well in lessons. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when the behaviour of a minority of pupils was thought to hinder progress. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development in the range of writing they give them to consider, including poetry. The school has built up a good range of books, which teachers match to pupils' individual reading needs, and reading is supported well by parents, particularly of younger pupils, through the home-school reading books. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily in its mixed age classes, having devised a two-year planning cycle which ensures that pupils do not repeat work. Teachers make good provision for higher attaining pupils, by sometimes grouping them with older pupils in the mixed age class and sometimes allowing them to work in a different class. For instance, a small number of Year 2 pupils successfully join the Years 3 and 4 class for literacy. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in class.
81. The school regularly assesses pupils' work through national statutory and non-statutory tests. Each pupil's progress is tracked, and targets for them are revised twice a term. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject. She monitors teachers' planning and has assessed with colleagues the effectiveness of the school's implementation of the literacy strategy. Previously lessons had been observed by the local authority's literacy consultant, who has given useful advice which has been acted upon. The literacy governor also takes an active interest and has observed lessons. The use of ICT is limited; some use is made of computers to help younger pupils develop their spelling and older pupils to word-process their writing.

MATHEMATICS

82. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are above the national average in all aspects of mathematics (the use and application of mathematics, number, shape, space and measures and data handling). In the 2001 National Curriculum tests, standards were well above average in Year 2 and close to the national average in Year 6. The variation in standards seen during the inspection and in test results reflects the variation in attainment of the small year groups rather than any weakness in the quality of teaching. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities achieve well as a result of good teaching. Staffing difficulties in Years 3 and 4 have meant that the rate of progress, while satisfactory, has not been as rapid as in other year groups. Traveller children and pupils who have special educational needs are supported well when necessary and achieve as well as all other pupils. Overall, standards have improved since the previous inspection as a result of the greater structure provided by the daily numeracy lesson, improvements in teaching and curriculum coverage of all the aspects of the subject.
83. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development. Pupils are often fascinated when working with large numbers and when discovering a particular pattern in a sequence. Boys and girls work together well as part of a group, often discussing key aspects of their work and helping pupils who are struggling with a particular concept.
84. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to recognise sequences of numbers and count on in 2s, 5s and 10s to 100. Above average pupils can continue this well beyond 100. They develop a good understanding of place value (how the position of a number affects its value) and this provides a secure base for more advanced work in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils develop a good mathematical vocabulary; for example, in a lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils, they were using terms such as clockwise, anticlockwise, half, quarter turns and right angles in a lesson on position and movement. All pupils are familiar with basic two and three-dimensional shapes and know some of their properties. They are able to construct bar charts to illustrate information, and above average pupils interpret data in tables and graphs well. Pupils organise their work well and are beginning to use mathematical symbols and diagrams in their work.
85. By the end of Year 6, most average and above average pupils are able to draw conclusions of their own and give an explanation of their reasoning. Most are developing their own strategies for solving problems and in the best lessons are encouraged to explain and share these with other pupils. There is often good discussion about the mathematical content of the work in group activities and this reveals an enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject. They have a very well developed knowledge of place value, for example, they know that 0.001 is $\frac{1}{1000}$ th when written as a fraction. Most pupils have speedy recall of times tables to 10 and above average pupils devise quick methods of working out 13 times 13 by the method 13 times 10 plus 13 times 3. Pupils' work is well presented and organised. Pupils have a good understanding of shape, space and measures and construct and interpret a variety of graphs, tables and charts. Pupils use their mathematical understanding well in subjects such as science, geography and design and technology. In a science lesson on the earth and beyond, pupils in Years 5 and 6 drew an accurate line graph to show sunrise and sunset times over a week. They were able to predict from the information when these would occur in the following week.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the infants and juniors. Teaching and learning in the Year 3 and 4 class are less strong, although still satisfactory, mainly because of a lack of continuity owing to the changes of teacher during the year. There is a well-established daily numeracy lesson with a clear three-part structure of whole-class, group and individual work, followed by a whole-class consolidation at the end. All lessons begin with a short activity to develop pupils' quick recall of basic number. This is largely successful, although in a few instances the pace of the session is not rapid enough. Planning is effective and good learning

