

INSPECTION REPORT

Knypersley First School

Stoke on Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124060

Headteacher: Mr L J Scragg

Reporting inspector: David Speakman
20086

Dates of inspection: 24/01/00 – 28/01/00

Inspection number: 197006

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Newpool Road Knypersley Biddulph Stoke-on-Trent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Shelley
Date of previous inspection:	27/01/97 - 31/01/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Speakman	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school this is.
		Art	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
		Design and technology	How well the school is led and managed?
		Physical education	What the school should do to improve further.
Ken Rowland	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well the school cares for its pupils.
			How well the school works in partnership with parents.
Jo O'Hare	Team inspector	English	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.
		Music	
		Religious education	
		English as an additional language	
		Under fives	
Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Science	How well the pupils are taught.
		Information technology	
		Geography	
		History	
		Equal opportunities	
		Special educational needs	

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the centre of Knypersley, a small village to the south of Biddulph in Staffordshire. It is a First School and caters for boys and girls between the ages of four and nine from the surrounding area. Pupils of statutory school age are taught in the main school building and those under five in a separate building on site. There are 265 pupils on roll with very much the same proportion of boys as girls, 123 girls and 142 boys with the number of pupils remaining about the same as the last inspection. The school is bigger than other primary schools. Children enter the school the term after their fourth birthday and attend on a part time basis at the Earlybirds pre school unit. They then transfer into one of the two reception classes and are grouped according to age. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 children in the Earlybirds and 45 in the two reception classes, 30 of whom were under five. They come with a wide range of abilities but their attainment on entry ranges from above to below average for their age. It is below average overall. There are weaknesses in their speaking and listening skills, numeracy skills and personal and social development. When they are nine, most pupils transfer to a local middle school. As at the time of the previous inspection all pupils are of white, UK heritage with English as their first language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special needs is low at six per cent. There are six pupils on stages 1 and 2 and ten on stages 3 to 5 with three pupils having statements of special educational need. All pupils on stages 3 to 5 have moderate learning difficulties. Thirty eight pupils (14.3 per cent) are eligible for free school meals. This figure is broadly in line with the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Knypersley First is an effective school, with only minor and no key issues identified by this inspection. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and very good progress whilst under five. By the time they leave the school their standards of attainment are generally above average and they achieve well. Pupils' attitudes towards school are good, as is their behaviour. Pupils achieve good standards in their personal development. The quality of education offered by the school is good. The curriculum for children under five is excellent and the quality of teaching is very good. At Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, the quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher, deputy and senior managers who are well supported by the governors is of a very good quality. This has led to a very good level of improvement since the last inspection. The school has addressed all the previous key issues effectively and through very good leadership and good teaching, has surpassed its own realistic targets, and standards have improved steadily over the last four years. The school spends an average amount of money on each child and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are good, largely as a result of good teaching throughout the school.
- Children under five have a very good start to their education and these pupils make very good progress. This is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are keen to learn, behave well, and form very good relationships with each other and their teachers. This makes a significant contribution to the progress that they make.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in their learning and make good progress.
- The standard of care for pupils is very high.
- The school works well with the parents and the community and makes very good use of these contacts to improve the quality of education.
- The headteacher, deputy and senior managers are very effective leaders. They are well supported by a staff and governing body committed to constant improvement and high standards.

What could be improved

- The governing body does not fulfil its statutory requirements as they have not yet completed establishing performance criteria for the work of the headteacher and deputy.
- There are insufficient opportunities in some lessons for pupils to learn independently.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual development is currently less well developed in some areas.
- There are insufficient fiction and non fiction books in the school's central library.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress in improving since the previous inspection. Good progress has been made in improving development planning. This now clearly identifies priorities and progress towards meeting these is closely monitored. There are now very good procedures to monitor teaching and this has been very effective. At the time of the last inspection although teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, 20 per cent was unsatisfactory. Now the quality of teaching is good at both key stages and, very good for children under five: no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Excellent progress has been made in meeting this key issue. Higher attaining pupils now achieve well, and good progress has been made in improving the provision for these pupils. There has been good progress in improving medium and short term planning and the school has made very good progress in establishing assessment procedures and making good use of data and information.

At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment and the quality of education were requiring some improvement. These areas are now good and very good progress has been made in improvement. Excellent progress has been made in provision for children under five. The school's good climate for learning has been well maintained. At the last inspection the management and efficiency were judged to be good. The leadership and management of the school are now very good and good progress has been made in improving this aspect of the school's work.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	C	C	C	C	well above average A above average B
Writing	C	B	A	A	average C below average D
Mathematics	A	A	A	A*	well below average E

The proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 or above in the national tests in 1999 for seven year olds in reading was broadly in line with the national average. It was well above average in writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above the national average in mathematics, close to the national average in writing but well below in reading. When compared with similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was average in reading, well above average in writing and very high when compared to the national average in mathematics. The standard of attainment in mathematics places the school in the highest five per cent of schools for this subject when compared with similar schools.

Attainment is judged to be above average by the time pupils are five, at the end of Key Stage 1 and at Year 4. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics has improved and is now above average. Attainment in science has been maintained and remains average as do those in religious education. Standards in information technology remain in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1, but have improved at Key Stage 2 from below average to being in line with the national expectations. The progress those pupils make in all foundation subjects at Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory overall, as at the time of the previous inspection. Progress is now good in physical education whereas it was satisfactory at the last inspection. The exceptionally high standards in swimming and the excellent progress those pupils make has been maintained. Standards in the core skills of reading, writing and number are good. Standards in the use of information technology are appropriate in other subjects.

Results in national tests in 1999 have surpassed targets set for the year 2000.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils, and especially the under fives, demonstrate good attitudes to their learning, settle down quickly to their tasks and are able to sustain good levels of concentration throughout the lesson. Pupils enjoy coming to the school and are happy and relaxed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, the standard of behaviour in the school is good. Behaviour in and around the school is good in all areas. In classrooms, most pupils behave well and concentrate on their tasks. However, a very small number of pupils display poor behaviour and create some disruption in the lessons. This is handled well by staff.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of the pupils is good and is based on the school ethos of consideration and respect for others and their property. Many examples can be seen of pupils supporting and helping each other both in and outside the classroom. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance at the school is in line with national averages and has remained so for several years. All absences are explained.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Very 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 is a strength of the school and the overall quality is good. Teaching of children under five is very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. More than three quarters of the teaching is good or better and in one fifth of the lessons it is very good. It is excellent in six per cent of lessons seen. The teaching profiles for Key Stages 1 and 2 are similar. The quality of teaching in English is consistently good and some very good teaching was seen at Key Stage 2. In mathematics teaching is good. The effectiveness of strategies across the curriculum for teaching literacy is very good and for numeracy good. The strong emphasis on teaching of basic skills extends to science and information technology as well as English and mathematics.

Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach and of their pupils are good. In the best lessons teachers have full command of the subject material. Staff have a very effective approach to planning. Lesson plans are based securely on a consistent pattern of assessing pupils' progress and lesson objectives are shared with even the youngest pupils. Their use of assessment is very good and ensures that pupils at different levels of attainment are provided with tasks that are appropriate for their needs. Teachers' expectations are very high, particularly at Key Stage 2 and for children under five. Management overall is very good, and teachers deal with interruptions and inappropriate behaviour calmly. In a very small number of lessons inattention and minor disturbances were overlooked and remained unchecked. Throughout the school, teachers use effective teaching methods.

Pupils respond to teaching well and the quality of their learning is good and very good for those children under five. They sustain interest and concentration and as a result, they successfully acquire skills, knowledge and understanding well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provides a good range of worthwhile opportunities that successfully meet the interests, aptitudes and pupils' different needs, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good overall. Teaching of basic skills is well matched to targets in pupils' individual education plans. Teachers create good learning conditions in a context of appropriately high expectations.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. It is satisfactory for their spiritual development, good for their moral and cultural development and very good for their social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This provision has many very good features and is very good overall. The school provides a secure and caring environment for all its pupils. It is seen to be a strength of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, deputy head and senior management team are very effective in their work and in moving the school forward. An efficient and committed team of teachers, support workers and governors, ably supports them. There is a shared commitment to improve the school and the staff have and governors have the necessary skills to succeed in their endeavours.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body meets its statutory requirement satisfactorily. They meet all requirements of recent curriculum initiatives well and carry out their responsibilities generally effectively. However they still have to complete work already started on developing targets and performance criteria for the work of the headteacher and deputy and to successfully implement these in practice.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school very effectively evaluates its own performance. This is an important aspect of the role of the senior management and ensures that the highest quality possible in the performance of the school is provided. There is a rigorous process for the monitoring and improvement in the quality of teaching. In addition, key staff check teachers' planning and evaluate lessons. Senior management carefully analyses the results of statutory and non statutory testing and this provides valuable data on the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding. It is used well to support weak areas and to build upon the school's strengths.
The strategic use of resources	Financial allocations are made with close reference to the school development plan and this mechanism effectively supports school improvement. Governors monitor value for money effectively before and after allocations are made. They investigate the sources of best value and checks on value for money are then followed through effectively. Specific grants, including funds attracted by pupils with special educational needs are appropriately directed and used specifically for the intended purpose. The school plans the strategic use of its financial resources very carefully. Levels of staffing and learning resources are good and enable the delivery of the National Curriculum. The accommodation is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Children like coming to school and parents feel that they are making good progress.- They feel that the behaviour of pupils is good.- They are happy with the quality of teaching and feel that the school expects children to work hard.- They feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.- Parents would feel comfortable in approaching the school if they have a problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Parents do not always feel well informed about how their children are getting on.- A few feel that the school is not well led and managed.- Some are concerned about the amount of homework that their child receives.- Some parents expressed concern over the teaching of reading.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views that parents have about the school. However, the leadership and management of the school are judged to be very good. Teachers make good use of homework at all stages in the school and pupils' reports are of good quality and identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. Concern expressed over the teaching of reading is not justified. Standards are high and pupils enjoy reading in school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above in the national tests in 1999 for seven year olds in reading was broadly in line with the national average. It was well above average in writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above the national average in mathematics, close to the national average in writing but well below in reading. When compared with similar schools, standards of attainment were very high when compared to the national average in mathematics, well above average in writing and above average in reading. The standard of attainment in mathematics places the school in the highest five per cent of schools for this subject when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessment in science indicates that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was very high in comparison with the national average, but average for those attaining Level 3.
- 2 There has been an improvement in standards attained since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be requiring some improvement. Now attainment is judged to be above average by the time pupils are five, at the end of Key Stage 1 and at Year 4. All pupils, including those with special educational needs now make good progress.
- 3 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics has improved and is now above average. Attainment in science has been maintained and remains average. The difference between present achievement and last year's higher results in the progress of pupils over time is due to limitations of the range and depth of work through a topic approach and this means that most progress is made in Year 2. Attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards in information technology are in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1, but have risen from below average at the time of the last inspection to be in line with the national expectations. The progress those pupils make in all foundation subjects at Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 are satisfactory overall, as at the time of the previous inspection. Progress is now good in physical education whereas it was satisfactory at the last inspection. The exceptionally high standards in swimming and the excellent progress those pupils make has been maintained.
- 4 In each of the four years between 1996 and 1999 the trends in average levels followed the same pattern for boys and girls, although girls average scores over the four years were above those of boys. Inspection evidence indicates that there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
- 5 Assessments completed within the first few weeks of entry indicate that the overall attainment on entry to the reception classes is below average. Children under five make very good progress and easily achieve the desirable learning outcomes for children at five in all the six areas of learning. Pupils enter school with standards that are generally above average, particularly in their language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and personal and social skills.
- 6 Standards in the core skills of reading, writing and number are good. Standards are appropriate in the use of information technology in other subjects.
- 7 The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very effectively and is taking the same approach to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the effectiveness of which is good. Their implementation is having a positive impact upon standards and pupils use their literacy skills across the curriculum well, such as in discussions. They make good use of their numeracy skills, for example, in physical education, science and art.
- 8 By the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time the pupils leave their school, standards of listening are above average. Standards in speaking among seven year olds are average, but for a significant proportion of pupils, these are above average. Throughout the school, pupils listen to their teachers attentively. They respond appropriately and are beginning to express themselves clearly and lucidly, talk confidently in a range of situations, and by Year 4, they are beginning to