objectives (what pupils will learn during a lesson) are explained to the pupils. In most activities, the work pupils are expected to do in group and individual work is well matched to their abilities and offers good levels of challenge. This is successful in ensuring pupils with special educational needs, and below average, average and above average pupils make good progress in lessons. Opportunities are sometimes missed to work intensively with a particular group in order to assess their understanding and extend learning more effectively. Additional challenge activities that extend the learning of the above average pupils are used successfully in lessons. Additional support and separate lesson plans are devised for pupils who have special educational needs and this impacts well on their learning. Teachers use assessment well to inform lesson planning and the progress of individual pupils is tracked effectively.

87. In the most effective lessons, pupils are encouraged to check their work, for example in a lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher asks a pupil "Are you sure that is right? Check it again." In these lessons, teachers also encourage pupils to explain and share with the class any strategies they have used to reach an answer. Good questioning extends pupils' understanding well by encouraging them to think more carefully about their answers. In an activity where pupils in Years 1 and 2 were counting in fives up to 100 the teacher asks "What do you think the next two numbers would be if we carried on beyond 100?" The setting of work that involves real-life problem solving is a good feature of many lessons. Computers offer some support to pupils' learning but, overall, they are not used enough to develop learning in the subject.
88. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and offers support as necessary. She has produced a good action plan for the subject and analyses any strengths and weaknesses arising from pupils' performance in national and school tests. Samples of pupils' work are scrutinised each term. Some monitoring of teaching has taken place in the past but the co-ordinator has not had an opportunity to do this recently. This makes it difficult for her to maintain an overview of standards in teaching and learning across the school.

SCIENCE

89. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be broadly in line with national averages. Pupils' scientific enquiry skills were deemed to be weak because of too much direction from the teacher. There has been good improvement since that time and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are now above the national average. Pupils of all abilities achieve well across the school. Standards by the end of Year 2 are not as high as in 2001, when teacher assessments placed them well above average, but this reflects the difference in ability of the respective pupil groups. There are a few more lower attaining pupils than in 2001. In 2001, standards by the end of Year 6 were average but there are now a few more pupils on course to attain the higher level 5. There is a much greater focus on scientific enquiry through practical investigation and this has also brought about good improvement in pupils' achievements, attitudes and enjoyment of the subject. This approach has also made a good contribution to the spiritual development of the pupils by creating opportunities for pupils to develop awe and wonder and a sense of discovery.
90. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a good knowledge in all aspects of the national science curriculum. They respond well to suggestions and put forward their own ideas about their work. In a lesson for Years 1 and 2 pupils, for example, pupils explained to the class why they had chosen a particular material as suitable for the window of a toy trailer. They used words such as flexible, transparent and opaque in their explanations. They were able to record their observations in a variety of ways. These were modified well by the teacher to the pupils' abilities so that above average pupils designed their own tables, average pupils had a blank table provided for them and below average pupils and those with special educational needs received individual support with a more simplified table.

91. Teachers build on these good foundations well, so that by the end of Year 6 all pupils have a good scientific vocabulary across the range of their work. They are interested and enthusiastic about the subject. In Years 3 and 4, pupils investigate the properties of magnets, the process of osmosis in plants and the characteristics of rocks and soil. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' knowledge is extended well to include work on the human body, electric circuits, forces and motion and light and sound. They have a good knowledge of the earth and beyond and use terms such as orbit, universe and satellite. They know that the earth and planets move around the sun. Pupils have used the Internet to research their topic on the earth and beyond but a scrutiny of pupils' past work in all year groups indicates that computers are not used enough to develop learning in the subject.
92. Teaching is good in the infants and juniors. A similar structure to the literacy and numeracy lessons is used successfully. Lessons begin with good introductions, including reviews of previous learning, group and individual activities and closing whole-class recapitulation sessions. Teachers make science interesting by passing on their enthusiasm for the subject effectively. They make activities practical for the pupils and relate work to real-life situations, for example when selecting the material for a toy trailer. This activity shows how well teachers respect and value the different cultures represented in the school. Teachers' planning is largely effective and based on good subject knowledge. Where the teaching is not so effective, group activities are not so well matched to pupils' abilities and there are short periods where some pupils need pushing on with their work. The teachers' time is not used so effectively in these sessions, when the class is not brought together to explain a recurring problem and the teacher makes the same point to a number of individuals.
93. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and has developed a good whole-school planning base, which has brought consistency across the school. Planning is monitored and evaluated and support given when necessary. Methods for finding out how well pupils are doing are good, and pupils are assessed against National Curriculum levels; these assessments are reviewed regularly. A good action plan has been devised, with appropriate targets for development of the subject. There has been no opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching across the school and not enough use has been made of the scrutiny of pupils' work to develop learning in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Because of the way the school organises its curriculum, there were no opportunities to see design and technology being taught during the inspection, and it was possible to see art and design taught only to pupils in Years 3 to 6. However, evidence of pupils' work from all year groups was available.
95. Standards are as expected for pupils' ages; their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have produced effective collages based on their observations of woodland. They have also produced satisfactory observational drawings of leaves and other woodland material. They have sketched portraits of each other. They have woven baskets, and for design and technology have produced designs with moving parts, for instance of a roaring lion. Art has also been used well to reinforce their learning about the Isle of Struay in geography.
96. In Years 3 and 4 pupils have used a range of materials, including paper and balloons, to design and make dinosaurs; they develop their skills of modelling well. Their previous work also shows good examples of string printing and observational drawing, for instance of a mug. For design and technology, they have designed photo frames, successfully evaluating and modifying what they have done.

97. In Years 5 and 6 they continue to develop their skills of observational drawing, for example by sketching a tennis racket or a shell. In a lesson during the inspection, they worked well in groups on designs based on stories. They understood well the need to evaluate their designs, both in relation to the design and to the materials used. In design and technology they have made moving toys, which they have evaluated at length, as well as designing and making musical instruments. They have sometimes used computers to write up their description of making and evaluating.
98. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching either in design and technology or in art and design. In the two lessons seen the teachers made good use of classroom assistants and together they provided good encouragement and support to pupils. In the lessons observed, pupils worked well together in groups; this makes a good contribution to their social development. In a lesson with pupils from Years 5 and 6 the teacher showed a good understanding of the subject, making effective links between the pupils' work and the Bayeux tapestry, with which the pupils were familiar. In this way the subject also makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
99. The co-ordinators have both taken over the responsibility for their subjects only recently, following the departure of the previous co-ordinator. The school is using national guidelines for planning both subjects, but it has not yet developed systems of assessment which enable teachers to plan for the development of pupils' skills as they move through the school. Both subjects are supported well through extra-curricular clubs, which give pupils who are interested an opportunity to develop their skills, and the school has good resources for teaching the subjects. Standards are broadly as they were at the time of the last inspection, but all aspects of design and technology are now taught; this is an improvement.

HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY

100. History and geography are taught as part of a two-year topic cycle, although each subject is planned separately as a distinct subject. Nationally recommended guidelines have been adopted by the school and give a good base from which teachers plan appropriate work for the pupils. One lesson was seen in geography in the class of Years 5 and 6 pupils. However, a full range of evidence was available in both subjects, including pupil workbooks, class displays, photographs, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. Taking all this evidence into account, overall standards are similar to those expected for pupils' ages by the end of Years 2 and 6 in both subjects and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Some good work was seen in the geography lesson and pupils' enquiry skills and evaluation of secondary sources was better than expected for pupils' ages. This was due to the very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher, preparation of the lesson and use of resources.
101. Good support for pupils who have special educational needs enables them to achieve satisfactory standards. Some of the work of the above average pupils in both subjects is better than that normally seen and involves good use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In history, for example, junior pupils write effective empathetic and factual accounts of life in Tudor and Elizabethan times and research words in common use that have ancient Greek origins. In geography, numeracy skills give good support to mapping and fieldwork studies.
102. Both subjects make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. In history, for example, pupils draw inspiration when learning about the influence of great historical figures such as Greek philosophers, mathematicians and poets. In geography, they gain awareness of the importance of environmental issues such as the need for conservation.
103. In history, by the end of Year 2, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of the work of well-known historical figures such as Mary Seacole and George Stephenson. They develop sound skills in identifying different ways that the past can be represented. They begin to make observations about similarities and differences in the way people in the past lived. By the end of Year 6,

pupils have developed sound understanding of important aspects of key historical periods. They have good knowledge, for example, of the Tudor period and the Greek civilisation, gained from a variety of secondary sources including the Internet.