show an understanding of the main points in a discussion. Standards in reading are above average by the time the pupils are seven. They read fluently, with considerable confidence and accuracy. They read and follow instructions for their work. They read independently, discuss their favourite books and give reasons why they have enjoyed them. They can recall the stories they have read and define the main points of texts, as observed in their shared and guided reading. Most pupils use a whole range of reading cues to correct their own mistakes. By Year 4, reading standards also exceed the national average. The pupils enjoy and understand what they read and talk about the characters in their books. The pupils read for different purposes and a significant proportion of them can adopt appropriate strategies for the task. Concern expressed by some parents about reading are not justified. Standards are good and pupils enjoy reading in school. By the end of Key Stage 1, the standards in writing are very high. The pupils work in a range of forms, including stories, poems, instructions and factual accounts, for example, following their visits. They transfer these skills to other subjects such as geography and in science where the pupils make conclusions on the basis of their data, on the senses, for example. The pupils' handwriting and presentation are generally satisfactory, and for some pupils, these are good. By the end of Year 4, the pupils achieve high standards. They write in a range of styles and for different purposes, including reports on educational visits, stories, poems, letters and work in other subjects of the curriculum. The standards of handwriting and presentation are generally satisfactory, but there are some examples where the standard of pupils' writing is not sufficiently high, nor fluent.

- 9 In mathematics, Year 1 pupils generally achieve appropriate standards with some higher attainers achieving good standards in aspects of number. Some lower attaining pupils struggle to keep numbers in mind when counting and working with numbers and still use fingers to count, not yet having developed mental recall of addition bonds. Higher attaining pupils more readily recall the addition and subtraction number bonds. Most add coins proficiently, giving the total of sums of money. Pupils identify shapes such as triangles and quadrilaterals. Some accurately count squares in shapes as a preliminary exercise to finding the area of irregular shapes. Pupils in Year 2 develop the skills and knowledge learned in Year 1 well. They have a good understanding of number and apply this well in a wide range of situations. Their mental skills in number develop well and all pupils have some good strategies for calculating. However not all pupils have developed the habit of self checking. They accurately identify and name solid shapes such as cube, sphere, cuboids and competently point out and count the number of faces, edges and vertices. They show a good understanding of line symmetry and most pupils are able to draw simple symmetrical shapes, most showing good motor skills and accurate measurements. Most draw and interpret simple block graphs, understanding and accurately answering questions about the graph. Pupils in Year 3 attain good standards in number. They show a developed understanding of number bonds and able to develop good strategies for solving questions. Pupils have developed preliminary ideas in working with numbers to two decimal places and higher and average attaining pupils work well with these numbers. They competently approximate and measure length and weight accurately using standard metric units. Pupils classify shapes accurately according to the number of sides for example or whether they have all straight sides. They use tally marks properly in collecting data and making graphs. By the time they reach Year 4, most pupils are working comfortably at levels that are high for their age. They have a secure understanding of number. All count below zero accurately and order positive and negative numbers in size order. Pupils show good mental maths skills and they are good at solving problems and identifying which operation to use when solving number problems. This illustrates pupils' good use of literacy in maths and their good knowledge of mathematical vocabulary.
- 10 In science Year 2 pupils' curiosity is well established. They are beginning to enjoy difficult problem solving, and use a range of appropriate resources to test their developing ideas about materials and how they change. Squeezing sponges and twisting pipe cleaners gives them a base of practical experience. In Year 1, pupils effectively structure their learning in scientific ways. As pupils study the five senses they experiment, think harder and use more difficult technical words. At Key Stage 2, progress accelerates and by Year 4 most pupils are well in line to achieve the national averages, and a significant minority is set to exceed these. Junior pupils are good at seeing science problems worked out in relevant practical situations. Year 3 pupils can test materials, knowing, for instance, that textile materials work better as protective packaging. They can design a secure box in which an egg remains unbroken when dropped. Year 4 pupils are good at precise measurements, such as of temperature. They can then prove which material acts as the best insulator to keep a liquid warm, or ice cubes frozen.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 Most pupils, and especially the under fives, demonstrate good attitudes to their learning, settle down quickly to their tasks and are able to sustain good levels of concentration throughout the lesson. Pupils enjoy coming to the school and are happy and relaxed in the presence of the staff and adult helpers. Where lessons are delivered with pace and clear targets, their work is good. On the few occasions when lesson objectives are less well defined, a small number of pupils are less able to maintain their levels of concentration and become restless.
- 12 Extra curricular activities seen during the inspection are well supported and specialist instruction from outside agencies extends the very good instruction, which the school provides. Good examples of individual, paired and group working are clearly evident and pupils display an enthusiastic response to teacher questions and ask sensible and pertinent question of their own. Relationships between home and teachers are very good and parents are able to seek advice and support about their children at any time. Pupils with special educational needs maintain a positive self image and have a willing and confident attitude to their work. Their behaviour is mostly very good. Support assistants encourage independence in the pupils to tackle challenging tasks with determination. Overall, the standard of behaviour in the school is good. Behaviour in and around the school is good in all areas and very good in the Earlybird and reception areas. In classrooms, most pupils behave well and concentrate on their tasks. However, a very small number of pupils across the school display poor behaviour and create some disruption in the lessons. This behaviour is not related to the quality of teaching and teachers take appropriate steps to reduce the negative effect which these pupils have on the learning programme, keeping pupils on task and moving forward with their learning. Classroom rules have been personalised by the pupils in consultation with the teachers and pupils and parents are well aware of the expectations of the school. Effective procedures are in place for dealing with disharmony or oppressive behaviour and bullying in the school is not a problem. Pupils are happy in the school and know well what action to take in the event of any problems arising. There have been no exclusions for several years and rewards and sanctions are appropriate and applied consistently. Parents know and understand what is expected of them and the pupils and are very supportive of the school aims and standards.
- 13 The personal development of the pupils is good and is based on the school ethos of consideration and respect for others and their property, which is effectively delivered through the school's personal and social education programme. Many examples can be seen of pupils supporting and helping each other both in and outside the classroom. The older pupils demonstrate substantial consideration and care for younger pupils and both guide and protect them during the recreation periods to good effect. This is particularly evident in cases where pupils have particular needs or restricted ability. Staff know and understand the needs of the pupils and act as very good role models in encouraging the pupils to show care and consideration for their peers. The older pupils are allocated areas of responsibility with specific tasks, which they perform with confidence and determination. They earn the trust and respect of the staff and are allowed access to all areas of the school to carry out their duties. They also help staff and other adults at school functions and act as guides to visitors during open days and school performances and actively support a range of charitable organisations. They use their initiative well in setting up the hall for physical education classes and for clearing up after other activities. Relationships in the school are very good with obvious mutual respect between the staff and the pupils. Pupils have confidence in both teaching and non teaching staff, and are able to learn and develop from the examples and standards set by the staff. They show respect for their own and other people's property and for their environment. The school is a clean, tidy and secure area and there is no evidence of graffiti or abuse. Pupils talk openly about themselves and their school and are polite and courteous in their dealings with adults.
- 14 Attendance at the school is in line with national averages and has remained so for several years. All absences are explained and the school has very good procedures in place to ensure that parents and pupils understand the importance and value of regular attendance. Pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start promptly. Registers are completed at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions and satisfy statutory requirements. There are no indications of persistent absenteeism in the registers but despite repeated requests from the school, through the prospectus and regular newsletters, there is still an unacceptable level of absenteeism due to pupils taking holidays during term time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 15 Teaching is a strength of the school. It has substantially improved since the previous inspection. The overall quality of teaching is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. More than three quarters of the teaching is good or better and in one fifth of lessons it is very good. In six per cent of lessons, teaching is excellent. Teaching of under fives has moved from satisfactory in 1996 to very good, with one in five lessons excellent. The teaching profiles for Key Stages 1 and 2 are similar. Some of the teaching of the oldest pupils is excellent.
- 16 Confidence and good expertise, as a result of a well structured in service training programme have replaced the lack of secure subject knowledge noted in the previous report. In the best lessons teachers have full command of the subject material. They convey not only accuracy of detail to their pupils, but also enthusiasm for learning. The strong emphasis on teaching of basic skills extends to science and information technology as well as English and mathematics. Teachers make good use of the structure of the literacy hour to achieve a good balance of attention to training in phonics and word building skills, to work involving punctuation and sequencing of sentences and to reading whole texts with expression. Numeracy teaching provides a sound base for developing pupils' mathematical skills, but the structure is not as well understood as literacy, because it is still in the early days of its implementation. Pupils' independence in creative thinking, to develop and use their own strategies for handling numbers is not sufficiently emphasised. Teachers focus well on the full range of basic computer skills, from switching on the electricity at the start, to saving work securely at the end of a lesson.
- 17 In a determined response to the unsatisfactory planning in 1996, there is now a very effective whole school approach to planning. Lesson plans are based securely on a consistent pattern of assessing pupils' progress. The objectives for lessons are shared with even the youngest pupils, usually written up on the board, and explained clearly. At the end of lessons children join teachers in assessing how successful the lesson has been. In this way pupils begin to get an idea of the process of learning. Teachers are aware that pupils learn by small steps and are careful to ensure that new learning is built securely on the old. Teachers are particularly good at matching the activities in the lesson to the abilities of the pupils. Overall a high expectation exists, from the precise use of technical vocabulary to the setting of work which is achievable but always challenging. Teachers put a lot of effort into making the work sheets and guide cards for the children they have in mind. Expectations are generally higher still in the upper part of the school for pupils at all levels of attainment. However, opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills are limited.
- 18 Teachers explain things clearly. They give precise instructions so that pupils know what to do. For instance, Year 2 numeracy lessons build up a series of logical steps so that pupils can see exactly how one piece links to another. The most successful lessons have short introductions followed by plenty of activity and opportunity for pupils to try things out for themselves, to create their own solutions. In these lessons teachers demand high productivity and give time signals so that pupils know how much they have to do and how long they have to do it. This keeps them on their toes. Teachers seem not to need to manage the pupils in these lessons, because the pupils are too busy with the task in hand, usually a practical activity. However, in a small minority of lessons the teachers' input went on too long, or pupils were not required to do a demanding enough work, they lost concentration or even became bored. The impact of an otherwise well planned lesson was lost. Management overall is very good, and teachers deal with interruptions and inappropriate behaviour calmly. In a very small number of lessons inattention and minor disturbances are overlooked and go unchecked. This does not constitute good practice.
- 19 Excellent teaching occurs when all the factors combine; when pupils acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills in a learning situation where their own independence and initiative sets a strong pace. In a Year 4 lesson the pupils took a serious pride in using their own geography data, surveyed as a homework activity, as the content of their lesson on water usage. This gave them complete ownership of the activity. Homework is well used to support many subjects. Very good teaching, when teachers create conditions where pupils' thinking is almost palpable, as with pupils in Year 2 wrestling with the concept of change and forces, is

only a step removed from excellence.