104. In geography, by the end of Year 2, pupils draw simple maps of their route to school and draw good, labelled plans of their homes. They show sound awareness of places beyond their own locality and are beginning to recognise how people affect the environment. They are beginning to use an appropriate geographical vocabulary. Mapping skills are developed well in the juniors so that by the end of Year 6, pupils use atlases and maps of different scales to find information about contrasting localities, such as a coastal area. They use Ordnance Survey maps effectively to locate key features in an area. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced good work on traffic and building surveys when conducting a study of their village. They used their literacy skills well to write letters to the local council suggesting the need for a pedestrian crossing, and included maps of where it might be located. Their good numeracy skills helped them produce good tables and graphs to record the different housing and the movement and type of traffic in the village. Links with a school in Japan give pupils a good insight into similarities and differences between the two countries.
105. On the basis of a scrutiny of pupils' work, teaching and learning across the school are satisfactory. One very good lesson was seen in geography. In both subjects, the activities planned interest the pupils and, as a consequence, they respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment in both subjects. There is some evidence of work being matched successfully to the needs of the below average, average and above average pupils, particularly in geography, but this is not always as effective as it should be. This is linked to weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' progress in the subjects. Some teachers have developed good systems for their own class but there are no whole-school assessment systems. This makes it difficult for teachers to know with any certainty what pupils already know, understand and can do.
106. Teachers link subjects together successfully and this gives greater meaning to the pupils' learning. In an infant geography topic, for example, the teacher used a well-known story about a Scottish island family to develop mapping work and activities that gave pupils a good understanding of the similarities and differences between their own community and the island community. Good use of secondary sources such as Scottish artefacts, photographs and pictures added further impetus to the pupils' work. All teachers use visits effectively to enhance and enrich the history and geography curriculum. These bring the subjects alive for the pupils and heighten pupils' interest and enthusiasm. During the inspection pupils in Years 5 and 6 were preparing for a residential visit to a coastal location. In the teachers' planning there is good emphasis on development of the correct subject vocabulary. Computers offer some support to learning in both subjects but could be used more to develop and consolidate knowledge and skills.
107. Leadership and management of the subjects are satisfactory. The co-ordinators monitor and evaluate teachers' planning, and organise and manage resources for the subjects effectively. They have formulated appropriate action plans for the subjects but have not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and this clouds their overview of how their subjects are developing. Overall, there has been satisfactory development of the subjects since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

108. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, and this has been particularly marked over the past two years. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Standards now meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 but, despite good progress, remain below expectations at the end of Year 6. This is due, in part, to two key factors. National expectations

for eleven year olds are much more demanding, and the good base being developed in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 has not yet filtered through to Years 3 to 6. There has been insufficient time for key skills to be developed progressively through the school.

109. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop basic keyboard and mouse control well and are able to access programs independently. Above average pupils know how to save, print and retrieve their work unaided. All pupils have had experiences of word-processing simple texts and know that computers can make pictures to accompany text. Above average pupils know that equipment such as video-recorders, cookers, washing machines and cameras can be programmed to perform tasks. All pupils have had opportunities to program a computer toy to perform certain functions. Teachers are beginning to build on this secure base well and by the end of Year 6 most average and above average pupils have developed good word-processing skills. They use ICT to generate, develop, organise and present their work and are able to add to, amend and combine different forms of information from a variety of sources. For example, they download pictures from the Internet to add to their own text. In discussion with pupils in Year 6, it is clear that many of these experiences are relatively recent and much of their previous work involved basic word-processing.
110. Despite the good improvement, there are still some weaknesses in pupils' learning that have not yet been addressed successfully, particularly in Years 3 to 6. There are some examples of computers supporting learning in subjects such as English, mathematics, science, history, geography and design and technology. In science, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used a microscope attached to a computer to examine the structure of rocks and soil samples. In design and technology, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have used computers to design a board game. Overall, however, computers are not used enough in other subjects. Some experiences expected for pupils by the end of Year 6, for example opportunities to use e-mail, have not been covered in the recent past. One good activity towards the end of the inspection introduced pupils in Year 5 to this aspect. Pupils have had too few opportunities to use ICT systems to control events and to sense physical data. There are no whole-school assessment systems to record pupils' progress and this makes it difficult for the teachers to build on strengths and to address any weaknesses in subsequent work.
111. There has been good progress in the provision of hardware for the subject and the school opened a new computer suite with eight computers and two printers during the year 2000. In addition, each classroom has its own computer. There are still some shortages in software to support work across subjects and to consolidate and extend learning for pupils who have special educational needs. There are not enough activities planned where there is direct teaching of skills. In the activities observed, individual support for pupils was good and scrutiny of planning suggests that teaching is satisfactory. Pupils who have special educational needs are particularly enthusiastic when working on computers and all pupils enjoy their work and treat equipment with respect. Teachers have attended recent training in the subject but discussion with the co-ordinator indicates that some teachers still lack expertise in the teaching of more advanced skills.
112. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and are contributing to some good progress in the subject. A good scheme of work has been introduced and this gives teachers a sound base from which to plan their work. Planning is monitored and support given when necessary. The available resources are well organised and are helping to raise standards. There has been insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject. This makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to know with any certainty what is working well and what is not.

MUSIC

113. Only two lessons were observed, one in Years 1 and 2 and one in Years 5 and 6. With evidence from these lessons, observation of a whole-school singing practice and the scrutiny

of teachers' planning, standards in the work seen are better than those expected for pupils' ages. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well. This represents improvement since the last inspection, when standards were similar to the national average. Music in Years 1 and 2 and 5 and 6 is taught by the co-ordinator, who came to the school three years ago. Her very good subject knowledge, planning and enthusiasm account in large part for the good standards observed during the inspection. All pupils enjoy their music, have good attitudes and work well together when composing simple musical sequences in groups. They are taught to handle musical instruments correctly and they respond well to this, treating them with care.

114. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are able to identify different groups of instruments and understand how symbols can be used to represent sounds. In a lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils, pupils learnt that percussion instruments can be scraped, shaken, tapped and clicked to make different sounds and were able to compose a simple sequence of these sounds following a simple pattern of four random picture symbols. Pupils acted as conductors pointing to the symbols as a cue for groups to play. Pupils make good progress in recognising and exploring ways in which sounds can be combined and used expressively. Pupils develop a good sense of rhythm and maintain a beat when clapping. They keep in tune well when singing as part of a large group and know a good range of songs from memory.
115. By the end of Year 6, pupils know how music can create emotion or drama. In a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils designed their own movie story. They composed a simple musical score to accompany this, using tuned and untuned instruments effectively. Opportunities are provided for pupils to experience and develop performing, composing and appraising skills. Pupils know what crotchets, quavers and minims are. Scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates that pupils are provided with experiences that develop a good understanding of how pitch, dynamics, duration, tempo, timbre and texture can be structured to create varying moods and effects. Pupils sing well in unison with clear diction, pitch and a sense of musical expression. They sing enthusiastically and with obvious enjoyment.
116. The quality of teaching in the two lessons seen was good. The teacher's very good subject knowledge enabled her to introduce and consolidate the correct subject vocabulary and good planning helped to develop key skills progressively. The lessons observed were well structured and resources were readily available. This ensured that all pupils were actively involved in the lessons and a good pace of learning was maintained. Effective questioning helped the teacher to assess pupils' understanding well and it is clear from a scrutiny of planning that subsequent lessons are planned to take account of this. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to perform in front of an audience.
117. Despite the good standards seen in the lessons during the inspection, there are some areas of the music curriculum that are not so well developed. Computers are not used as a resource in the subject and there is limited music from different cultures and times available. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware of how the subject needs to be developed and leads by example in her own good teaching. Teachers' planning is monitored and support is given to other teachers as necessary. There has been no opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and take sample lessons to help other teachers develop their own skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. Because of timetabling constraints, there were limited opportunities to observe physical education during the inspection. Both the lessons seen were on developing games skills, but during the year the school plans for pupils to take part in the full range of the National Curriculum, including outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when there were no plans for dance or outdoor and adventurous activities.