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

- 20 The school's curriculum as a whole provides a good range of worthwhile opportunities, which meets the interests, aptitudes and their particular needs including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. The curriculum meets the requirements in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, information technology, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and of the foundation subjects.
- 21 The school has successfully addressed the issues regarding the planning of the curriculum raised in the last inspection report. There has been good progress in improving medium and short term planning. There are very effective strategies for teaching literacy skills which result in pupils' high levels of attainment in English. In mathematics, the strategies are well implemented and are beginning to have positive effects on pupils' learning and subsequent attainment. The strong focus placed on these subjects has resulted in pupils' already surpassing the realistic targets set by the school.
- 22 The good quality and range of learning opportunities are well planned and clearly identify the different levels of pupils' abilities. Provision for special educational needs is very good. The pupils' individual targets in the good quality education plans, together with the time the pupils have to achieve their targets at a challenging level. As a result these pupils make good progress. The higher attaining pupils are provided with consistently challenging tasks to meet their specific needs. They also, therefore, make good progress and consequently, achieve levels of which they are capable. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully addressed the issue regarding the range of learning strategies for these pupils. However there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their learning skills through independent learning.
- 23 Appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and all pupils have equal access to all areas of the school life. Sound provision is made for sex education and drugs awareness under the school's health education programme. Provision for extra curricular activities is good. These include short tennis provided by a tennis coach, swimming, football coaching as well as other seasonal activities such as a science investigators club, a French club and recorders. These opportunities are further enriched by a variety of carefully planned visits and visitors, which effectively enhance pupils' learning, and extend their interests. These include Rugely Power Station and Tittesworth Reservoir for science and geography studies, local church, the public library at Biddulph and Stanley Head Outdoor Education Centre. Pupils make other learning related visits when appropriate. There is also a multi cultural dimension to this provision. For example, the pupils have weeks designated to different cultures such as Chinese, Indian, European and further plans are being made to widen the scope for this provision. Drama is a strong feature of the school life and successfully promoted through the headteacher's close associations with the Theatre Royal in Hanley. The pupils participate in other events such as recorder playing in Lichfield Cathedral. They regularly entertain the local senior citizens and participate in a number of fund raising activities for charities, such as the Red Nose Appeal, the NSPCC and Children in Need. These events help the pupils to be aware of other people less fortunate than themselves.
- 24 The school has formed very constructive relationships with the receiving schools and other institutions such as Stoke on Trent College and the local primary schools. These effectively help to share resources, to use local people's expertise and subsequently, to enrich the pupils' curricular provision.
- 25 Provision for personal, social and health education is another strength of the school. Through this, the pupils learn to consider how their actions and those of others can have an effect on those around them. They learn the difference between right and wrong, to make sensible choices; they help them to become confident people with enduring values and lay effective foundations for becoming active and worth while citizens.
- 26 The community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. There are very good

examples where it is actively involved in the life of the school. A representative from 'Biddulph in Bloom' visits the school to encourage fund raising for the project and to lead assemblies. War veterans talk about their experiences on Armistice Day, the pupils from the High School help with activities, Port vale Football Club gives assistance with training programmes. The local councillors, the vicar and the mayor and other civic leaders all add to the learning opportunities offered at the school. The school supports the Health Promoting School Award, for which they won an award in 1998. Around 30 parents help with school activities on a regular basis, a very good example of which was observed at the time of the inspection, when seven of them ably helped with activities for children under five.

- 27 The overall provision for the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in the school. There is no policy in place as to how the learning opportunities planned for the pupils can include these important aspects of their development. However, there is an increased provision since the last inspection.
- 28 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There are occasions where opportunities are missed in lessons and in assemblies which sometimes do not contain a spiritual dimension. The quality of Collective Worship is satisfactory. However, there were many examples where this development took place notably in the learning opportunities in classes for children under five and in some of the lessons observed. For example, in Year 1, pupils were riveted to their screen in their information technology lesson. In the same year group, pupils were completely absorbed in their singing and in playing their instruments in the action songs. In Year 4, pupils were enchanted with the beauty of Ted Hughes' writing, 'The Iron man' and quoted similes, which they found particularly apt.
- 29 The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school provides an orderly atmosphere in which the pupils feel safe, secure and valued. This is demonstrated in the way staff display their pupils' work. The school teaches right from wrong and takes a firm stand on inappropriate behaviour. Parents feel that the school encourages and fosters values of honesty, fairness and respect. As a result, the school functions as a fair and just society in which everyone matters equally.
- 30 The provision for social development is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when this was deemed to be good. Older pupils take care of children who are under five and always accompany them to their own play areas after midday meals. The pupils are involved in a number of activities, which also ensure that they develop socially. They are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and are often seen helping in numerous ways in the daily routines of school life.
- 31 The cultural development is well provided for through the curriculum and the number of visitors that are invited into the school. For example, there are multi cultural visitors, who all inform the pupils of their culture. The celebration of English literature through suitable books in class libraries and in the literacy lessons also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' own rich cultural heritage and to that of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 32 The school provides a secure and caring environment for all its pupils and has improved on the quality of this provision since the last inspection. At that time the overall provision was deemed to be satisfactory with some good aspects. This provision is now very good overall and is seen to be a strength of the school.
- 33 Procedures for child protection and for the safety, security and welfare of the pupils are in place and are of very good quality. Staff are fully aware of the action to take in a suspected case of child abuse and have been given specific training to help them recognise the signs which could indicate these incidents. The head teacher is the designated responsible person for dealing with any cases which are suspected. The safety and security of the pupils is of paramount concern to all the staff at the school and all precautions are secure and procedures are in place. There is complete trust between pupils and staff. Staff understand and respect the problems of their pupils and take a very sympathetic and understanding approach in dealing with them. This consideration consolidates the trust, which the pupils have in the staff, and promotes their self

esteem. Staff maintain very close links with parents to ensure the needs of the pupils are best served.

- 34 Links with external agencies like the police and medical services are well established and are of considerable benefit to the pupils and the school. During school hours, the building is secured. Two members of the school staff are qualified to deliver first aid treatment in an emergency and there are four first aid boxes in clearly indicated appropriate locations around the school. All accidents are carefully recorded in an accident or injury file and appropriate action is taken to inform parents of any incidents which arise. All teachers have been trained and qualified to supervise activities in the school swimming pool. Supervision during recreation periods and lunchtime is of good quality and all the non teaching support staff are a great asset to the school.
- 35 Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are very good and this is reflected in the assessment through the school. An extensive procedure for monitoring pupil progress is in place and this has been standardised across all classes. Pupils are tested at the end of each learning unit and progress is recorded and achievements noted. Detailed and extensive assessment procedures, supported by formal and informal testing, allow teachers to plot individual and class progress continuously through the school and on to the further stages of their education. Differentiated teaching in all classes allows pupils to progress at a rate which is in line with their abilities and tasks set are appropriate to their needs. The procedures adopted allow teachers instant access to information regarding how individual pupils are performing against their targets and they can then use this information to inform future progress. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are of good quality and are regularly checked and measured against agreed criteria. Support for pupils with special educational needs is of very good quality and these pupils are very well served despite there being few special needs assistants.
- 36 Personal development of the pupils is promoted by the trust which staff place upon them and the way in which they are encouraged to help, support and protect the very small members of the school community. The school has a monitor system in operation and pupils are allocated specific tasks and responsibilities. Opportunities to use their own initiative in lessons are limited but when possible the pupils become involved and work with enthusiasm and determination. Pupils support the staff and parents at the various functions organised by the Parent/Teacher Association, the Biddulph Carnival and other community based activities. Very good examples can be seen of the care and consideration the older pupils display towards children in the Earlybirds and reception classes and for the support and help they give to less able pupils. In addition, several charities receive considerable support from the efforts of all the pupils in the school.
- 37 The educational and personal support and guidance for the pupils in the school is very good. About 30 parents provide regular and valuable in class support for the staff in all aspects of the curriculum. The induction of new pupils into the Earlybird/reception area of the school is very well organised and much appreciated by all parents. Pupils start at the school well prepared and parents are made fully aware of what they will be doing. Transfer to the middle school is well organised and the strong relationship between the schools enables a trouble free move to take place with good transfer of records to inform future progress. The education programme is further supported by the rich opportunities provided by the substantial number of visitors who come to the school to take part in the weekly assemblies or to teach, inform, advise or relay information about life outside the school. Further support is provided by the appropriate system of rewards, which the school has introduced to encourage good performance and effort. The Worker of the Week and the Student of the Week awards both generate enthusiastic competition for the recognition of the work and effort of the pupils and this is realised when the awards are presented at the weekly assembly. In addition, certificates for other notable achievements are presented at the same time.
- 38 The school is good at identifying pupils with special educational needs at a very early stage so that its work to improve basic skills can be most effective. The early years staff make good use of the information gained from the baseline assessments. Pupils are then monitored continuously until their progress indicates they can be taken off the register. If progress is not satisfactory, specialist help is introduced from the local education authority. The school has very good relationships with many specialist agencies, particularly the educational psychology service and the behaviour support unit, both of which have helped to raise pupils' welfare to a

high level. The school uses its knowledge of its special needs pupils effectively to give guidance on behaviour and academic improvement. These pupils are well prepared for their transfer to the middle school through the links created with other schools in the pyramid.

- 39 Very good procedures are in place for monitoring and encouraging good attendance and the school is consistently in line with national averages in this area. All absences are explained and the school performance for unauthorised absence, supported as required by the education welfare services, is well below national averages. The procedures in place and the diligence of the teachers and school secretary in monitoring the registers ensure that attendance at the school remains satisfactory. Rewards and inducements are appropriate but the level of holidays taken during term time has an effect on the attendance record.
- 40 A good range of extra curricular activities further enriches the school curriculum. The pupils are happy to come to school. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very solid and effective in most cases. A very small number of pupils cause some classroom disturbances at times but these are handled appropriately by the teachers. Where the disturbance is such that progress in learning is affected, teachers have suitable sanctions to overcome the problems. Behaviour around the school, in corridors and recreation areas is very good and well controlled. During the inspection, there were no indications or evidence of any oppressive or threatening behaviour, harassment or bullying. The very good procedures in place are effective. Pupils know what to do if they feel threatened in any way and are relaxed and comfortable in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 41 A substantial number of parents provide regular support in the classroom in most areas of the curriculum. The Home / School Partnership is strong and parents are aware of and support the school in its practices. The school operates a training scheme to enable parents to understand how to support the school and the pupils and all parents who provide the support are given detailed instructions and directions which clearly and concisely explain their role in the classroom and their responsibilities. This help and support extends into the production of learning aids for the pupils and to educational and social activities, helping with the reading programme and work in the library. Parents are willing and happy to support the school and are welcomed by the staff for the valuable contribution, which they make to the learning programme. Parental presence in the school helps the pupils to adjust well to adults and offers them excellent opportunities to develop their social skills, politeness, helpfulness and consideration for others. The number of parents and non teaching helpers who work in the school also helps their speaking and listening skills. The presence and support of the classroom assistants, special needs assistants, nursery nurses and other support assistants are an asset to the school.
- 42 The relationship between teachers and supporters is very good across all aspects of the curriculum. Information provided about the school is extensive and all aspects of the school activities and achievements, both academic and sporting are relayed to parents through the weekly newsletters or through special messages sent home. Major changes, like the introduction of the literacy and numeracy initiatives were introduced through open meetings as well as notices. Parents' concerns about up to date information concerning the curriculum are supported by the inspection but this information is provided at the start of each school year. In all other respects, the school serves parents very well by the quality and quantity of the information provided. All the positive aspects of parental comments are fully supported by the inspection and parents' views of the school, its values and the benefits it offers the pupils are very clear and positive.
- 43 The school holds two performance review evenings each year and provides a written report before the summer term meeting which can be discussed at that meeting. The report is of good quality and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils. Parents can recognise their own children from the reports but felt that the previous hand written reports were more personalised than the current computer generated reports. Inspection does not support this view. Staff are readily available to discuss any concerns parents might have about any aspect of their children's school life and activities and make sure that parents are kept informed about concerns which staff might have about the pupils. The information provided by the school, and

the advice which is given to parents with regard to changes to the school curriculum allows parents the opportunity to provide support at home for their children, especially with their reading. It is apparent that many parents do provide this support.

- 44 Overall, the views of the parents is that this a very good school, where the pupils are valued and cared for by an efficient and diligent staff and where they receive a sound base on which to build their education. Staff are highly regarded and the home/school partnership is solid. The pupils are happy and relaxed in the school, the atmosphere is calm and welcoming and pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability at all times.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 45 The headteacher, deputy head and senior management team are very effective in their work and in moving the school forward within the terms of reference in the development plan. An efficient and committed team of teachers, support workers and governors, ably supports them. There is a shared commitment to improve the school and the staff have and governors have the necessary skills to succeed in their endeavours. Together they have established a clear vision for the future of the school and work hard to ensure that they meet their aims for the good of the pupils in their care and the school development in general. This has had a very beneficial effect on improving standards since the current headteacher and deputy have been in post. The previous inspection judged the leadership and management of the school to be good. Recently in post at that time, they had made commendable efforts to put management strategies in place and to build a team of staff that had common purpose and goals. This has been developed very well since that time and there is now a great sense of purpose pervading the work of the school and a genuine interest in the progress and development of the pupils. The headteacher provides strong leadership and effectively delegates responsibilities to key staff, whilst ensuring that they meet their commitments well. The senior management team, made up of the headteacher, deputy head (also as early years coordinator) and two key stage coordinators work effectively together and are fully involved in the good progress that the school has made in raising standards and providing a good quality of education for its pupils.
- 46 An important aspect of their role is to monitor and ensure that the highest quality possible in the performance of the school is provided. To achieve this, there is a rigorous process for the monitoring and improvement in the quality of teaching. This has been effective and the standard in teaching has improved since the previous inspection. At that time the quality of teaching was broadly satisfactory overall and was satisfactory or better in about eighty percent of lessons. The deputy head has taken responsibility for early years and now teaching for children under five has improved from satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection to very good, with the quality of teaching in one in five lessons being excellent. Teaching is now a strength of the school. In addition to effective monitoring of teaching, the key staff check teachers' planning and evaluations of lessons. Subject coordinators ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met in their subjects and that standards are being maintained. The senior management carefully analyses the results of statutory and non statutory testing at each key stage in the school; on entry, at the end of the reception year and at the end of Years 2 and 4. This provides valuable data on the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding and is used well to support weak areas and to build upon the school's strengths.
- 47 The management of special educational needs has established a very effective and caring provision, well supported by the named governor. The pupils' progress has not yet reached the level which this quality of provision suggests. This is because many of the initiatives are recently introduced and will take some time to work through. Also the level of training of the teachers and support staff is continuously expanding, and the impact of this is felt in the longer term. The manager for special needs is constantly evaluating the provision to find areas for improvement. For instance the school is in the process of integrating and including in its roll a disabled reception boy, and has established close links with the special school to ease the transfer. Also it is studying the likely implications for adapting the main building to cater effectively for expanding special needs.
- 48 The school implements its aims very effectively. At the time of the last inspection the school was required to reconcile a dual set of aims. This arose from a mission statement and a set of school aims, which have now been successfully clarified. The school very effectively creates a

caring, well ordered school community in which each child can begin to develop to their full potential within the framework of a broad and balanced curriculum. It generally successfully encourages each pupil to explore new activities and learning experiences in an effort to discover and promote new knowledge and skills, talents and interests, although independent learning is insufficiently developed in some lessons. The school establishes and develops principles of consideration, respect and safety for others and their property in pupils as they get older. Relationships in the school are very good.

- 49 The governing body meets its statutory requirement satisfactorily. They meet all requirements of recent curriculum initiatives well and carry out their responsibilities generally effectively. However they still have to develop targets and performance criteria for the work of the headteacher and deputy and to successfully implement these in practice. They are aware of this requirement and are currently in the process of developing targets.
- 50 The senior management team and staff are instrumental in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are well supported by the governors who are well informed and discuss fully the school development plan. This is an evolving document, which covers the development in the current year in detail and for the subsequent two years in outline. The priorities for each year are brought forward and combined with a review of the previous year and other needs are added when necessary in response to the headteacher's and governors monitoring and informal visits and discussions. Each year the plan is initiated through consultation with the headteacher and staff, the chair of governors and other key governors, who effectively set the priorities for the coming year. The development plan and the budget for the year are closely linked. There is a strong programme of review. The progress towards achieving the targets set in the development plan is carefully reviewed regularly and this ensures that the school meets its targets well.
- 51 Financial allocations are made with close reference to the school development plan and this mechanism effectively supports the school's development. Governors monitor value for money effectively before and after allocations are made. They investigate the sources of best value, for example in obtaining competitive tenders. Checks on value for money are then followed through. The chair of the finance committee receives a monthly budget report using this, he and the headteacher closely monitor the budget and any variations between actual and planned spending that may arise. They reconcile these differences successfully. Reports are given to the full governing body at termly meetings. Specific grants, including funds attracted by pupils with special educational needs are appropriately directed and used specifically for the intended purpose. The school plans the strategic use of its financial resources very carefully and each year, the funds attracted by pupils in the school are spent on those pupils. The school does not carry over sums of money as a contingency for the future. The funds available to the school for special needs are very efficiently used for maximising the provision, and resources are placed to achieve the most beneficial effect.
- 52 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate for the satisfactory delivery of the national curriculum, with some areas of strength in each aspect and accommodation is good. Staff are suitably trained in all aspects of their teaching needs and in service training consolidates their individual needs. All staff have been given specialised training for working in the swimming pool and have all been awarded certification to support this. The swimming pool is a very well used and valuable asset to the school and pupils take excellent advantage of this facility. As well as the very capable and competent teaching taking place in the pool, professional swimming instructors provide additional support for the pupils. The use of the part time teacher has been very carefully considered and is very well utilised. All members of staff receive some non teaching time in which they are able to monitor their special areas of curriculum responsibility and support their colleagues effectively where appropriate. The match of teaching staff to support staff is very good and very effectively employed. The accommodation enables good delivery of all aspects of the national curriculum. The information technology suite, currently being installed, will allow the school to move forward in this important area and build on the good base, which has been established. The school has good recreation areas outside the school and the large playing field allows very good opportunities for the pupils to develop good sporting skills. Overall, the school is well maintained, in very good clean condition and free from debris, litter and graffiti thanks to the diligence of the caretaker and cleaning staff. The pupils show concern for their school and their environment and provide good support in this area. The school is adequately equipped to deliver the curriculum and the school development plan indicates that these facilities will be

suitable extended in the near future. As well as the installation of the information technology suite, the plan is to move on to the library as the next phase of improvement. In all other areas, despite the limited storage space available, resources are satisfactory.

- 53 The induction programme for new staff is good, with suitable time allowed to permit access to other teachers to study and learn from their good and effective practices. The mentor system for newly qualified teachers is well established and effectively monitored and all staff offer help and support as required. The team spirit in the school is excellent and the induction programme allows very good training into the teacher's role. All aspects of safety, security and pupils' welfare are included. All staff have completed the first stage of appraisal and the school is well into the second stage. At present this is awaiting further government guidelines before it can be completed. The deputy head teacher is responsible for staff appraisal and, supported by the head teacher, they monitor all teaching and provide feedback to the staff both formally and informally. Procedures are solid, well presented and provide a valuable support service to the school as a whole.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 54 There are no significant weaknesses. Areas for improvement relate to the governing body responsibilities, library provision, opportunities for pupils to extend independent learning and provision for the spiritual development of pupils. There are therefore no key issues for action for this school to address. However, to take the school forward and build upon its present quality, the staff and governors should include the following minor issues in its development planning:
- (1) The governing body should fulfil its statutory requirements by establishing performance criteria for the work of the headteacher and deputy.
(Paragraphs 49).
 - (2) Promote independent learning for pupils where appropriate.
(Paragraphs 16, 17, 22, 117).
 - (3) Improve provision for pupils' spiritual development.
(Paragraphs 28, 76, 77, 81, 122, 135).
 - (4) Improve library's stock of appropriate fiction and non fiction books in the school's central library.
(Paragraphs 52, 85).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	21	52	21	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	265
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.97	School data	0
National comparative data	5.3	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	29	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	22	22
	Girls	26	29	29
	Total	46	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90(79)	100(88)	100(96)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	22
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	51	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(83)	100((88)	100((89)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	265
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YRR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	399957
Total expenditure	399850
Expenditure per pupil	1509
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	107

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	265
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	30	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	42	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	48	2	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	46	9	2	0
The teaching is good.	44	50	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	38	19	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	37	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	44	4	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	46	7	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	43	42	9	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	50	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	47	7	4	11

- At the parents' meeting, which was attended by nine parents, a small proportion of parents expressed concern about the teaching of reading.

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

- 55 Standards of attainment and provision for children under five at Knypersley First School are very good and area strength of the school.
- 56 The children enter the school the term after their fourth birthday and attend on a part time basis the Earlybirds pre school unit. They then transfer into one of the two reception classes and grouped according to age. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 children in the Early Birds and 45 in the two reception classes, 30 of who were under five. They come with a wide range of abilities but their attainment is below the average for their age, with weaknesses in their speaking and listening skills, numeracy skills and personal and social development.
- 57 The children make very good progress and, by the time they are five, their attainment in all six areas of learning is above the national expectations for pupils of this age. The excellent curricular and learning opportunities, together with very good quality regular assessment, ensures very good continuity of provision. The additional strength is the close level of partnership with parents whose good support for their children helps them to progress.
- 58 The Unit for children under five is organised by the deputy head who is also the coordinator for early years. Together with the very capable, knowledgeable nursery nurses and a child care specialist they form an effective team. They work very closely and ensure that the curriculum is broad, balanced and the learning opportunities are rich and stimulating. The children learn in bright and cheerful rooms. The curriculum offered in the Earlybirds area and in the younger reception class reflects all the recommended areas of learning for children under five. In the older reception class, the range of activities provided is extended and more focused on transition to the National Curriculum, which is an appropriate way to take the children's learning forward. This provides a very good introduction to the National Curriculum programmes of study and gives a secure foundation for later achievements. All these factors help the children to become confident and interested learners.
- 59 Teaching is never less than very good and a third is excellent. All staff have very good understanding of young children's learning, high expectations and very good relationships with them. Planning is thorough and provides a wide range interesting and varied activities, which are well matched to children's prior attainment. Clear learning targets underpin all activities.

Personal and Social Development

- 60 The children in the Earlybirds and in both reception classes quickly learn rules and routines. They gain a measure of self awareness and confidence as they organise their own play or work in groups with or without adults. They quickly develop confident and secure relationships with each other and with adults. They learn to cooperate well in group situations and concentrate on tasks for lengthy periods. Very good examples of this were observed during activities to explore floating and sinking. The children contribute to class discussions in appropriate ways, showing respect for each other's ideas by listening carefully and speaking out with increasing confidence and clarity. They take responsibility for class routines and clear up well after activities. All children show a social maturity and an increasing capacity to make sensible, independent choices in their learning. At the time of the inspection, the children helped to serve refreshment to their parents and visitors after an assembly presentation. All the children show very positive attitudes to their learning which help them to lay very good foundations for the future.
- 61 Teaching in this area is excellent. Adults are warm and supportive. The children are well managed and this is underpinned by very good relationships. All staff are very aware of individual children's needs. Good provision is made for children with special educational needs and these children are well integrated into the classes. Adults and the children are clear about expectations of work and behaviour, which are consistently high. The staff take every opportunity to develop this area of the children's development. A very good example of this

was seen in the confident manner in which the children made a drama presentation of Noah's Ark at an assembly and mixed confidently with the visitors afterwards. The strong focus put on personal and social development in planned activities and daily routines contribute well to the very good progress these children make.

Language and Literacy

- 62 The children's speaking and listening develops very well. This is clearly illustrated as they follow a story or instructions for their work. The children's knowledge of books is developing very well. In the Earlybirds' area, as they share a book, they understand that they read from left to right. They talk about the story and characters and recall what happens, for example, to Noah's Ark. They recognise letters in their names. In both reception classes, the children's independent reading is developing very well. They read simple sentences and handle books appropriately. They write their own names independently. Higher attaining children write their own sentences and understand the need to use full stops and starting the next sentence with a capital letter. The children make very good progress. They make very good use of speaking and listening, reading and writing in their activities, exchanging ideas as they play, read books and write sentences.
- 63 The teaching is excellent in two thirds of lessons and very good in about a third. Adults engage the children in planned speaking and listening activities when they talk about their work, about their painting or to use the prism to find different rainbow colours. All staff use appropriate means to help the children to develop a range of strategies to understand stories in books. They help the children to understand the meaning of writing and the formation of letters.

Mathematics

- 64 In mathematics, the children successfully count numbers to ten and sometimes beyond, in the early years. They demonstrate this understanding by correctly showing the number of fingers when singing number songs. They begin to understand doubling of numbers, for example, when singing about Noah's Ark. The older children recognise shapes such as triangles, squares and circles. They use appropriate mathematical language such as smaller, bigger, in front of, more than, to describe shape, position, size and quantity. They are familiar with counting songs, games and activities. The children can compare, sort, match, order, sequence and count numbers using different objects. They are familiar with large numbers from their everyday life. They understand the mathematical operations such as addition and subtraction.
- 65 The quality of teaching is very good. All staff plan activities to meet the learning targets for their children. Work is planned to meet the needs of different ability groups very successfully. In the lessons observed, there was a very good level of productivity as a result of excellent organisation, dynamic pace and the very effective management of the children by the teacher and the nursery nurses. They effectively create an effective environment in which the children can learn and subsequently achieve well.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 66 The children are given many opportunities to explore the world around them. The staff link these experiences well and as a result, the children make very good progress. The children make face masks to represent the animals in Noah's Ark and to re-enact the story in their remarkable assembly to the parents and to the rest of the school. They demonstrate their ability to use the computer to find matching numbers to the ladybirds or to the frogs displayed on the screen. In exploring their environment, the children learn to plant flowers, to understand the layout of their school and to appreciate the beauty of the natural world. When they visit Heath Farm, or 'the animal man' brings in some creatures for them to study, the children are helped to understand it from first hand experience. In experimenting floating and sinking, the children explain that when their bottles are full, these sink. They follow a route in the garden to look for hidden 'animals' to take them to their 'animal' hospital.
- 67 Teaching in this area is very good. The staff make very good provision for the children to learn about the world. They make effective use of the garden, the pond and the school as they plan walks around the area. The children receive individual help and through well constructed assessment plan, teachers ensure that the children make very good progress. An additional

factor to these arrangements is the close involvement of parents in the plans. For example, the children were given tasks of designing and making boats to test floating. This close liaison between the staff and the parents helps to forge excellent links, which directly affect these children's progress and their subsequent achievement.

Creative Development

- 68 The children's creativity is fostered successfully by access to a good range of materials and appropriate help from adults. Children's progress is, therefore, very good. They use materials practically and imaginatively, successfully exploring a wide range of techniques to record their ideas, for example, to find the colours of the rainbow. They show that they are developing their observational skills as they use coloured pencils for drawing their boats. They sing nursery songs and use their bodies in time to the music. In their assembly presentation, the children play their percussion instruments with remarkable accuracy and show complete involvement and thorough enjoyment in their presentation. They respond to poetry and to the rhythms of words in songs such as the Dinosaur Song.
- 69 The teaching in this area is very good. The children are given suitable opportunities to respond and to represent their ideas through drama, painting, retelling of stories, imaginative play such as the animal hospital, and in dance and music. All the activities to develop this area are imaginatively planned and carefully assessed. All classrooms are stimulating with exciting displays, which raise pupils' creative awareness.

Physical Development

- 70 The children demonstrate very good control and coordination. They make very good progress in using a variety of implements, and cutting and sticking skills are well advanced. They show good control of their bodies when dancing, for example. Their skills in swimming are excellent; they are confident in water and many are able to swim without floating aids. There is a wide variety of large wheeled apparatus, which further adds to their development.
- 71 The quality of teaching is very good. The staff understand the need to provide the children with imaginative and challenging activities to encourage this development. The teaching of swimming is excellent. The organisation of parents and the nursery nurses, together with increasingly challenging activities, ensure that the children make excellent progress in swimming.
- 72 The early years coordinator gives excellent leadership to the provision for the under fives. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good improvement in all areas of provision for these children.

ENGLISH

- 73 The pupils enter Key Stage 1 with above average levels of attainment. They make good progress in relation to their prior attainment through both key stages; consequently, their levels of attainment are above average by the time they are seven and nine. National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that in comparison with schools nationally pupils attain average standards in reading but well above average standards in writing. This is the same when results are compared with similar schools to Knypersley. Trends indicate that overall standards in the Statutory Tests have risen over the last four years. Inspection evidence supports these results.
- 74 Since the last report, when it was judged that overall standards were in line with the national average, the school has made good improvements in the subject. The report at that time implied that the higher attaining pupils were insufficiently challenged. However, inspection evidence shows that these pupils now make good progress and, as a result, they attain the levels of which they are capable. The school's records indicate that pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, particularly when they are supported during their work inside and outside the classroom. There are no variations in attainment between boys and girls.

- 75 Literacy levels are good and support pupils' learning in other subjects. The pupils' work shows growing competence in reading and in writing across all subjects of the curriculum. Teachers plan for these skills to be used in other subjects such as in religious education when Year 2 pupils write about their visit to St. John's church. Using well extended sentences, a range of punctuation marks and accurate spelling of longer words such as 'congregation', 'microphone', 'commandments' and irregular words, such as 'hymns'. At both key stages, pupils use information technology to practise and extend writing.
- 76 By the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time the pupils leave their school, standards of listening are above average. Standards in speaking among even year olds are average, but for a significant proportion of pupils, these are above average. Throughout the school, pupils listen to their teachers attentively. They respond appropriately and are beginning to express themselves clearly and lucidly, talk confidently in a range of situations, and by Year 4, they are beginning to show an understanding of the main points in a discussion. Throughout the school, the pupils are encouraged to give detailed observations about their reading in the literacy sessions and in other subjects. The pupils are encouraged to articulate their thinking. However, in subjects such as religious education, the pupils are not always given sufficient time to do this. Nevertheless, in every class, the pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with the teachers, adults working in the room and in pairs or groups as required. This was observed, for example, in Year 2, where the pupils evaluated each other's work and quoted adjectives, which they found particularly apt.
- 77 Standards in reading are above average by the time the pupils are seven. They read fluently, with considerable confidence and accuracy. They read and follow instructions for their work. They read independently, discuss their favourite books and give reasons why they have enjoyed them. They can recall the stories they have read and define the main points of texts, as observed in their shared and guided reading. They are aware of the content page and understand how to use the index. They use correct terminology such as adjectives, which they identify in their reading correctly. Most pupils use a whole range of reading cues to correct their own mistakes.
- 78 By Year 4, reading standards also exceed the national average. The pupils enjoy and understand what they read and talk about the characters in their books. The pupils read for different purposes and a significant proportion of them can adopt appropriate strategies for the task, including skimming to gain an overall impression and scanning to locate information. This was observed in Year 4, where the pupils referred to the text of 'The Iron Man' during a literacy lesson. They use dictionaries and thesauruses to aid their understanding. They are beginning to show competence in locating information to support their work. At the time of the inspection, the pupils were observed using the library well to find relevant information for geography, for example.
- 79 By the end of Key Stage 1, the standards in writing are very high. The pupils work in a range of forms, including stories, poems, instructions and factual accounts, for example, following their visits. They transfer these skills to other subjects such as geography and in science where the pupils make conclusions on the basis of their data, on the senses, for example. The pupils' handwriting and presentation are generally satisfactory, and for some pupils, these are good. In this group, the pupils' writing is even, fluent and beginning to be joined.
- 80 By the end of Year 4, the pupils achieve high standards. They write in a range of styles and for different purposes, including reports of visits, stories, poems, letters and work in other subjects of the curriculum. There are good examples of extended stories in English, which show that the pupils employ a wide range of punctuation marks correctly including the apostrophe and inverted commas. The pupils spell and use complex regular and irregular words and use these confidently in English and in other subjects. The standards of handwriting and presentation are generally satisfactory, but there are some examples where the standard of pupils' writing is not sufficiently high, nor fluent.
- 81 Throughout the school, the pupils make good progress in listening and for a significant proportion of them, it is good. At Key Stage 1, the pupils acquire and use new vocabulary in their literacy sessions. They experiment with words to good effect. For example, when talking about the characters in the 'Hairy MaClary' text, they quote 'ferocious', 'vicious' and 'frightening' to describe the cat. In Year 4, the pupils offer observations and explanations about Ted Hughes use of similes. They feel confident to evaluate the effect of the language used by the author.

- 82 The pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school, which is well supported through regular reading at home. The pupils' progress is further enhanced by the home/school reading records, which are consistently maintained in all classes. The pupils at Key Stage 2 also make good progress in reading. They read with confidence, obvious enthusiasm and for pleasure. They are beginning to show understanding of complex texts and explain the authors' intentions, showing mature understanding of the text. They show increasing ability to abstract required information from their reading efficiently.
- 83 In writing, the pupils at both key stages make good progress. Through guided writing, the pupils acquire writing skills, which they are beginning to transfer to other subjects successfully. Their progress is accelerated through good and often very good teaching and the efficient support that the pupils receive in the lessons. Very good strategies are being used by the teachers; they teach and link together the skills of oracy and literacy systematically and to use these skills effectively to teach spelling, punctuation and grammatical expression. These are evidenced in the planned activities to practise, consolidate and extend the newly learned skills. Precision in the use of terminology and attention to detail are consistently emphasised by the teachers in English and in other subjects. As a result, the pupils learn to improve the quality of their writing. Enthusiastic teaching is another factor for good progress. In Year 2, in their creative writing, in a story titled, 'Lost in the Woods', the pupils wrote with increasing imaginations, employing words to good effect. This good progress was in evidence at Key Stage 2, where the pupils show good acquisition of skills, which they are able to apply to their writing.
- 84 The quality of teaching is consistently good, with some very good lessons observed particularly at Key Stage 2. The teachers are confident in the subject and know how to teach literacy skills effectively. They make high demands on their pupils for behaviour and work. There is a good balance of teachers presenting work and pupils' actively working, with a good choice and a variety of approaches adopted by the teacher. Planning is effective, in that it is consistent in year groups and between key stages, thus ensuring equal provision for pupils of the same age in different classes. There are good procedures for assessments; information from these is carefully recorded and used for planning and to set targets. Marking is regular and kept up to date. Most teachers make meaningful comments on how their pupils may improve their work. The higher attaining pupils are provided with consistently challenging work to meet their specific needs. Homework is set regularly; this supports and extends pupils' learning in the subject. Parents are involved in their children's learning and give good support at home.
- 85 Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning in English are good. They respect the views of others in discussions and feel secure in the knowledge that these will be listened to and respected. The pupils move around the classrooms sensibly, settle to their tasks quickly. They are often observed to be completely absorbed in their work and concentrate on their tasks for long periods. Behaviour in literacy lessons is good. The pupils treat books with care and replace these for others to use. They are courteous to the adults and to other pupils in the classrooms. They work amicably in pairs when required. These factors all contribute to the standards the pupils achieve at Knypersley First School.
- 86 The subject is well led by the coordinator. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching literacy skills is due in the main to her good leadership. This is achieved in conjunction with the headteacher who keeps an overview, by monitoring teaching and learning in English. The findings are systematically documented, targets for improvements are set and the outcomes are subsequently evaluated. All information is shared with the staff. There is a determination by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, to move the school forward and to continue to raise standards for all the pupils in the school. As a result, the school not only meets but also exceeds the targets set. Statutory requirements are met. Teachers' plans cover the National Literacy Strategy well, in conjunction with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Resources for the implementation of literacy hour are good. The library stock is presently rather depleted, but the school uses the school library service regularly. Furthermore, plans are in hand to replenish the library as a matter of urgency and funds are being set up to achieve these aims. These will further encourage the pupils to use the library for independent study and research.

MATHEMATICS

- 87 At the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 or above was very high in comparison with the national average in the National Curriculum tests in 1999. All pupils achieved at least the expected Level 2. Higher attaining pupils scored appropriately high. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. Lower attaining pupils also achieved well with no pupil scoring below Level 2. When compared with schools with pupils from similar schools, the performance of seven year olds was very high. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with the national average. There has been a trend of continuous improvement over the last four years. Between 1996 and 1998, the school trend kept pace with the national trend, with scores being above that national standard each year. In 1999, standards rose sharply, and at a rate much greater than the national average. Although data indicates that the performance of girls in tests over the last four years was above that of boys, inspection evidence indicates that girls and boys are currently working at comparable levels. Inspection evidence confirms that the standards that pupils attain are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4. The progress which pupils make, including those with special educational needs and those of higher attainment is good at both key stages.
- 88 In Year 1, pupils generally achieve appropriate standards with some high attainers achieving good standards in aspects of number. Most pupils recognise odd and even numbers and can recite these sequences confidently. They recognise and use symbols + and – for the number operations of addition and subtraction and know such names as add on, take away, subtract and difference between. Some lower attaining pupils struggle to keep counting digits in mind when counting and working with numbers and still use fingers to count, not yet having developed mental recall of addition bonds. Higher attaining pupils more readily recall the addition and subtraction number bonds. Most add coins proficiently, giving the total of sums of money. Pupils identify shapes such as triangles and quadrilaterals. Some accurately count squares in shapes as a preliminary exercise to finding the area of irregular shapes. Pupils in Year 2 develop the skills and knowledge learned in Year 1 well. They have a good understanding of place value in number and accurately add ten to numbers by adding onto the tens digit. Higher attaining pupils add tens and units to other tens and units with carry over of units. Pupils are making good progress towards knowing their multiplication tables up to ten times ten. All pupils sequence numbers using different digits, further showing secure understanding of place value. They have good mental recall of subtraction number bonds to mentally subtract numbers such as 50 and 36. All pupils use two digits comfortably and have some good strategies for calculating. However not all pupils have developed the habit of self checking. Pupils show a good knowledge of fractions by dividing shapes into halves and quarters. Higher and average attaining pupils tell the time accurately to $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ past the hour and all know the names of days of the week and months of the year. They match shapes well and know the names of more common regular polygons. They accurately identify and name solid shapes such as cube, sphere, cuboids and competently point out and count the number of faces, edges and vertices. Pupils can identify symmetry in shape and show lines of symmetry in shapes. Most are able to draw simple symmetrical shapes, most showing good motor skills and measurement. Although lower attaining pupils experience some difficulty in drawing symmetrical shapes accurately, they show good knowledge of symmetry. Pupils measure lengths of lines accurately using standard units such as centimetres. Most pupils draw and interpret simple block graphs, understanding and accurately answering questions about the information in the graph.
- 89 Pupils in Year 3 attain good standards in number. They show good understanding of number bonds and are able to develop good strategies for solving questions. For example they quickly provide the operations when given 4 digits so that they obtain a sensible number sentence; $6*4*5*5$ gives $6+4-5=5$. Pupils explain clearly how they arrived at their answers. They use number bonds to 20 quickly and accurately, mentally recalling answers when solving number problems. They are proficient at doubling and halving numbers. Higher and average attaining pupils have good fundamental understanding of inverse operations and link together addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division. Some weakness was detected in average attaining pupils understanding of the link between multiplication and division. Lower attaining pupils understanding of inverse operations is limited to the link between addition and subtraction. Most pupils are beginning to use brackets competently and know the order of operations in number calculations. Pupils have developed preliminary ideas in working with numbers with two decimal places and higher and average attaining pupils work well with these numbers. They competently round numbers to nearest hundred and ten. All are able to make different numbers from three digits and then, using their knowledge of place value arrange them in ascending order. Pupils use > and < symbols accurately in ordering numbers. All pupils

measure length and weight accurately using standard metric units. They count quickly and accurately forwards and back in 5's and apply this effectively to minutes past the hour. Most read digital and analogue clocks accurately and work out that 35 minutes past is 25 minutes to the hour. Some lowerattainers find this difficult and their work is generally limited to $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ past the hour. They read calendars well. Pupils classify shapes accurately according to the number of sides for example or whether they have all straight sides. They use tally marks properly in collecting data, making graphs and answer questions well using the graphs drawn and others given to them.

- 90 By the time they reach Year 4, most pupils are working comfortably at levels that are high for their age. They confidently round numbers and estimate answers to addition and subtraction sums. They have a secure understanding of place value, which enables them to multiply and divide numbers by ten and a hundred. Pupils work with decimals to two decimal places and calculate the answers to money problems at appropriate levels. All can count below zero accurately and order positive and negative numbers in size order. Pupils show good mental maths skills. They count quickly and accurately in tens well beyond a hundred, recognising and applying patterns. They quickly and accurately calculate numbers that total a hundred, using such numbers as 19 and 81 for example. They are good at solving problems and identifying which operation to use when solving number problems. They identify key words in questions that tell them how to solve a problem and which operation to use. This illustrates pupils' good use of literacy in maths and their good knowledge of mathematical vocabulary. When using measures, pupils use their knowledge of place value to convert from one unit to another such as centimetres to millimetres. They develop their knowledge of shapes well and identify and name accurately a good range of polygons. They draw and interpret bar charts well when given data and they answer questions about given charts.
- 91 Pupils use the skills they gain in numeracy well in other subjects. Year 2 pupils show good measuring (weighing) skills when baking jam tarts in science. They accurately weigh 500g of flour and 250 g of fat for example and show good knowledge of weight when estimating and feeling the weights of ingredients. In Year 2 physical education lessons, pupils race against the clock for 1 or 2 minute periods. Pupils are expected to count total scores in small games and pair work when throwing and catching. In Year 3 art pupils tessellate shapes to create patterns. At Year 4 in physical education, pupils develop ideas of distance such as keeping a ball within 30 centimetres of their bat to retain control. Pupils judge this distance well.
- 92 Progress at both key stages is well supported by the attention which pupils give to their teachers. They show very positive attitudes, often excitement during oral sessions and eagerness to participate in question and answer sessions. They respond well to interesting activities and challenge when given. Behaviour is generally good, although occasionally too noisy to encourage full concentration. Pupils remain on task throughout lessons and are attentive. They work well together in pairs and small groups, exchanging ideas and supporting each other well, learning well through discussion. There are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults.
- 93 The quality of teaching is good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was variable but generally satisfactory. Teachers give good clear instructions so pupils are aware of what they have to do. Lesson objectives are clearly stated and often written on the board so pupils are clear about what they are to learn in the lesson. Teachers make good use of resources and classroom support assistants. Their work is effective and results in them having a significant impact on the quality of learning. Teachers use assessment well in planning their lessons to ensure they pick up on the weaknesses in the previous lesson and that pupils at different levels of attainment are given appropriate tasks. Planning is good and activities promote good learning through the progressive development of skills and knowledge and appropriate reference to pupils' prior attainment. Teachers' intervention is appropriate and pupils are generally allowed to work and solve their own difficulties but support is given when necessary. Teachers are good at questioning which they use well to probe and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Classes are well managed, partly through strategies and partly through very good relationships. However, in some lessons that were otherwise judged to be satisfactory, teachers occasionally permit noise levels that are too high to enable full concentration and sometimes pupils queue up to ask for information when other pupils are working with the teacher. This is not efficient use of time. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they are able to discuss and answer questions well. Good attention to detail is evident, such as when Year 4 pupils were given details of how to

record their work and to pay attention to units for example. This effectively sets good practise for the future.

- 94 The school has prepared the transition of the curriculum to the National Numeracy Strategy well in terms of training for staff in the management of its teaching, development of resources and the introduction of planning to match pupils' levels of attainment. The coordinator provides good leadership both through the provision of a well constructed policy to help teachers plan lessons and through monitoring of teachers' planning, samples of pupils' work and when possible, supporting teachers by working with them in class or giving demonstration lessons. Good use is made of analysis of assessments to monitor pupils' performance and to guide future planning. This has led to a significant rise in the percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level in statutory tests in 1999 when compared with 1998 and over the last four years. The school has very good well organised resources to effectively support teaching.

SCIENCE

- 95 Pupils' standards shown in the 1999 teacher assessments were very high with all pupils achieving Level 2 or above although the number of pupils assessed to be at Level 3 was nearer the average both when compared to schools nationally and to schools of a similar background. Some unusual results appeared within Level 3. At this level pupils standards were very high for the study of living things and above average in investigation skills, but no pupils reached Level 3 in knowledge of physical processes. The school has analysed these results and adjusted the curriculum to give a better balance across the four attainment targets for science.
- 96 Pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with that expected for their age and progress is sound overall. The difference between present achievement and last year's higher results lies in the preparation of pupils over time. The sample of work for Key Stage 1 shows the influence of a topic approach to science, with a limitation in the range and depth of pupils' work. This creates an uphill task for Year 2, with enough time to get all pupils to Level 2 but not enough to boost the Level 3 numbers. This situation has been rectified as of January 2000, teaching of science is not topic based. The school anticipates that this will overcome the difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs are helped by these changes and good support enables them to make good progress.
- 97 Since the last inspection the school's capacity to look critically at its own work has risen dramatically. The criticism in the previous report that science was not adequately monitored is no longer true. The high level of evaluation of planning, teaching and standards in the subject has had a significant impact on all three. The school has switched over to a much stronger planning base in the new nationally recommended scheme of work. It has eradicated the weakness in planning to the average level, with very effective challenge for the high attaining pupils, and tasks well matched to all levels of ability. It has achieved consistency of teaching, with all teachers emphasising a practical, investigative approach within their lessons.
- 98 It takes time for the impact such initiatives to be seen, but already there are improvements in pupils' work and attitudes. By Year 2, pupils' curiosity is well established. They are beginning to enjoy difficult problem solving, and use a range of appropriate resources to test their developing ideas about materials and how they change. Squeezing sponges and twisting pipe cleaners gives them a base of practical experience and baking jam tarts develops this even further. These are good learning conditions. A more rigorous programme is being introduced in Year 1, and pupils there are taught to structure their learning in scientific ways. As pupils study the five senses, they have to experiment, think harder and use more difficult technical words. This creates a firmer platform on entry to Year 2, and more in line with the foundation established in the early years.
- 99 The influence of the new planning is effective into Key Stage 2. Progress accelerates and by Year 4 most pupils are well in line to achieve the national averages, and a significant minority is set to exceed these. Junior pupils are good at seeing science problems worked out in relevant practical situations. So Year 3 pupils can test materials at a higher level than Year 2, looking for outcomes that can be applied. Knowing, for instance, that textile materials work better as protective packaging, they can design a secure box in which an egg remains unbroken when dropped. Year 4 pupils are good at precise measurements, such as of

temperature. They can then prove which material acts as the best insulator to keep a liquid warm, or ice cubes frozen. Recording of test results in a wide variety of ways is under developed at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2, although provided with the opportunity, some are not yet adept at thinking out their own appropriate ways of recording experimental results.

- 100 Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching. All teachers plan interesting and often exciting lessons. Resources are now well selected and have a direct relevance within the good learning conditions created. A lot of thought is given to matching the task closely to the ability of the pupils. Assessment is well used in planning the next stages of learning. While all pupils are challenged to think, and are introduced to precise scientific language, the higher attaining pupils are expected to think harder. For example, "How do you keep a drink cold in the jungle, with no electricity?" Pupils with special educational needs are given the opportunity to work things out for themselves, but are supported when they experience difficulty. With good management to create calm working conditions, pupils develop an interest, persist with difficult problems and concentrate well.
- 101 The difference between the satisfactory and very good lessons often lies in the pace. Time targets keep pupils moving fast and extended activities. Slower lessons miss opportunities. For instance, in the egg dropping lesson a faster work rate would allow time to measure the drop. The height of the teacher's arm makes for a fair test, but does not enhance numeracy skills. When time runs out the really interesting questions, like 'would it work off the school roof?' remain unanswered. Information technology contributes appropriately on occasion to study of content knowledge and to recording of results, but not yet as a tool for sensing and compiling of data. Literacy skills are well used as pupils describe their activities in a scientific style. The emphasis on technical vocabulary feeds back effectively into language development. The very strong management of science has achieved this significant improvement since the previous inspection and has put in place a good curriculum.

ART

- 102 At Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve standards that are appropriate for their age. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were judged to make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1, but progress was better at Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 4, standards in art were above what would be expected for pupils of a similar age. Within the limited evidence seen, standards are now judged to be sound.
- 103 All pupils develop sound practical, creative and imaginative skills in a range of techniques. At Key Stage 1, pupils use pastels and wax crayons to draw their interesting pictures inspired by the story "We're All Going On a Bear Hunt". They use the same media to produce self portraits that show that accurate shapes are well reproduced in their sketches and drawings. Pupils use tangram shapes to make interesting pictures and this work is linked with shape work in mathematics. In religious education, pupils learn about Rama and Sita and the festival of Diwali inspires some of their artwork. This work adds significantly to pupils' cultural development. In Year 2, pupils further develop drawing and colouring skills. Self portraits and still life pictures show satisfactorily developing skills. Good use of colour is evident and shape and scale are well preserved. Pupils use appropriate media for colouring; paint for large scale and crayons for small scale pictures.
- 104 At Key Stage 2, pupils experiment with different media to create faces, either in painted portraits or as masks. Creative skills are evident and pupils' work shows originality, expressing their ideas and observations well. Pupils' sketches in preparation for painting illustrates how pupils preserve shape, scale and form. They pay appropriate attention to detail, for example when sketching portraits of Tudor people. They use paint satisfactorily mixing and matching colour well to the original tones. They use papier mâché well to make masks that are moulded from their clay moulds. Pupils extend their sketching techniques and use charcoal as well as pencil to sketch and add shading and tone effectively. Collage is used well to develop pupils' use of colour. They paint scenes based on a theme such as river or water. Whilst doing this, they are limited to using blue and white and create effect by mixing and varying tone.
- 105 Computers are used to good effect at both key stages to produce computer generated artwork

that is precise and effective. This combines imaginative thought with basic computer skills and develops bothwell.

- 106 Pupils show positive attitudes to their work and respond well to challenge. They listen well and follow instructions carefully. They show a high level of interest, particularly in the efforts of others and they are eager to contribute to discussions. Behaviour is good.
- 107 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers motivate pupils through their own enthusiasm. They have good knowledge and have high expectations of pupils. Planning is clear and well written. Some teachers encourage pupils to sketch expressively, but in some instances pupils are not sufficiently free with their sketches which are often completed in meticulous detail.
- 108 The curriculum is developing with reference to new national guidelines. Good use is made of an appropriate range of resources. Good quality display enhances the learning environment both in and out of the classroom.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 109 All pupils make satisfactory progress in both elements of designing and making and attain standards that are satisfactory for pupils of this age. Sensitive support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make sound progress alongside their peers. This is consistent with judgements made at the time of the previous inspection when standards and progress were judged to be satisfactory. However, the designing process, although satisfactory standards were seen, is less well developed. A limited number of activities were able to be seen during the week and these judgements have been made not only as a result of these observations but also from looking at pupils' work, from teachers' documentation and from talking to pupils and teachers.
- 110 Pupils at Key Stage 1 develop sound skills in making and finishing models. Pupils create card models using different aspects of paper mechanics. They construct their card models, of hot air balloons for example, to move as realistically as can be expected using hidden props. Whilst constructing their models, pupils demonstrate some good pasting skills to join the parts of their models, but some pupils found using scissors to cut accurately difficult and this impeded their progress. Once their models have been constructed, pupils show good colouring skills, some of which were the result of good instruction by the teacher. They have also use paper mechanics to effectively illustrate their literacy book "We're all going on a Bear Hunt" where the bear moves along their coloured drawings of a forest. Pupils in Year 2 use needles generally effectively to join two templates together to make glove puppets. They sew accurately, threading needles competently. Once their puppets have been made, they arrange other parts such as features of the face, using glue well to fix these features. However, their finished puppets lack some creativity and all are similar to other pupils' puppets. Pupils have also made wooden spoon puppets, and have usedfabrics well to make the costumes that their puppets wear.
- 111 At Key Stage 2 pupils practice basic skills such as paper weaving in preparation for further development. These samples are neatly finished and creatively designed with respect to colour combinations. Older pupils in the key stage develop paper mechanic skills and produce three dimensional books with three different styles of mechanic; popup, fold out and on sliders. These are designed for a specific purpose and the older pupils will share their books with younger children in the school. In their work, pupils use their numeracy skills well, including accurate measuring of their components.
- 112 Pupils' responses to design technology are good at both key stages. They show a keen interest in their tasks and willingly share experiences with each other. They listen carefully to instructions and carry them out enthusiastically. Pupils persevere well when tasks are difficult and do eventually succeed.
- 113 The quality of teaching is good in the lessons seen. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, but insufficient attention is given to developing the design process at Key Stage 1 and in allowing pupils to exercise independence in selecting their own materials and resources. Classes are managed well and resources are conveniently organised for ease of access and

efficient use. The wide range of good quality resources, noted at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. There is a sound policy and the scheme of work is being further developed in line with national initiatives.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

- 114 In common with many schools, these subjects are taught in blocks at different times of the year. As a result the full range of teaching for these subjects was not seen during the week of the inspection and very few observations of lessons were made. Evidence gathered from display, work samples, discussions with the pupils and teachers show that history and geography are not neglected over the course of the year.
- 115 The samples of work for both subjects are small for this reason. However they do show the strong links with a topic based approach from earlier in the year. The depth and rigour of the work at Key Stage 1 is limited by the demands of topic planning, and is a superficial treatment, below the capacities of the children. The teachers realised this was happening and have moved away from topics to a much stronger and more demanding nationally recommended scheme of work. The effects are already to be seen in the work displays of the older classes. Year 3 pupils give lively answers about the lives of the Tudor monarchs. Most have good recall of their learning, and refer to the displays on the wall because they know relevant information is shown there. They can point out that information about the past can be found in the various books they use, and also that clues exist in the things commonly used in those times. Pupils are not too clear about the chronology, exactly or even roughly how long ago these things happened. There is an implication in the use of mathematics in this. They are not explaining sufficiently clearly the reasons why people acted as they did, from the clues they have learned.
- 116 The work in geography is stronger. The oldest pupils are studying the local area intensively. They are looking at the protection of the environment and the use of water. They made a survey for homework, of where and how much water is used in the home (including washing the dog); a good example of parents helping their children with their learning. Some excellent teaching took this a stage further, linking earlier learning and mathematics to look at average use, and converting the numbers into graphs. Pupils felt total ownership of this project, and enjoyed looking for reasons behind the numbers. Although pupils have been taught about graphs in mathematics, one class has not sufficiently developed the skills to competently change numbers into graphs.
- 117 The context of history and geography teaching is particularly strong. Extremely good links exist with many local environmental groups. The pupils can work on the doorstep, in the well developed school site. Or they can go further afield, as year one did on a successful field trip during the inspection. Visits to historical sites are well used as a source of information. The very good links, which the staff has built up with neighbouring schools and services, enable it to borrow artefacts when required.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 118 Standards of attainment are in line with those expected for the pupils' age by the end of Year 2. Pupils nearing the end of Year 4 are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. Individual pupils at times achieve higher standards. Pupils with special educational needs effectively use specific resources for their needs, and receive beneficial support and make good progress.
- 119 Pupils are good at using the computer independently. The confidence, which was lacking in the previous inspection, is now well established. Year 2 pupils can run the classmate system for the teacher. When individual pupils have finished their turn on the money programme they unobtrusively fetch the next worker. Some pupils in Year 3 doing research on the Tudors, realised they could get better information from the CD ROM and went to get it on their own initiative. Pupils in Year 4 understand that basic instruction given can be expanded in the directions they choose. So instead of 30 posters all the same, they all vary, with critical thought going into the design. What is not so evident is close discussion in pairs so that the collaborative thinking strengthens the learning process.

- 120 Provision for information technology has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Equipment has been upgraded. A new scheme of work not only gives very good guidance to teachers, but also provides a good assessment system to track pupils' progress. By determined and well targeted in service training for all staff and the teachers' weak expertise found in 1996 has developed to above average skills. The school's aim to ensure the teaching of basic skills is now being realised.
- 121 Teaching is good overall. Teachers use the strategy of teaching a whole class a particular new skill very effectively. They give clear explanations and rightly use demanding technical language. Expectations throughout are high. Set upon a strong foundation laid in the early years, Year 1 keeps up a strong pace, expecting pupils to learn challenging skills and ideas. Year 2 pupils are expected to gain a greater understanding of the context of the technology, how different parts work and how they help us. Teachers there emphasise accuracy of detail, down to the spaces required after a full stop. In this strategy, teachers use a recording file for pupils to enter their names next to the software used or skill that they have practised. This ensures equal turns for all, and promotes sound, consistent progress is continued at Key Stage 2.
- 122 Mostly teachers use the time well, but there are lessons or parts of lessons where the computer could be used more, such as in the literacy and numeracy hours. The recording files, however, show that a good quantity and range of work is done, and that curriculum requirements are fully met. Teachers' planning is particularly effective in building skills and knowledge as a sequence of steps based on earlier learning. Information technology helps to develop pupils' knowledge in many other subjects, in art and design skills, in history and geography knowledge and extends understanding in mathematics. These links and the time to explore them create good learning conditions where pupils want to find out, use equipment sensibly and concentrate on the task. In only a very few lessons did the teacher not engage the pupils' full attention during the introductory explanation
- 123 Several subjects contribute effectively to computer learning. Literacy skills enable pupils to read their worksheet or on screen instructions to take the next necessary step. Numeracy also contributes important skills, such as the knowledge of sets and subsets which supports Year 4 pupils' understanding of how a database works. Teachers are excited at the prospect of using the new computer suite when it is installed. The style of teaching used at present will not transfer fully to the new arrangements. The coordinator is planning a run up procedure to encourage staff to teach in that area and to get the feel of the different conditions. Very strong management has put information technology onto a firm foundation in readiness for the new computer suite.

MUSIC

- 124 At the end of Key Stage 1 and at the age of transfer, pupil's attainment is average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Throughout the school, progress is satisfactory. Since the last report, the school has maintained its standards in music.
- 125 At Key Stage 1, the pupils sing and play songs with a developing awareness of rhythm. Using percussion instruments, they play a regular beat to accompany their singing as observed in Year 1. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are developing a sense of pitch and sing with increasing confidence to produce a pleasant tone. Year 3 pupils are beginning to recognise beats and reproduce these accurately in their playing. When singing their hymns, the pupils are beginning to improve their expressions of phrasing. They learn to control their voices and instruments progressively as they move through the year groups. They listen carefully to recorded music and understand that music can evoke an atmosphere. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to use assemblies to inform the pupils of the composer and the name of the excerpt being played.
- 126 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teachers build on pupils' previous learning and there is a brisk pace to lessons. In a very good lesson observed in Year 1, the teacher set very high expectations for the pupils' performance and for their behaviour. As a result, the pupils made good gains in their learning. In this lesson the pupils were ably accompanied by the welfare assistant who joined in not only by playing the piano competently, but also in singing. This

encouraged the pupils to participate fully and with enthusiasm. They understand that they must only play when the music requires them to do so. In this lesson, the pupils understood the role of the conductor and responded to her conducting accordingly: they sang and played in time, starting after the introduction and finishing crisply at the end.

- 127 At present, an enthusiastic coordinator who knows how she wants to see it is developing the subject progress from each year group. Her leadership, through her own expertise in the subject, is beginning to have an effect on the quality of provision in the school. Resources for music are good both in quality and in quantity; these are well stored, easily accessible and well used by staff and pupils alike.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 128 Because of the organisation in the teaching of physical education, it was only possible to observe games and swimming. Standards in aspects of physical education seen, in relation to pupils of a similar age are mainly above average at Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils reach Year 4. The standards that pupils attain in swimming are very high for their age and pupils make excellent progress. Standards in swimming have been maintained since the last inspection and those in physical education have improved. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is generally good.
- 129 From an early age pupils understand the necessity for warming up at the beginning of lessons and cooling down at the end. They are aware of the effect that exercise has on their body and recognise what is causing these changes. In warm up activities, pupils generally use space well and move around the hall safely, paying attention to others in the class. They are able to sustain physical activity over a lengthy period of time. Games skills are well developed and by the time pupils reach Year 4, they are proficient at sending and catching a ball, in a controlled manner and in applying their skill in a game situation. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop these skills well and are beginning to throw accurately with regard to distance and direction and catch objects such as balls or bean bags competently. They speed up as they become more confident. By the time pupils have reached Year 4, they are using a bat to control a ball to good effect. More proficient pupils bounce the ball on their bat more than a hundred times without a break. Pupils effectively improve upon their performance as they gain practice. When they have developed this skill sufficiently, they put it into practice in a small game situation. They practice simple tennis games for example, by controlling their batting of the ball over limited distance and direction. This is achieved by controlled force applied to the ball and in the lessons observed, most of the pupils had the ball well under control. A few groups of pupils lost control of their sponge balls.
- 130 Pupils attending the extra curricular clubs in short tennis and football achieve good standards in skill practice and when applying their skills in playing a game. For example, pupils can throw, catch and strike footballs and many from Key Stage 2 can dribble a ball well in soccer, keeping it under control. Appropriate attention is given to the use of numeracy skills in lessons. Pupils show a good concept of distance and time and use counting well when practising against their own personal best.
- 131 Pupils at all ages achieve very high standards in swimming, they have high levels of skill and confidence in the water, and even younger pupils actively swam for up to 25 minutes at a time. Pupils are developing good swimming styles and use both arms and legs effectively. Their positioning in the water is good and pupils achieve the required standards at an early stage. Some less competent and confident pupils use swimming aids to help them swim and these help significantly.
- 132 Attitudes to physical education are generally good throughout the school and always very good in swimming lessons. However, in some games skills lessons, Year 1 pupils show inappropriate behaviour and do not fully cooperate with the attempts of the teacher to manage them in open spaces. Otherwise, pupils work well on their own and continue to cooperate well within groups.
- 133 Teaching is generally good and is never less than this standard in swimming. Teachers plan their work effectively, ensuring that the planning, performing and evaluating elements of the attainment target are carried out and that practice is consistent with the scheme recommended

by the Local Education Authority used and hence consistent across classes and different year groups. Most teachers motivate pupils well by their own enthusiasm and good quality demonstrations of activities. They use time effectively. At all times associated key vocabulary is emphasised and used. The quality of teaching in swimming is good and all teachers have gained the Royal Life Saving Society's Teaching and Rescue Certificate. Teachers have also been trained in teaching the "TOPS" physical education scheme and lessons follow a consistent format.

- 134 The curriculum is appropriately balanced and was developed and improved in response to the previous inspection judgements. The curriculum addresses well the extra entitlement that Key Stage 2 pupils have in addition to those for Key Stage 1 pupils. This includes a visit to an outdoor education centre, where pupils practice climbing and team building activities for example. The curriculum makes a significant contribution to the social development of the pupils through teamwork in both school and in competitive situations. The school offers a very good range of extra curricular sporting activities. These include swimming, football, gymnastics, short tennis, rounders and cricket, some of that are seasonal. Resources are appropriate, well stored and of a good quality.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 135 At the end of Key Stage 1 and at the age of transfer at nine, pupils', attainment is in line with expectations laid down in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject across the school. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the standards.
- 136 The pupils know Old and New Testament stories and from an early age, they are beginning to be aware of less tangible ideas such as accounts of the major events in the life of Jesus. They make references to the festivals that are important in the Christian religion. Through their visits to St. John's Church, Key Stage 1 pupils know about the Baptism and understand this ceremony. Older pupils know about the faiths of Buddhism, Islam and Judaism. They understand that religious beliefs guide people's actions.
- 137 The pupils progress satisfactorily in acquiring understanding of religions and are beginning to learn from religions through their lessons in the subject. In considering the importance of families, younger pupils at Key Stage 1, suggest that the school is also a form of family. Older pupils make their own observations about places of worship, and refer to the local church as 'a place where we can learn about God'. Through their studies, the pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong, and to apply their understanding to their everyday lives. For example, they make their own class rules.
- 138 At Key Stage 2, pupils build on this knowledge and some of them are beginning to become thoughtful and deep thinkers. In a discussion, the pupils indicate that they realise that some questions are difficult to answer.
- 139 The quality of teaching is good. The lessons are characterised by skilled questioning which motivates pupils' thinking. However, at present, not all teachers use discussion to encourage the pupils to articulate their thinking. Nevertheless, there were some examples, such as in Year 3, where a meaningful debate took place about feelings. All the pupils were involved where the pupils gave a good selection of reasons as to why they may be feeling sad. In Year 4, the pupils make good learning gains through carefully planned lessons where the teacher asked them to consider change and how this can be outside our control. Throughout the school, the teachers seize opportunities to use the subject to practise literacy skills, especially speaking and listening. There are some good examples in all year groups where the pupils record their views and observations carefully. The teachers use the plenary sessions well to summarise key points and to ascertain understanding. In all lessons observed, there is mutual respect for the efforts of others; the pupils understand that their contributions are valued and they feel comfortable in expressing them openly.
- 140 Pupils' response to religious education is good. They show interest and share their ideas with others openly. They work sensibly in pairs as observed in one class when they discussed the story of the Good Samaritan. In this lesson, the pupils demonstrated that they could make links

between that parable and present day life. For example, some state why they would not help the injured man and give valid reasons for their views. The teacher has carefully created a climate, in which an honest and open discussion can take place.

- 141 There are few resources as yet to support the subject well; however, there are some multi faith reference books in the library and there are plans to extend these shortly. The teachers are resourceful in borrowing artefacts from various sources. The coordinator for the subject is keen to develop it when the new agreed syllabus is published in September. She knows how she wants to develop it and has already made good progress in achieving her objectives.