119. In the games lessons seen, standards were as expected for pupils' ages. In Years 1 and 2, pupils worked well together in pairs throwing a ball to each other and also made good progress in developing striking skills, first with their hand and then with a racket in a small game. In Years 5 and 6 pupils practised bowling and striking skills with a rounders bat. Again they developed these in a small game in which they understood the need to work as a team and also the importance of fair play. Although it was not possible to observe swimming, the opportunities for pupils are good throughout the school. In the recent past all pupils have learned to swim at least 25 metres by the time they move on to secondary school, and many achieve this much earlier.
120. The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen the teacher ensured that pupils warmed up properly before exercise. She had a good understanding of the subject and so was able to provide appropriate demonstrations to pupils, as well as using pupils themselves to demonstrate. She checked what pupils were doing and was able to suggest ways of improvement. However, there was not always sufficient time left in lessons for pupils to consolidate the skills they had learned.
121. The school uses the specialist knowledge of the subject co-ordinator well by a class swap which enables her to teach both the Years 1 and 2 and the Years 5 and 6 classes, as well as work alongside the teacher in the Years 3 and 4 class. This also gives her a good opportunity to check on pupils' progress in these classes. The school has a good indoor hall for physical education and a good range of resources. Outdoor accommodation is at present limited, but there is an area under development which will provide a flat grassed surface.
122. Lessons are supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular clubs, which include netball, football, cricket, rounders and tennis. There are also opportunities for inter-school competition in a range of sports, which are good for a small school. The school holds its own sports day, which takes place in the evening and has become an important link with the village community. Pupils also take part enthusiastically and successfully in the district sports. The subject makes an important contribution to pupils' social development in the opportunities it offers for pupils to work together in teams. All pupils in the school vote to elect sports captains, who are given responsibility, for instance for looking after the physical education equipment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. The standards achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 6 meet the expectations of the local authority's agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good.
124. By the end of Year 2 most pupils understand the significance of festivals such as Succoth, Christingle and Easter. They also know that, just as Christians regard the Bible as a special book, Muslims respect the Qur'an. They know stories from different traditions. By the end of Year 6 they have extended and deepened their knowledge of the range of world faiths. They have an understanding, for instance, of the significance of the Five Pillars of Islam or the festival of Ramadan to a Muslim. They understand the significance of the ceremony of marriage across the religious traditions. They know stories from the Old Testament, such as Moses and the Burning Bush and the story of Esther. They also have a good understanding of the significance to Christians of the events surrounding Easter. They understand that there are differences between faiths, as well as shared common features. They also show an understanding of some of the dilemmas posed by religious belief.
125. Because of the good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils, pupils have positive attitudes and behave well in lessons, although younger pupils occasionally become restless when they have to listen for a long time. Teachers are quick to pick up on this and manage pupils very well. They use questions well to deepen pupils' understanding of the

significance of religious practices to a follower of the faith. They also hold their attention by using a good range of resources, such as a copy of the Qur'an on its stand to demonstrate the respect due to it, or a Sikh wedding garland to emphasise the importance of the ceremony. Teachers use visitors, such as the vicar, to add interest as well as information. Pupils regularly visit the church, but there are not enough opportunities for them to visit places of worship of other faiths, to enlarge their understanding. However, teachers take every opportunity to encourage respect for other faiths and cultures, as well as the Christian tradition of the school. They also encourage pupils' spiritual development, for instance giving them the opportunity to write prayers for harvest festival.

126. The school has not yet developed systems to assess pupils' learning against the targets of the agreed syllabus, but this is in its development plan. The school has acquired a good range of artefacts for the different faiths studied, and these are used well in lessons. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching to see what works and what does not. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection.