

INSPECTION REPORT

Bishops Down Primary School

Tunbridge Wells

LEA area: Kent

Unique Reference Number: 118468

Headteacher: Mrs Chris Davies

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston
OFSTED Inspector Number 8402

Dates of inspection: 2nd-5th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707480

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school	Nursery and primary, with physically disabled unit
Type of control	County
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	Rydal Drive Tunbridge Wells Kent TN4 9SU
Telephone number	01892 520114
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Appropriate authority	Governing body
Name of chair of governors	Mr Peter Turner
Date of previous inspection	March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Vivien Johnston, Registered Inspector	English Geography History Information technology	Attainment and progress Teaching Curriculum and assessment Efficiency
Joan Lindsay, Lay Inspector		Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Links with parents and the community
Robina Scahill	Mathematics Art Music Physical education Special educational needs	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Jenny Catlin	Science Design and technology Religious education Under fives Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Leadership and management

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Standards are high, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- The ethos of the school is excellent, and its provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well and so make very good progress. The provision for the physically disabled pupils is very good.
- Pupils are very well behaved, and respond very positively to the education provided by the school.
- The partnership with parents is very strong. They receive good information, and provide the school with very good support.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Standards in information technology are low because, until recently, pupils have had too few opportunities to use computers.
- Teachers' marking and their records of how well pupils have done are insufficiently precise about the quality of pupils' work.
- Pupils do not present their written work sufficiently carefully and neatly.

The weaknesses are greatly outweighed by what the school does well, and the school is already working to improve them. They will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The improvement since the last inspection is good because the school responded very purposefully and effectively to the inspection findings. The quality of teaching is now much higher than previously. Teachers with subject responsibilities have worked hard on curriculum planning, and this is now good overall. The way subjects are managed has improved. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is much better than previously, as are the opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assessment is more effective, although weaknesses remain in class teachers' marking. As a result of these and other developments, such as in staffing and resources, pupils' progress has improved and standards have risen except in information technology. Due to the strengths in the leadership and management of the school and the commitment of the staff and governors to further improvement, the school is well placed to maintain its strengths and to continue to improve its performance.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
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English	A	B	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
Mathematics	A	A	
Science	B	C	

This table shows that the 1999 results were high compared to national results, although in science they are not better than the results for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

The standard of work of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is well above the national average in English and mathematics, whereas in science it is average as pupils' skills in investigations, which are not covered in the tests, are less well developed than in the other areas of the subject. Standards are above average in religious education, history and physical education, but well below expectations in information technology because pupils have had too few opportunities for using computers. By five years of age, children's attainment is above average in almost all areas of their work.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Very good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science	n/a	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	n/a	Insufficient evidence	Satisfactory
Religious education	n/a	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 98% of the lessons observed. In 60% of the lessons, it was good or better. In 24%, it was very good. These are high proportions. The consistently effective teaching is a strength of the school.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good, both in lessons and around the school. This contributes to their good learning.
Attendance	Good attendance rate, with no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive promptly in the mornings.
Ethos*	Excellent. A strong commitment to equal opportunities for all to succeed. The school ethos contributes much to the high standards pupils achieve.
Leadership and management	Good overall. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. The governing body is well informed. Subject management varies, but is mostly good.
Curriculum	Well planned, with good links between subjects. Homework topics extend the taught curriculum well for pupils in Key Stage 2.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good teaching enables these pupils to make very good progress during both key stages.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision for spiritual and cultural development. Excellent provision for moral and social development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Very good staffing and accommodation. Resources are good, although the computers have been under-used.
Value for money	Good. Above average attainment on entry; good progress, especially in English and mathematics; overall standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Very good personal development, and consistently good teaching.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is very approachable, and is keen for parents to play an active part in their children's education. • The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children. • Standards of behaviour are high. • Their children like school. • The school provides a high standard of education, which is enhanced by the very good homework set for pupils in Key Stage 2. • The quality of teaching and care provided by staff is very high. Children with physical disabilities and special 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More homework should be provided,

educational needs are taught and cared for very well indeed.	
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Inspectors' findings agree with parents' views. The many good features identified by parents in the questionnaire and at the meeting prior to the inspection were found to be a true reflection of the school's strengths. The school provides a high standard of education, with the exception that the provision for information technology is not as good as for the other subjects. The homework provided for pupils in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, whereas that for pupils in Key Stage 2 is very good.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- raise standards in information technology [15, 226, 227] by implementing the curriculum planning introduced this school year, and by meeting the requirements for using information technology in other subjects [230]. Classroom computers should be used regularly, to supplement pupils' experiences using the computers in the workbay [230]. The school has recently made a good start on improving its provision for information technology.
- improve teachers' marking of pupils' work, so that pupils are given clearer feedback on what they have done well and how to improve in future [33]. Linked to this, improve class teachers' records of their assessments, including of pupils' wider reading, so that they can monitor their progress over time more effectively [33, 51, 91]. The school is already working on improving these weaknesses.
- improve the standard of presentation of pupils' written work. [10, 92, 103]. The school has already started to do this, through teaching handwriting.

[The numbers in brackets refer to the paragraphs in the report in which these are discussed.]

In addition to the key issues above, the following, less important point should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- additional, planned opportunities for outside play should be provided for the children in the reception class [83].

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Bishops Down Primary School admits children part-time into the nursery class in the term after their third birthday, and into the reception class in the September and January before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there were 42 children in the nursery and 14 children aged under five in the reception class.
2. The school has 198 pupils on roll, which is lower than in primary schools nationally. Numbers have remained steady over the last few years as the school is over-subscribed. Except for the nursery class, each year group has about 29 pupils. The proportion of boys to girls in each year group varies, although there are roughly similar numbers of boys and girls in the school as a whole. Year 1 has many more boys than girls, whereas Year 3 has mainly girls. 87 pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, a higher proportion than in schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is above average, partly because the school provides two places in each year group for pupils with physical disabilities. Some pupils come from the residential areas near the school, and a considerable proportion travel from other areas of Tunbridge Wells. More pupils than in most schools come from above-average socio-economic backgrounds. About 5% of the pupils have free school meals, which is below average. Almost all the pupils are white, and almost all speak English as their first language. The overall level of attainment when children enter the school is above average.
3. The school aims to enable children to identify and build on their strengths and to learn to succeed. It values the provision of a happy, stimulating, secure and friendly learning environment where children are encouraged to produce their personal best. Its curriculum is to be broad and balanced, based on personal experience and first hand learning whenever possible, providing for children's personal, spiritual, social, moral, physical, aesthetic as well as academic education. The school values the joy and wonder of the world around us and aims to encourage the enjoyment that discovery and reflection bring. It also values a strong partnership with parents, and acknowledges the crucial role of parents in the learning process.
4. The school's current priorities are to improve teaching of English and mathematics. The targets for pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 next year are that 78% of the pupils will attain level 4 or higher in English and 75% in mathematics. In the following two years, the targets rise to 80% and then 86% attaining level 4 or higher in English, and 79% and then 82% in mathematics. These targets take appropriate account of the varying proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group, and are realistic.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	7	21	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
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¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	21	21	20
	Total	28	28	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (77)	100 (81)	96 (84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	21	20	20
	Total	28	27	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	96 (100)	96 (87)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	12	13	25

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	18	18	19
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	72 (79)	72 (68)	76 (78)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	17	16	17

²

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Percentage at NC	School	68 (65)	65 (64)	68 (71)
Level 4 or above	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)			%
missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year	Authorised	School	95.2
	Absence	National comparative data	93.8
	Unauthorised	School	0.0
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age)
during the previous year

	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is

	%
Very good or better	24
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

5. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in improving standards in all subjects except information technology. There is no longer significant underachievement by any group of pupils. As a result, pupils of high, average and low prior attainment make good overall progress, and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. This improvement is mainly because teaching is now consistently effective. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection expressed the view that standards are high and that their children are stretched well by the work they are set, and the findings of the inspection support their views.

6. Children's attainment on entry to the school is above the average for schools nationally. From this starting point, the under fives make good progress overall. Those with special educational needs also make good progress. By the time they are five, standards are above average. The children meet the desirable outcomes for learning in physical development. They exceed them in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and personal and social development.

7. At the end of Key Stage 1, results in the national tests of English and mathematics have risen steadily, and are now well above the national average. In 1999, results in reading were very high, and in writing they were well above average. In mathematics, they were above average. Results have improved steadily since the last inspection. For the last two years, all or almost all pupils have attained the nationally-expected level 2 in both subjects. The girls have generally done better than the boys, as they have tended to be of higher attainment on entry in recent years. Compared to similar schools, that is schools with a similar proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, the results in reading and writing are well above average whereas for mathematics they are average. Teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in science are high, but are not accurate.

8. At the end of Key Stage 2, results in the national tests of English, mathematics and science have risen considerably since the last inspection, especially in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 5. For example, in mathematics 9% gained level 5 in 1995, whereas 48% did so in 1999. In English and mathematics, overall results were well above the national average in 1999, and in science they were above average. Compared to similar schools, the results were above average in English, well above average in mathematics but average in science. Overall, the difference between the boys' results and those of the girls is close to the difference nationally, with girls tending to do better in English whereas boys have generally done better in mathematics and science.

9. The school has compared pupils' results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 1 with their results four years later at the end of Key Stage 2. This shows that almost all have made at least as much progress as would be expected, and that some have done considerably better. The school has met the targets it set for results in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Targets for future years are for continued improvement, and take appropriate account of variations in the prior attainment of the different year groups, in particular the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The targets are likely to be met.

10. Standards in English are well above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress during both key stages as a result of effective teaching. The work of the pupils who completed Year 6 in 1999 shows that standards in writing were well above average. The attainment of the pupils currently starting Year 6 is well above the expectations for their age, in all aspects of English. Standards in speaking and listening are particularly high at both key stages. Pupils enjoy reading, and their wide vocabularies help them to

express themselves well in writing. The quality of the content is often higher than its presentation, in English and in other subjects.

11. Pupils' high standards in oracy and literacy support their work well in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils of all ages learn well from listening, and their oral skills and wide vocabularies help their learning in all subjects. Their confidence in reading enables pupils of all ages to cope well with the reading demands of other areas of the curriculum, such as doing research in homework topics. Pupils develop good skills in writing in different styles. The range of writing opportunities provided in, for example, history is wide: older pupils write imaginative accounts of previous times, record information they have researched for homework, make notes, write explanations of events and discuss their opinions giving reasons to support their views.

12. In mathematics, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average in all aspects of the subject, but pupils' presentation of their work is neither well organised nor methodical. The standard of the written work of last year's Year 6 pupils is also well above average. The good work of the current Year 6 pupils indicates that these high standards are being maintained. Pupils make good progress during both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils are given plenty of opportunities to practise their number skills. By Year 2, most pupils count in fives and tens confidently, and recognise patterns in numbers such as the combinations that add up to ten. During Key Stage 2, pupils learn to carry out more complex calculations. The oldest pupils have made good progress reading and plotting co-ordinates in all four quadrants of a graph, applying their understanding of the properties of quadrilaterals and negative numbers. Homework consolidates what has been learned in class, and contributes to the pupils' good progress.

13. Pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills are developed well in other subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers take many opportunities to reinforce pupils' knowledge, such as saying 5 times table while changing after a physical education lesson. Curriculum planning makes good links between mathematics and other subjects. For example, in geography a survey of the shops in the town centre involved pupils collecting data, collating and presenting it in graphs and bar charts, and interpreting what the figures meant.

14. In science, standards at the end of both key stages are in line with the national expectation. Pupils make satisfactory progress during both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils make steady gains in their knowledge and understanding across a broad range of science topics. Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound grasp of forces and how to measure them, know about plant growth, and have learned about reversible and irreversible processes. Their skills in scientific investigation are less well developed than their scientific knowledge.

15. Standards in information technology are well below the standard expected nationally at the end of both key stages because pupils have had very few opportunities to use computers and so could not make the progress they should have. However, recent improvements in teaching mean that they are now making good progress in information technology lessons. They have occasionally made good use of computers in other subjects, for example working with databases in geography.

16. In religious education, standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make good progress during both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, they know a good range of Bible stories and have explored themes such as being thankful and special people, which also contribute well to their moral and social development. Pupils in Key Stage 2 gain a good knowledge of world religions such as Sikhism and Hinduism, and successfully make comparisons between these religions and Christianity.

17. In the other subjects, pupils achieve the standards expected for their ages in art, design and technology, geography and music. Their attainment is above the standard expected for their age in

history and physical education. They make good progress in history, music and physical education, and satisfactory progress in art, design and technology, and geography.

18. Pupils with special educational needs, including those who are physically disabled, make very good progress during Key Stages 1 and 2 because of the high quality of teaching and support provided for them and because the work is well matched to their needs. As a result, in 1999 almost all pupils with special educational needs gained the expected level 2 in the national assessments in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and most gained the expected level 4 at the end of Year 6. Their progress is much better than was reported by the previous inspection.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

19. Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour and personal development are also very good, and relationships within the school are excellent. The pupils' very positive response is a significant strength, which has been maintained well since the last inspection. Parents rightly feel that standards of behaviour are high, that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children, and that they enjoy school.

20. The social development of children aged under five is given a high priority and is good overall. The children in the nursery and reception classes make good gains in their self-confidence and independence. They enjoy learning, playing with their friends and talking to adults they know. They listen well and show respect to others, which enables them to play well co-operatively. They take turns fairly, and queue quietly and sensibly at lunchtime. The children recognise the difference between right and wrong, and respond appropriately to adults' comments on their behaviour. Their behaviour is good.

21. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, are very interested in their learning. They settle quickly to their work, concentrate well and try hard. For example, in literacy hour lessons, they are keen to read and discuss texts, and their answers to teachers' questions show they have listened attentively both to their teachers and to each other. In a personal, social and health education lesson observed at Key Stage 1, pupils responded maturely, waiting for their turn to speak and contributing thoughtful ideas sensibly. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading for pleasure, and most do so regularly at home as well as at school. The older pupils become successful independent learners, asking for help only when they cannot resolve problems on their own or with help from each other. They research and present their homework projects well. However, pupils of all ages take less care over their written work in school, and so standards of presentation are generally lower in their class work than in their homework. The school's sympathetic approach to pupils with special educational needs, including the physically disabled, enables them to develop confidence and have high self-esteem. They respond very positively to the extra help they are given, and take a full part in the life of the school. For example, physically disabled pupils belong to the football club, take part in practices and have responsibilities at inter-school matches.

22. Pupils of all ages are very well behaved, in lessons and around the school at playtime and lunchtime. They move about the school in an orderly way, and show respect for property. Lessons are very rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour, which usually amounts only to over-enthusiastic participation in class discussions. When reprimanded, pupils are quick to do as they are told. Pupils are very courteous and friendly to each other and to adults. The rate of exclusions is low. Only one exclusion has occurred recently, in the previous school year, and was an effective sanction. Incidents of bullying are few and minor, and pupils are confident that they will be sorted out fairly and speedily.

23. Relationships are excellent, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Parents attending the meeting prior to the inspection commented on the over-riding respect their children have for the staff, and for the headteacher in particular. This was evident during the inspection. Pupils work well together as they are very supportive, kind and caring towards each other. For instance, older pupils play with the children from the reception class in the playground. Pupils' friendliness and consideration for others' needs are important elements in the successful inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities and those with special educational needs in the life of the school. For example, they work willingly with whoever they are partnered with for pair work in physical education, enabling those with physical disabilities to take an equal part in lessons. Pupils are concerned when others are hurt or upset, and do their best to help each other. They show respect for other pupils' work, for example when individuals explain what they have done to the rest of the class, and when pupils' achievements are rewarded in assemblies.

24. Pupils' personal development is very good. The excellent ethos of the school contributes much to their sense of community and respect for others. They are very aware of what is right and wrong, and respond very positively to the school's system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils of all ages are keen to take responsibility for tasks such as returning registers to the office and ensuring that the classroom is tidy. The youngest pupils learn to clear up after practical activities and reading games, and do so efficiently and without fuss. The older pupils take increasing responsibility for helping with day-to-day routines, such as in assembly and playground duties. They carry out these duties with maturity. Residential visits for the pupils in Years 5 and 6 further develop their independence and maturity, and through experiences such as supporting charities they develop a good sense of responsibility for others. Their interested response to the topics explored in assemblies shows their respect for others' beliefs and values.

Attendance

25. Attendance rates are above the national average. They have improved since the previous inspection. There are no unauthorised absences. Registers are called correctly in the morning and afternoon and, apart from a very minor discrepancy, they are consistently marked. The children aged under five attend school regularly. Pupils' punctuality in arriving at school is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

26. The consistently effective teaching is a strength of the school. Parents commented on this at the meeting prior to the inspection, and in responses to the questionnaire. They commented especially on the very good teaching of those with physical disabilities and special educational needs. Inspectors agree with their views.

27. The teaching of the children under five is good. In the lessons observed, it was always at least satisfactory, and in two-thirds it was good, or sometimes very good. The teaching of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is also good. It was less than satisfactory in a very small proportion of the lessons observed at Key Stage 2. In both key stages, it was good or better in over half the lessons observed. It was very good in a third of the lessons at Key Stage 1, and a quarter in Key Stage 2. The proportion of good and very good teaching is higher than is found in many primary schools. The quality of teaching is now much higher than at the time of the last inspection.

28. The teachers of the children aged under five have a firm understanding of how children learn and so they provide activities which encourage learning well. The activities are planned carefully, and are well matched to children's varying needs. Particular emphasis is placed upon developing

skills in literacy and numeracy. Teachers give clear explanations, and question children well to check their understanding. They encourage the children to share their work and successes, to enable others to learn from them. The teachers and support staff provide good role models for the children to follow, and their relationships with the children are very good. They manage the children very well. They make them aware of the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour firmly but gently, and give clear explanations as to why children should not do certain things. Teachers have very good procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of all pupils. In their planning, they identify clearly what the children are expected to learn, and base their assessments on these learning objectives. The information gathered is used well to inform planning for future lessons. Good provision is made for children who have difficulties in their learning or social development. They are quickly identified, and individual support is planned and provided.

29. At Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers' expertise is generally good, and better than was reported by the last inspection. Teachers use their subject knowledge well, for example in teaching specialist vocabulary, particularly in the literacy hour. This is a strength in teaching as it helps pupils to extend their use of language both orally and in writing. The recent in-service training in literacy and numeracy has given teachers a good knowledge of how to plan and teach these subjects effectively. Similar support is now being provided in information technology, which is the subject in which teachers are least secure, especially at Key Stage 2. Most teachers still do not have the confidence to make sufficient day-to-day use of classroom computers, although the recent training has given them the knowledge necessary to introduce whole class teaching, using the suite of computers in the workbay. This has enabled pupils to make good progress this term.

30. Lesson planning is good. It is detailed, and the work is matched well to pupils' varying needs. In their planning, teachers identify clearly what they expect pupils to learn from the lesson activities, and ensure that this information is shared with the pupils. They take careful account of the targets in the individual education plans of the pupils with special educational needs. Their expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are high, except in the presentation of written work. Lesson activities are varied and interesting, which motivates pupils of all levels of attainment. Teachers plan well for what their learning support assistants are to do during lessons, and liaise regularly with them, with the result that the learning support assistants are very effective. Their teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs and physical disabilities is particularly good, and contributes much to these pupils' very good progress. All these strengths are significant improvements since the last inspection.

31. Teachers and learning support assistants use a wide range of teaching methods well. Whole class discussions and small group activities are challenging and purposeful because teachers ask probing questions and encourage all pupils to contribute. For example, in a lesson observed during the inspection, Key Stage 1 pupils played various reading games in small groups, organised according to their skills in reading. The pupils learned a lot and had fun at the same time because the adult supporting each group encouraged all to take part, helped them with difficult letters and words, and rewarded success with plenty of praise. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons, and use a good variety of resources. They set time limits for the work, and so most lessons have a very purposeful pace.

32. Teachers manage learning activities well. This is particularly effective at Key Stage 1, where pupils are strongly encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers have well-established routines for tasks such as clearing away at the end of activities, with the help of the pupils, and so these tasks take up very little time. Occasional instances of inattentiveness are dealt with firmly, and pupils are frequently reminded to focus on their work. This motivates pupils and helps to maintain the school's strong learning ethos.

33. Teachers assess pupils by informal observation and questioning of pupils during lessons, and so know them well as individuals. Written work is marked regularly, but usually only with ticks and brief comments of praise rather than more detailed evaluation and feedback on what pupils have done well and how they can improve in future. This weakness, which was also noted by the previous inspection, leads to pupils being unclear about what they should focus on to improve their work in future. Most teachers do not assess pupils' progress systematically enough, and their records of pupils' attainment are too varied. Some teachers' records give clear information on the quality of pupils' work, whereas others simply tick that pupils have experienced or demonstrated a skill rather than identifying the standard of the work. Teachers do not record sufficient information to review individuals' progress over time, although they use their day-to-day observations well to plan appropriate work for the next lesson.

34. A few parents expressed a wish for more homework, especially at Key Stage 1. However, the inspection found that the use of homework is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Pupils regularly have spellings and tables to learn, and are tested on them at school. They are also expected to read at home. The records of this independent reading are too brief, and there is insufficient sharing of advice between parents and teachers on how to support them in future. Monitoring pupils' independent reading at home remains a weakness at Key Stage 2, leading to some pupils not reading widely enough or choosing inappropriate titles. More formal homework is introduced in Year 3, with research projects each term and follow-up written tasks each week. This homework is very good. Parents expressed this opinion strongly at the meeting prior to the inspection, and that the provision of homework for the older pupils has improved since the last inspection. The work set is challenging and interesting. As at the time of the last inspection, it makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning across the curriculum.

The curriculum and assessment

35. The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection, in response to key issues identified then. It is now good.

36. The curriculum for the children who are under five is appropriately based on the desirable learning outcomes specified nationally for these children. Their progress from the nursery to the reception class is planned well. The curriculum provides well for the children to move on to the early stages of the National Curriculum.

37. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad as it includes all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education, with French being taught at Key Stage 2. The curriculum is further enhanced by personal, social and health education lessons. These follow a very good scheme of work, and cover sex and health education together with drugs abuse effectively. As at the time of the last inspection, specialist teaching is provided in several subjects, and contributes to the high standards attained in physical education and music. The provision for information technology has been improved at Key Stage 2 by the introduction of class lessons in which pupils are taught aspects of using computers. Planning is appropriately based on the subjects of the National Curriculum, while cross-curricular links are successfully maintained through topics. These links are very strong, and contribute to the effectiveness of the curriculum as they give pupils good opportunities to apply their learning in other contexts. For example, a local study in geography was planned to develop pupils' knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and information technology; and work in religious education has been linked to art.

38. The school's current priorities are to raise standards in English and mathematics, and to implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy successfully. These priorities have

influenced the curriculum, with benefits to the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics but disadvantages to some other subjects. The overall time allocated to English is relatively high, particularly at Key Stage 1, as pupils are given daily opportunities for reading, and regularly have short sessions on spelling and handwriting. Older pupils also have time for extended writing. As a result, foundation subjects such as art, design and technology, geography and history are given relatively little time. In some of these subjects, notably history, homework topics are used well to supplement lessons and so standards are above the expectation for pupils' age. In other subjects, particularly art, pupils have too little time to learn and develop their skills and so standards are in line with the expectation for their age. Overall, however, the curriculum is reasonably well balanced as the disadvantages are minimised. The school intends to review the balance of time, together with its planning for subjects such as art and geography.

39. The curriculum provides well for pupils with special educational needs. Adaptations are made when necessary, particularly for pupils with physical disabilities, enabling them to participate fully. They visit a local hydrotherapy pool once a week, at a time when they will not miss key lessons in English, mathematics or science. The curriculum also extends high-attaining pupils well as the work is made challenging for them too. As a result, the curriculum is very effective in giving pupils equal opportunities for success.

40. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has improved planning for pupils' progress from year to year. The newly-introduced planning for information technology is appropriate as it enables pupils to build on their existing knowledge and skills, recognising that these are at a low level. In other subjects, particularly those taught through cross-curricular themes, planning takes insufficient account of the need to build on pupils' prior learning. For example, though pupils have many opportunities to label and colour in maps in geography, the scheme of work does not plan for how skills such as in mapping should develop from year to year.

41. A very good range of educational visits and visitors to the school extend the curriculum. Teachers make excellent use of the school's woodland area for work in many subjects. Theme days provide exciting opportunities for active learning, for example about the Victorians. Pupils visit local museums, in addition to going further afield such as to the Natural History Museum or the British Museum in London. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from residential visits. These are generally based on geography and history activities, such as a study of the life and occupations in Tudor times.

42. A good variety of extra-curricular activities is provided, particularly for sports. These include football, netball, athletics, gymnastics, and swimming in the summer, and are popular with pupils. Pupils have good opportunities for team games as the school organises sports clubs for all who wish to participate, as well as entering teams for local competitions. Other activities include chess and recorders at lunchtime, and a school orchestra. Pupils are given good opportunities to take part in performances for the school, their parents and at the local music festival. Regular drama productions, which have included a school opera every other year, are very popular with pupils and their parents.

43. At whole-school level at Key Stages 1 and 2, the school has good systems for assessing and reviewing standards, and using the information to monitor pupils' progress. Their work in English, mathematics and science is formally assessed twice a year. The school uses this information to identify those who are in need of extra encouragement and support even though they do not have special educational needs. End-of-year tests are also used, particularly at Key Stage 2, to check on standards in these subjects. Test results are analysed, to identify trends in attainment and to inform curricular planning. The progress of pupils with special educational needs towards meeting the

targets in their individual education plans is assessed regularly. Summary information on all pupils is passed on at the end of the school year, so that the next teacher will be able to plan appropriately for individuals' needs. This arrangement works well, contributing to pupils' steady progress from year to year. These systems are an improvement since the last inspection.

44. Although the school has a clearly-written assessment policy to guide class teachers' practice, pupils' attainment and progress during the school year is less carefully assessed and recorded. This was also found to be a weakness by the previous inspection, and contributes to pupils not making the progress they are capable of in some areas of the curriculum. For example, in English, records of pupils' independent reading are inadequate. For some subjects, such as information technology, assessment records have not previously been maintained. The school has recognised that this is a weakness, as was identified by the last inspection, and so has recently introduced class record sheets for subjects. Some class teachers have started to use these sheets, but practice is inconsistent. Although it is a school policy that samples of pupils' work should be collated to exemplify standards in each subject and guide teachers' assessment of the standard of pupils' work, an exemplar portfolio has not been developed for most subjects. However, class teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well from their day-to-day observations of them, and in practice they use this information well to inform their lesson planning and teaching. On balance, therefore, class teachers' assessment is satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

45. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved very considerably since the last inspection. In response to the findings of the inspection, the school's aims have been revised to include spiritual, social and cultural development explicitly, and staff are committed to developing pupils' spiritual values through their teaching. The curriculum for the children who are under five and that for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 makes good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents feel that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children, encouraging self-esteem, independence and honesty. The inspection findings support this.

46. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. It has good policies for collective worship, and for pupils' spiritual, moral, personal, social and cultural development. Daily acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements, and include opportunities for quiet thought and prayer. The themes for assembly are mainly Christian, although the beliefs of other religions are also included. For example, the recent harvest celebration included stories from Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish faiths as well as Christianity. Colourful displays of information and religious objects further illustrate the way different religions celebrate festivals, and pupils are encouraged to notice and reflect on them. Pupils are given many other opportunities to reflect on their own lives and to appreciate the world around them. For example, a woodland walk enjoyed by the reception class led to their greatly appreciating the wonders of nature seen through the autumn colours of leaves. Personal, social and health education sessions include circle time, in which pupils have good opportunities to think about themselves, their achievements and how best they can help others.

47. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. They encourage pupils to strive to receive rewards, and explain the purpose of sanctions very clearly when they are necessary. The school's code of conduct permeates the daily life of the school, and staff set an excellent example to pupils through their own conduct, attitudes

and values. Parents commented on this. Social development is planned for from the earliest years. For example, pupils in the reception class learn to take responsibility by handing round drinks and biscuits. They are expected to share them fairly, and to wait patiently for everyone to finish. Children and pupils of all ages are encouraged to share their work and successes, to enable others to learn from them. Opportunities are provided for all ages except the very youngest children to mix together at playtimes, although infants have some time to themselves during their afternoon playtime and for part of the lunch break. Residential visits for the oldest pupils further develop their sense of responsibility and confidence.

48. Assemblies make a strong contribution to pupils' moral and social development. Issues of right and wrong are discussed regularly and very clear guidance is given, encouraging pupils to develop an awareness of moral principles and their responsibilities towards others. Circle time also encourages pupils to listen carefully to others and to respect their views. Very good opportunities for pupils to become involved in the wider society through fundraising events help them to develop an awareness of the needs of others. For example, sponsored skipping and a dragon boat race were organised recently, raising substantial funds for charities such as Scope.

49. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Taped music is played on entry to and exit from assemblies, and pupils are encouraged to notice and take an interest in what is played. The music is chosen to broaden pupils' cultural awareness. For example, African music tied in with the story of a former slave who established her own college in the United States. The school orchestra and opportunities for private music tuition further enhance the cultural development of those who take part. A very good programme of visits to museums and other sites of interest and of visitors to school, such as puppeteers presenting the story of Peter and the Wolf, is organised. These experiences are built on very well during follow-up lessons, successfully making pupils' cultural development an integral part of the curriculum. Additionally, Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge of European culture is extended through weekly lessons in French.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

50. Parents expressed very positive views on the quality of help and guidance given to their children, and in particular on the care provided for the children with physical disabilities and special educational needs. Their views are supported by the findings of the inspection. The school provides its pupils with very good support and guidance, and provides a secure and caring environment. This makes a significant contribution towards their happiness and well being, and to the standards that they achieve. These aspects of the work of the school have improved considerably since the last inspection. Health and safety concerns have been dealt with effectively, and improvements to the curriculum have enabled staff to monitor the progress of the children in their classes. However, weaknesses in class teachers' assessment practice remain.

51. Pupils' academic progress and personal development are generally monitored well. Staff show high levels of care and concern for pupils, know them very well, and deal with any problems sensitively. Parents commented on this. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Good induction is provided for children when they enter the school, both those starting in the nursery or reception class and those joining the school during Key Stages 1 and 2. The procedures for monitoring the progress made by children aged under five are good. Support staff are regularly involved in assessing and recording these children's progress. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' academic progress in English, mathematics and science is tracked effectively by formal assessments once or twice a year. However, their progress during the school year is insufficiently monitored because of the inconsistency in teachers' assessment of pupils' work. Personal, social and health education sessions, which include circle time, are effective in providing support and

guidance, and pupils in Key Stage 2 are involved in personal target-setting. Some of these targets are rather general, but the system helps to create a positive learning ethos and develops pupils' confidence and motivation to succeed.

52. Pupils are given good guidance in how to learn. They benefit from the 'Learning to Learn' procedure, which has been introduced to help them focus on their learning. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The school also makes the transition to the next stage of pupils' education smooth and supportive, including to secondary school, for example by booklets which tell them and their parents what to expect.

53. Children are assessed carefully on entry to the school and tested regularly in subsequent years, to ensure that any learning difficulties are identified and sorted out as early as possible. The progress made by pupils with special needs is monitored carefully, and reviewed each term. Individual education plans for these pupils are very good. They provide detailed, specific guidance to teachers as they include the pupils' strengths as well as their learning and physical difficulties and, where appropriate, pastoral and medical requirements. They have appropriate, attainable targets, and the pupils' progress towards them is noted carefully. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The plans are reviewed each term, and the pupils' progress towards the targets they are set is discussed with parents. The school has good links with relevant outside agencies, and uses their expertise well. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties receive good support.

54. The procedures for recording and reporting on attendance of the pupils are satisfactory. The registers are checked regularly, and the headteacher follows up any absences promptly.

55. Parents rightly observed that the school sets very clear boundaries, and deals very effectively with misbehaviour and any problems individual children may have. This is a major strength. The school has very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and monitoring discipline. The behaviour policy has clearly-stated strategies, and a good system of rewards and sanctions. It is supported by guidelines for pupils, for example on how to behave 'When we are not in class'. The newly-introduced home/school agreement is popular with parents. It sets out the expectations and responsibilities of the school, parents and pupils very well. Staff implement the policy and guidelines consistently. They give pupils much praise and encouragement for trying hard and behaving well. Pupils are rewarded by smiley stickers, stars and suns, and with certificates which are presented in assemblies. When they occur, which is infrequently, misbehaviour and bullying are dealt with very firmly and effectively. Staff ensure that pupils are aware of the consequences of their actions, and give pupils every opportunity and encouragement to make positive decisions. This contributes to the school's positive ethos.

56. The procedures for child protection and for promoting pupils' wellbeing, health and safety are excellent. Staff are aware of the requirements of the policy for child protection. The school pays very close attention to health and safety issues. For example, class teachers are given good information about individuals' medical needs, and staff have been trained in first aid as necessary. Pupils are frequently reminded about safety in lessons and at other times. The playgrounds are well supervised. The procedures for reporting and dealing with accidents are good. Health and safety checks are carried out each term, and any concerns which are identified are dealt with promptly. The school is sympathetic to the need of some physically disabled pupils for time off school for medical reasons. When they return to school, they are given good support, and helped to catch up with what they have missed.

Partnership with parents and the community

57. The school has maintained a very good partnership with parents since the previous inspection.

This has been achieved through very good quality information provided to parents. Parents feel that communications with them are very effective, and make them feel involved in their children's education. The communications include regular newsletters from the headteacher on whole school matters. In addition, each half term a class newsletter gives information on topics to be covered and how parents can support their children's learning. Very good, helpful booklets give parents key information when their children join the school, and when they move on to the next key stage. The booklet for parents of pupils with special educational needs is also very good. Assistance is provided at the time of transfer to secondary school. The formal published documents such as the prospectus and governors' annual report are satisfactory.

58. In addition to information about the school, parents receive an informative annual report on their children's progress. Results of any tests are also given, as well as an explanation of what the test scores mean. There are formal consultation evenings each term. Parents attending the meeting prior to the inspection strongly expressed the view that the school's response to their suggestions or concerns is wonderful. The school successfully operates an open door policy which enables parents to contact staff at any time, and so parents feel that staff are very approachable to discuss any problems or concerns. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their child's progress through home/school books as well as regular reviews and consultations.

59. The involvement of parents in their children's learning is excellent. Several help voluntarily in school on a regular basis. The great majority support their children in their homework tasks, and regularly hear them read at home. In addition, parents raise funds to support the work of the school. For example, they cover the costs of maintaining and running the swimming pool. This is of considerable benefit to pupils, who have regular swimming lessons during the summer term. Parents were involved in developing a fragrant garden with raised beds, enabling pupils with physical disabilities to become involved in gardening activities. Parents show a responsible attitude to attendance and consequently there is very little parentally-condoned absence. Some parents do remove their children from school for family holidays, but the school asks that this is avoided for all age groups during May and this request is almost fully complied with. The strong partnership with parents has a very beneficial effect on the standards achieved within the school.

60. The community links that have been established make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' education, although the school does not currently have business or industry links. Links with secondary schools are pastoral rather than curricular. This is due to there being a large number of schools to which pupils transfer. Other community links include visits to local churches. The swimming pool is open to the local community during the summer holidays, which is much appreciated by families who live nearby.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

61. Parents commented on the very effective leadership and management of the headteacher. They feel she has led the school forward in a very focused way, with clear vision for its future. Their views are supported by the findings of the inspection. The headteacher provides very good leadership, and manages the school well. She is supported well by the senior management team and other staff with key responsibilities. The strategies for involving all staff in decision-making are a strength in the management of the school. As a result, the school's aims and values are understood and shared by all staff, and so are implemented consistently. Most school policies are followed well, although teachers' practice in some areas, such as marking and assessment, is inconsistent. The headteacher is very supportive of the staff, monitors their effectiveness carefully, and ensures

that appropriate training is provided. Her approach has enabled the staff to develop a very good sense of community and shared responsibility.

62. The school's ethos is excellent. Parents commented on this in their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting prior to the inspection. They praised the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils, and the way in which each pupil is treated as an individual. The inspection found that parents are right, and that the school's attention to providing equal opportunities has improved since the last inspection. The ethos is a significant strength of the school, and contributes much to the high standards pupils achieve.

63. The school improvement plan is comprehensive and has a strong focus on raising standards. It was devised following a good process of consultation between staff and governors, and includes points raised by parents. It identifies appropriate areas for development, which have been budgeted for carefully. The plan is reviewed and up-dated annually. It has proved useful in establishing the priorities for development each year, providing a clear framework within which the staff have worked effectively to improve the school.

64. The governing body is very supportive, and committed to helping the school improve. Governors have attended training to improve their knowledge and skills, and this has helped them carry out their responsibilities effectively. For example, governors have recently developed their monitoring role, and have started to visit classrooms and to check on aspects such as health and safety. Through its committees, the governing body is well-informed about the school's work. It meets its statutory responsibilities.

65. The effectiveness of subject management has improved over the last few years. Although it still varies considerably, most areas of the curriculum are managed well. These include mathematics, history, and the provision for the pupils who are aged under five. The implementation of the literacy hour has been managed effectively. The management of information technology was weak, with the result that pupils did not make the progress they should. It has recently improved, and pupils are now making much better progress. The headteacher has established a good system for monitoring standards in teaching and learning across the school. She observes lessons regularly, and gives constructive feedback to teachers on how to improve their teaching. Subject co-ordinators now monitor teachers' planning and teaching, to see whether the schemes of work they have written are implemented appropriately, and this is leading to improvements in teaching and learning.

66. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for those with physical disabilities is expertly and very effectively managed. The weaknesses identified by the previous inspection have been dealt with very successfully. Individual education plans are drawn up carefully. They set realistic targets, and give class teachers good guidance on how to meet the pupils' needs. There is a comprehensive policy which covers all statutory requirements and is implemented well.

67. The school responded very purposefully and effectively to the findings of the last inspection and the key issues for action which were identified. In-service training enhanced teachers' knowledge and skills, for example in how to provide better for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The quality of teaching is much higher than previously. Teachers with subject responsibilities have worked hard on curriculum planning, and this is now good overall. The way subjects are managed has improved. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is much better than previously. Assessment at whole-school level is more effective, although weaknesses remain in class teachers' practice. As a result of these and other developments, such as in staffing and resources, pupils' progress has improved and standards have risen. Due to the strengths in the leadership and management of the school and the commitment of staff and

governors to further improvement, it is well placed to maintain its strengths and to continue to improve its performance.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

68. The school is very well staffed with qualified teachers, as at the time of the last inspection. Teachers and learning support assistants show a high level of commitment, relationships are good, and staff work well as a team throughout the school. This contributes much to the school's excellent ethos, and to the good teaching. The teachers' range of subject expertise is now good as recent appointments have filled gaps, such as in English and science. There is a good balance between teachers with long experience and those recently qualified. Part-time teachers take classes to provide specialist teaching of French, music and physical education. Class teachers benefit from the time this gives them to plan for and monitor the subjects for which they are responsible, and pupils benefit from the specialists' expertise.

69. Staffing to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, is good. The co-ordinator does not have class-teaching responsibilities, and the school employs a good number of well-trained learning support assistants. They provide skilled teaching and support, which contributes significantly to the very good progress made by these pupils.

70. The arrangements for the professional development of staff have improved since the last inspection, and are very good overall. Teachers attend a good variety of in-service courses to improve their expertise. Much recent training has focused on literacy, numeracy and information technology, with beneficial effects on the quality of teaching of these subjects and on the progress pupils are making. Learning support assistants participate in school-based training and attend other courses, with a very positive effect upon the quality of support they provide. Their good expertise enables them to work very well with the children who are under five and with the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Procedures for staff appraisal are well established, and enable individual training needs to be identified and acted upon. The induction procedures to help new teachers become familiar with the policies and routines of the school are effective, and newly qualified teachers are well supported by a mentor.

71. Overall, the school's accommodation is very good, allowing the curriculum to be taught effectively. As parents commented, it has been improved since the last inspection by the addition of new cloakrooms, a refurbished care room and a corridor to link the two main teaching areas. As a result, lessons in the hall are no longer interrupted. Classrooms are sufficiently large, and the school has specialist areas for music and information technology. Attractive displays throughout the school enhance learning and celebrate pupils' work, an improvement since the last inspection. The buildings and grounds are well cared for. The grounds are very attractive, and are well used for physical education, science and outdoor play. They include adventure play areas, and a fragrant garden which is accessible to disabled pupils. The access to outside play areas is satisfactory for the children in the nursery class but not for those in the reception class. Parents have generously helped the school to maintain its swimming pool, which is used in the summer months and provides a valuable extension to the outdoor facilities.

72. Learning resources are good overall. Resources for information technology have recently been updated. They are sufficient for the needs of the curriculum, although still not enough for a whole class to use at the same time. This held back pupils' progress in the information technology lessons observed during the inspection. The library is satisfactorily stocked, though insufficiently used to develop pupils' independent reading. Good use is made of the school loan service to supplement the

school's own resources for learning. These are organised well, in classrooms and a central store. Labelling is clear and helpful, and ensures that the resources are easily accessible. Resources for the under-fives have been improved since the last inspection. The recent purchase of storage units for the nursery and reception classes has given the children easier access to the resources, enabling them to work more independently. The provision of resources for pupils with special educational needs has improved considerably since the last inspection, and is now good.

73. The accommodation and learning resources for physically disabled pupils are also good. The care room is fully equipped for their needs, and is useful for the care of any other pupils who feel unwell. The school has the necessary ramps and pathways for wheel chairs. Recent improvements have made the building fully accessible to the physically disabled pupils, and have enhanced the accommodation for all pupils. Specially adapted equipment is available for the physically disabled, enabling them to take a full part in lessons.

The efficiency of the school

74. Financial planning is good. The budget is complex because additional funding is provided for the care of the physically disabled pupils and for the nursery class. It has been managed carefully, to ensure that sufficient reserves are available to provide the support for any physically disabled pupils who join the school during the school year. The funding for pupils with special educational needs is spent on providing specialist staff and learning support assistants, and the school supplements this provision from within its other budget resources. This is appropriate and effective as the staff provide very good support to all pupils, and their progress is enhanced as a result. The budget surplus is currently being drawn upon to maintain existing staffing levels, to the benefit of the pupils. The school has appropriate contingency plans for managing within next year's and subsequent years' budgets without going into a deficit. The last audit report, six years ago, was satisfactory. School administration is efficient.

75. Staff are deployed well, to the benefit of the pupils. For example, after the children who are under five have gone home, their teachers and support assistants sometimes provide extra help in Key Stage 1 classes, enabling the each group of pupils playing reading games to be helped by an adult. The use of time during the day is generally good. Most sessions start promptly. The accommodation and most of the learning resources are used well. However, the potential of the library for research and independent reading has not been exploited, and classroom computers are under-used.

76. Attainment on entry to the school is above average, and pupils generally come from favourable socio-economic backgrounds. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, and good progress during Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Academic standards are above average overall. They are well above average in English and mathematics, but low in information technology. Pupils' personal development is very good. The quality of teaching is good, and the curriculum is well planned. The school's expenditure per pupil is very high when all its income is included in the calculation. The school receives a grant to cover the cost of providing for the physically disabled pupils to attend school. If this is excluded (as in the table on page 35), the expenditure per pupil is broadly average. Therefore, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

77. The school admits children part-time into the nursery in the term after their third birthday. Children are admitted into the reception class in the September and January before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, 42 children attended the nursery class in either the morning or the afternoon session, and 14 children aged under five were in the reception class.

78. Children's attainment on entry to the school is above average for their age. From this starting point, the under fives make good progress overall. Those with special educational needs make good progress. By the time they are five, the children meet the desirable outcomes for learning in physical development. They exceed them in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and personal and social development.

79. The last inspection report contained no information on the attainment and progress of children under five, nor on the quality of education provided for them. Although no comparison with the previous findings can be made, other evidence provided by the school indicates that good improvements have been made to the provision for the under fives. In particular, additional resources have been bought and the quality of the classroom environment has improved, for example through more lively displays.

80. Overall, the children who are under five make good progress in language and literacy. A few children have special educational needs, and their progress is also good. For example, they have learned to write successfully by dictating text for an adult to scribe for them. Most children have well developed speaking and listening skills. They make sound gains in their acquisition of new vocabulary, for example mathematical language. They listen attentively to stories, anticipating the next part. The high-attaining children are beginning to discuss their preferences for stories, and to recognise rhyming words. In reading, the average- and high-attaining children are already working towards level 1 of the National Curriculum in English. They read their own names and some common words. The low-attaining children remember the words of stories they are familiar with, and enjoy joining in when an adult reads aloud with them. The children develop good strategies to help them with their reading, such as recognising the sound made by the first letter of words. The children's writing is also of an above-average standard. Most have successfully learned to copy words from a teacher's writing. The high-attaining children make good attempts at spelling independently by using their knowledge of sounds.

81. The children make satisfactory progress in mathematics. They learn to name shapes such as a circle, square and triangle correctly, and to recognise and use numbers to ten. By the time they are in the reception class, most write nearly all these numbers correctly, and many draw the correct number of objects for numbers up to ten. The children sort objects accurately, using simple criteria such as colour and size. They learn well from the many opportunities to play with number games, puzzles and construction kits, which help their skills in problem solving.

82. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, including developing skills in using computers, the children make good progress. There are notable strengths in their early scientific learning and in their observation, designing, and making skills. The children have benefited from the good range of experiences provided to support their scientific learning. In particular, they demonstrated good knowledge of plants, animals and growth, and were beginning to know about different materials such as wood, paper and metal. They recorded their findings in pictures and writing, with the high-attaining children in the reception class producing neat work. The children have good opportunities to develop geographical awareness, through which they learn language such as 'under', 'behind' and 'in front of'. The children use materials and tools such as glue,

scissors, paper, material and card very successfully to make individually-designed artefacts. In play activities, the children explored sand, and experimented with using the mouse to control the computer.

83. In their physical development, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Children's manual dexterity is well developed by the time they are five. Through their play with tabletop games and jigsaws, using modelling materials, pencils and brushes, they show a growing ability to manipulate small items, particularly scissors. Physical education lessons are timetabled, and teachers' planning shows that the children have a suitable range of gymnastic, dance and games activities to develop their agility, physical co-ordination and control. However, the children in the reception class make unsatisfactory progress in outdoor play using equipment such as wheeled toys because they have fewer opportunities for this.

84. In their creative development, the children make good progress. They are working well towards the desirable learning outcomes for five-year-olds, and in some aspects those in the reception class are already near to achieving them. They are building up a good repertoire of nursery rhymes, and very much enjoy experimenting with musical instruments. Most children recognise familiar songs and sing with enthusiasm. They respond enthusiastically in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell and feel. Children experiment with 'dough' to make various artefacts and learn to cut and stick paper skillfully. They have good opportunities to express their own ideas through painting, and enjoy using colours. They make attractive large-scale pictures using pastels and felt pens. Through role-play activities in the home corner, the children spontaneously develop their own imagined situations.

85. The children make good progress in their personal and social development, which is given a high priority. They are happy to be in school. They develop in confidence, for example through playing with their friends in the playground and conversing spontaneously with familiar adults. They enjoy short periods of being allowed to play by themselves. They listen and show respect to adults as well as other pupils, and learn to play co-operatively. They take turns, and queue quietly and sensibly at lunchtime. They follow simple instructions correctly, and work independently after initial guidance by their teacher. Children know the difference between right and wrong, and respond appropriately to adults' comments on their behaviour. All staff provide very good role models for the children, helping them to form positive relationships and to care about others. The children show good independence in dressing themselves and in personal hygiene. Most make very good progress in developing their self-confidence and independence.

86. The quality of teaching for the under-fives is good. Teachers have a firm understanding of how children learn and so they provide activities which encourage learning well. The activities are planned carefully, and are well matched to children's varying needs. Particular emphasis is placed upon developing skills in literacy and numeracy. Teachers gave clear explanations, and questioned children well to check their understanding. They encouraged the children to share their work and successes, to enable others to learn from them. They made the children aware of the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour firmly but gently, and gave clear explanations as to why children should not do certain things. Teachers have very good procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of all pupils. In their planning, they identify clearly what the children are expected to learn, and base their assessments on these learning objectives. The information gathered is used well to inform planning for future lessons. Good provision is made for children who have difficulties in their learning or social development. They are quickly identified, and individual support is planned and provided.

87. Good use is made of support staff, and teamwork in both classes is good. The support staff work very well with the children, with good awareness of the purpose of activities and so enable

the children to make good progress. Support staff have regular involvement with assessing and recording children's progress. The children are very well managed, and they enjoy very good relationships with the adults in the class. The classroom is very attractive, with interesting displays of children's work and readily-accessible resources. Overall, the provision for and the management of children aged under five are good.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

88. Results in the national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average, and have improved steadily since the last inspection. They are well above the results for similar schools. In 1999 all Year 2 pupils gained the expected level 2. Pupils did best in reading and spelling, as about half gained the higher level 3 whereas a quarter gained level 3 in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, results are also well above the national average, and are above the average for similar schools. The school's results have improved steadily over the last few years, particularly in the proportion gaining the higher level 5: currently, over a third of the year group. As nationally, the girls have tended to do better than the boys.

89. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with above-average attainment in English. By the end of Year 2, the standard they attain is well above average in all aspects of the subject. The work of the pupils who completed Year 6 in 1999 shows that standards in writing are well above average by the end of Year 6. The attainment of the pupils currently starting Year 6 is well above the expectations for their age, in all aspects of English. Pupils make very good progress during Key Stage 1 and good progress during Key Stage 2, as a result of effective teaching.

90. Standards in speaking and listening are particularly high at both key stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Almost all pupils are articulate speakers who express their opinions clearly and well. They gain in confidence during Key Stage 1, from the many opportunities provided for them to take part in oral activities both in class in at other times such as in assemblies. The younger pupils listen with understanding, as is shown by their relevant and thoughtful answers to teachers' questions. Older pupils are very confident and fluent orally, both in discussion with adults and in pair and small group activities. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, learn well from listening. Their oral skills and wide vocabularies help their learning in all subjects.

91. Pupils enjoy reading. During Key Stage 1, pupils develop very good knowledge about books as teachers introduce and discuss vocabulary such as 'author' and 'title page' well. Almost all pupils are independent readers by the end of Key Stage 1, and have learned to comment well on the events of a story. Higher-attaining pupils make good predictions about what might happen next, and explain their reasons by referring to the text. During Key Stage 2, pupils make good gains in their knowledge of different kinds of text. For instance, exploring how newspaper articles are written enabled pupils in one class to write in this style effectively themselves, as reporters of a performance of 'Peter and the Wolf' by puppeteers. Their confidence in reading enables pupils of all ages to cope well with the reading demands of other areas of the curriculum, such as doing research in history and geography. Most pupils read regularly in school and at home. They are keen to take books home, where they are given good support. Although most move confidently from the support of scheme books to independent reading by the end of Key Stage 1, this transition and pupils' subsequent development is not monitored and guided carefully enough. As a result, some higher-attaining pupils are not being extended sufficiently, particularly in Key Stage 2, and a few average- and lower-attaining pupils are tackling books which are much too difficult for them.

92. Pupils' wide vocabularies help them to express themselves well in writing. By the end of Year 2, almost all write competently and accurately. Their spelling is accurate. During Key Stage 2, pupils develop good skills in writing in different styles, through their work in English and other subjects. The range of writing opportunities provided in, for example, history is wide: older pupils write imaginative accounts of previous times, record information they have researched for homework, make notes, write explanations of events and discuss their opinions giving reasons to support their views. Spelling is generally accurate, at both key stages, helped by the regular learning and testing of spellings. The standard of handwriting is average at both key stages. Until recently, insufficient attention has been paid to teaching pupils how to join their letters, and so too many pupils of all ages print rather than write in a cursive style. The quality of content is therefore often higher than its presentation, in English and across the curriculum.

93. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in English during both key stages. The work is adapted well to meet their needs, and they are given good support in lessons. This enables almost all to attain the expected level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1, and most to attain level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2. Physically disabled pupils are helped by the specialist resources provided, such as computers for those who find writing difficult, enabling them also to make very good progress.

94. Pupils' response to English lessons is very good at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, their response is good. From Year 1 onwards, pupils take turns well in whole-class discussion, respecting others' rights to speak and listening with interest. They also co-operate very well when asked to work together, and are very supportive of each other. Their behaviour is very good, and they are keen to learn. Occasionally, older pupils were rather fussy and needed reminders about concentrating, but they responded well to firm management. Pupils of all ages have very good learning skills, enabling them independently to sort out problems they encounter, for example by consulting a dictionary to check whether their spellings were correct. Pupils' positive responses contribute much to their progress and the high standards they attain.

95. The quality of teaching is a major strength. It is very good at Key Stage 1, and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers plan carefully and thoroughly, and provide a good range of interesting activities. Their classroom management is very good, creating a positive learning ethos in which pupils know that they are expected to concentrate, try hard and act responsibly. Teachers provide very good role models in their use of language, and teach new vocabulary systematically and well during the literacy hour. In oral activities, they ask questions which probe and extend pupils' understanding, and skilfully draw in the quieter and less confident while controlling but not discouraging those who are over-keen to have their say. They plan well for the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs, particularly in small group activities. Whole class discussions at the end of literacy hour lessons are effective because teachers encourage pupils to present their work to the class, and use this opportunity to extend their understanding by follow-up questioning and explanations. While teachers generally expect high standards, they miss opportunities to insist on pupils' written work being well presented and to teach them how to achieve this, although handwriting sessions are now improving standards in presentation. Marking is generally regular and is always encouraging, but is insufficiently informative to pupils about the strengths and weaknesses of their work, particularly at Key Stage 2.

96. The implementation of the literacy hour has been managed well, and has contributed to the consistent quality of teaching and pupils' steady progress. In-service training has successfully improved teachers' skills, contributing to their consistently effective teaching. The funding to support literacy has been spent well on book resources. The requirements of the National Curriculum are covered well, except for the use of information technology within English.

Assessment focuses on writing, with insufficient attention to pupils' reading development. In particular, the records of pupils' independent reading are insufficiently detailed. A portfolio of work exemplifying standards of attainment has not been created, but in practice teachers' judgements are accurate.

97. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, and further developments are in hand. The inconsistency between classes has been eliminated, and standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are higher. Results in the national assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have risen considerably, with a steady increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels and a more marked increase in the proportion attaining higher levels. Pupils now make consistently good progress, except in presenting their work neatly and carefully. The quality of teaching has also improved significantly, particularly as the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is now very small. However, teachers' records of their on-going assessments remain a weakness.

Mathematics

98. The pupil's results in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were above the national average, and have improved since the last inspection. Compared with similar schools, the results were average. Previously-completed written work shows that by the end of Year 2 standards are well above average in all the aspects of the mathematics curriculum, but that pupils' presentation of their work is neither well-organised nor methodical.

99. Results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen considerably over the last few years, and are now well above the averages for all schools nationally and for similar schools. A very high proportion of pupils gained level 5. Overall, the boys have tended to do better than the girls. The results have improved considerably since the last inspection. The written work completed by the pupils who were in Year 6 last school year is also well above average. The work of the pupils currently in Year 6 indicates that these high standards are being maintained. The improvement in standards is the result of higher quality teaching, which has been helped by the implementation of the national numeracy strategy, and the associated in-service training for teachers.

100. Pupils make good progress during both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils are given plenty of opportunities to practise their number skills. Most pupils learn to count forward and backwards to twenty accurately during Year 1. By Year 2, most pupils count in fives and tens confidently, and recognise patterns in numbers such as the combinations that add up to ten. In a lesson in which they made good progress, some higher-attaining pupils applied what they had previously learned when working with numbers up to fifty. By the end of Year 2, low-attaining pupils multiply by ten correctly whereas high-attaining pupils know multiplication tables up to six.

101. During Key Stage 2, pupils learn to carry out more complex calculations. For instance, in a mathematical investigation, pupils found the general rule for what happens when odd and even numbers are added and subtracted, in a whole class discussion led by the teacher. They then extended the investigation by finding out what happens when these numbers are multiplied, using a worksheet prepared for them. Pupils with special educational needs were enabled to do this work successfully because they were given very good support. Mathematical games help some classes to make good progress, for example in applying and consolidating their knowledge of place value. The oldest pupils have made good progress reading and plotting co-ordinates in all four quadrants of a graph, applying their understanding of the properties of quadrilaterals and negative numbers. Homework consolidates what has been learned in class, and contributes to the pupils' good progress.

102. Pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills are developed well in other subjects. This is an

improvement since the last inspection. Teachers take many opportunities to reinforce pupils' knowledge, such as saying 5 times table while changing after a physical education lesson. Curriculum planning makes good links between mathematics and other subjects. For example, in geography a survey of the shops in the town centre involved pupils collecting data, collating and presenting it in graphs and bar charts, and interpreting what the figures meant. Some of the homework topics set at Key Stage 2 also apply pupils' mathematical knowledge. The effective use of numeracy across the curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' progress in mathematics.

103. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They are very enthusiastic, hard-working, and keen to answer teachers' questions. When working in pairs, they co-operate well, share ideas and help each other. They explain their work to the rest of the class confidently in plenary discussion. Although the pupils' presentation of their written work has improved at both key stages, it is still a weakness as most take insufficient care to work neatly.

104. The quality of teaching at both key stages is consistently good, and has improved greatly since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and the amount of work to be covered in lessons is high, which contributes to their good progress, but they are too ready to accept untidily-presented work. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support, and as a result make very good progress. In the lessons observed, teachers generally told pupils what they expected them to learn during the lesson, and referred to these learning objectives both during and in plenary discussions at the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils worked confidently. Short sessions of mental mathematics at the start of many lessons improved pupils' speed in mental recall, such as quickly finding the odd and even numbers between two numbers they were given. These sessions were most successful when the topic was related to the rest of the lesson. Pupils were taught good strategies for mental calculations and to look for patterns in numbers. Good questioning involved all the pupils, and tasks were adapted well to meet the variety of needs within the class. Teachers sometimes set time limits for activities, which encouraged pupils to work purposefully. However, they occasionally left too little time for the plenary discussion, and so could not reinforce the main points of the lesson and new vocabulary as effectively as they had planned.

105. The curriculum for mathematics is good. It covers the statutory requirements well, except that insufficient use is made of information technology. A good emphasis is placed on mental mathematics, number work and developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Teachers' planning is effectively based on the school's policy and the national numeracy strategy. Annual tests track pupils' progress, but there is no portfolio of work to exemplify National Curriculum levels and guide teachers' assessments. The subject is managed well, with effective monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching. The findings from this monitoring have been used well to raise standards.

106. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Results in the national assessments have risen, and standards of pupils' work have improved. The last inspection found that some pupils were under-achieving, but this is no longer the case. The quality of teaching is much higher, and the pace and challenge of lesson activities is now good. The successful implementation of the national numeracy strategy has contributed to the consistently good quality of education now provided. The school is well placed to maintain the strengths in mathematics and make further improvements.

Science

107. In 1999, the results of the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the

national average. They have been consistently high since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils attaining level 3 was well above that found nationally in 1999. Results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were above the national average in 1999, but average compared to similar schools. Although the overall results have remained relatively steady since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 has increased gradually, and in 1999 was well above that found nationally. The boys have tended to do better than the girls.

108. Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with the national expectation. Standards have risen since the last inspection as there is no longer significant underachievement by any group of pupils. Teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are higher than the standard of previously completed work seen during the inspection. This is likely to be because a portfolio of exemplar work to help teachers to make accurate judgements has not been developed, and so some assessments were inaccurate. Pupils make satisfactory progress during both key stages. They make steady gains in their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the subject, though their skills in scientific investigations are less well developed than their knowledge of the topics covered. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work is well matched to their needs and they receive effective help from learning support assistants.

109. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have satisfactory knowledge across a broad range of science topics by the end of Key Stage 1. They know that some materials are magnetic, and sort animals correctly by common characteristics such as whether they can fly and where they can be found. Their appreciation of the nature and needs of animals has been enhanced through opportunities to observe the different habitats of animals in the school grounds. They record their observations carefully, in pictures, writing and on worksheets. Their drawings are often of good quality and accuracy. They have gained a sound understanding of aspects of investigative science. For instance, high-attaining pupils begin to make simple predictions such as how high different types of ball will bounce.

110. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a sound grasp of forces and how to measure them, know about plant growth, and have learned about reversible and irreversible processes. They apply their knowledge well, such as to make alarms for their work trays as part of their work on electricity, but their skills in scientific investigation are less well developed than their scientific knowledge. This is mainly because they have had too few opportunities for planning and carrying out investigations during the key stage, which contributes to standards being less high than the results of the national test at the end of the key stage. High-attaining pupils account for their observations and draw conclusions successfully. The lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are enabled to record their work though more structured support for their writing. Most pupils' presentation of their work is satisfactory, with a clear structure and accurate drawings.

111. Pupils' response is good at both key stages. They enjoy science lessons. Their attitudes to learning are very good because the activities provided are interesting and motivating. Pupils of all ages listen attentively and carefully in whole class discussion. They handle materials and tools, such as spring balances and light bulbs, wires and batteries, sensibly and safely. They show sensitivity towards living plants and creatures. The older pupils organise themselves well for practical activities, and work collaboratively in pairs.

112. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and their expectations of pupils' work are appropriate. Their lessons are planned carefully, with good links between what pupils are expected to learn and what will be assessed. Resources are well prepared. Teachers set interesting work, and explain lesson activities clearly. Demonstrations, such as of force meters, are successfully used to help pupils'

understanding. Teachers are explicit about their expectations that pupils will work sensibly and independently. They maintain discipline in a firm and calm manner, and so relationships are very good. They make good use of classroom assistants to help the pupils. Teachers make good use of the school grounds for fieldwork activities. Marking is satisfactory as it is regular, although the comments are encouraging rather than giving pupils precise guidance on the strengths and weaknesses in the work.

113. In most respects, science is managed satisfactorily. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, except that insufficient use is made of information technology. Visits and the use of the school grounds for fieldwork activities enhance pupils' learning. Relevant links are made with other subjects, which gives pupils a fuller understanding of their work in science and helps them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

114. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, and further improvements are being made. Results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen. Standards have improved as pupils are no longer under-achieving. Teachers' planning and teaching has been monitored, and the results of formal assessments are reviewed to identify areas for improvement. The quality of teaching is now consistently satisfactory. Pupils are still given too few opportunities for developing their skills in science investigations, and assessment also remains an area for development.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

225. Almost all the lessons in which pupils were observed using computers during the inspection were at Key Stage 2. Mostly, these were timetabled sessions in which pupils used the computers in the workbay. Pupils were infrequently seen using the computers in classrooms. Judgements are based on the evidence of these observations, discussions with pupils and teachers, teachers' planning and a scrutiny of pupils' previously-completed work in other subjects.

226. Standards are well below what is expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Pupils have had very few opportunities to use computers and so could not make the progress they should have during either key stage. Standards are lower than reported by the last inspection three years ago, and teachers appear to use computers less than at that time. Recent improvements to the management of the subject, its curriculum planning, the computer resources and teachers' expertise are now enabling pupils to make good progress, particularly at Key Stage 2. These improvements are too recent to have had an impact on the standards achieved at the end of each key stage.

227. As no teaching of information technology was observed at Key Stage 1, it is not possible to make overall judgements of the quality of teaching, nor of pupils' response and progress. Very little evidence of their previous use of computers was available. However, the curriculum planning for Key Stage 1 provides appropriate coverage of the various aspects of the National Curriculum for information technology, and teachers' lesson plans show that they have begun to implement it. Pupils have had a little experience of word processing and of using CD-ROMs and other software to support their work, for example in the literacy hour. They are keen to use computers. The evidence indicates that they have made poor progress in the past, due to the lack of teaching of information technology, as their knowledge and skills are well below average at the end of the key stage.

228. At Key Stage 2, the teaching observed was satisfactory. Teachers made effective use of learning support assistants to work with small groups in the computer workbay. Year 4 pupils were set the task of using computer graphics to make repeating patterns, while pupils in Years 5 and 6 learned how to write a simple control procedure to make the computer switch lights on and

off. Some Year 6 pupils were also observed working on a straightforward word processing task. These activities were well matched to the pupils' existing skills and experience, which were well below what is expected for their ages. Pupils used the mouse competently, but were less skilled in using the keyboard. Some needed help to save their work to disc. Most of the older pupils knew how to use on-screen menus, but were unsure of how to edit and format text such as by centering, cutting and pasting, and highlighting to change a font or its style. Their knowledge and skills in all aspects of information technology are well below the standard expected for this stage in Year 6.

229. The evidence of observations indicates that most pupils at Key Stage 2 are now making rapid progress from a low level of prior attainment. The lesson activities had been carefully planned to give pupils a step-by-step introduction to the task and the computer programmes. The work was explained clearly, and pupils were given helpful advice. At times, the pupils needed to be extended further, as when some of the oldest pupils tried to programme sequences of light changes but needed more guidance than was provided. Pupils' progress was also impeded in several lessons because there were not enough computers for all the class to try out the procedures that had been explained to them, and so only half the class could work at once. This led to frustration, as the pupils were enthusiastic towards using the computers. Overall, their response was good. They worked co-operatively and well in pairs, and listened attentively to instructions and explanations. They tried hard, and the more expert willingly helped those with little experience when they had difficulties.

230. Pupils have had too few opportunities to use information technology in other subjects. A few examples of good practice were seen, such as the use of a database to present survey findings in geography. Some Key Stage 2 pupils have made good use of information technology in researching and presenting their homework projects, for example by downloading information from CD-ROMs or the Internet. More cross-curricular opportunities for using information technology are planned for during this school year, but teachers' lack of expertise remains a constraint despite the beneficial impact of the training provided so far. For example, teachers make too little use of the computer in each classroom for independent and pair work on a day-to-day basis. Until recently, the computers in the workbay have not been accessible to classes in the mornings because the area was used for small group work supporting pupils with special educational needs. This was an inefficient use of resources which contributed to pupils' lack of progress.

Religious education

231. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection. They make good progress during both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to see how Bible stories have some relevance to their own lives. By the end of the key stage, they have learned a good range of Bible stories, such as the story of Moses, and know of other world faiths such as Judaism. They have explored themes such as being thankful and special people, which contribute well to their moral and social development. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop a good understanding of religious customs and values. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of world religions such as Sikhism and Hinduism, and successfully make comparisons between these religions and Christianity. They know the names of various religious artefacts, and know about the holy books, special festivals and places of worship of religions such as Buddhism and Judaism.

232. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages, contributing much to their progress. They listen attentively to Bible and other stories in assembly. In the small number of lessons observed during the inspection, they demonstrated a lively interest in and curiosity about religious stories and their meanings. Their enthusiasm and confidence in discussion reflected the excellent relationships they have with their teachers and one another. They responded thoughtfully to each

others' views and co-operated well with one another.

233. The teaching observed was satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers planned suitably for discussion, to enable pupils to reflect on the stories and themes introduced in assembly. They made good use of pupils' own knowledge and experiences, which built up their self-esteem and confidence. Key Stage 1 pupils' observation skills were encouraged well when their teacher used pictures of stained glass windows and portraits to help them understand Jesus, as part of their work on special people.

234. The scheme of work for religious education, which is based on the local Agreed Syllabus, is very good. It is very detailed, and provides good suggestions for teaching. It is effectively linked to collective worship by means of themes which are supported by Bible stories and the study of the beliefs and customs of other religions. Resources are good. The school has many books, and a growing selection of artefacts representative of the different religions studied. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and also develops their literacy skills well. Effective management of the subject has led to good improvement since the last inspection. The strengths identified then have been maintained, and areas of weakness have been tackled purposefully. In particular, in-service training has helped class teachers teach religious education effectively, and to develop good links between this and other subjects.

Other subjects

235. In **art**, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve the standards expected for their ages. They are introduced to a wide range of media and techniques, which are developed systematically. This gives pupils confidence, and contributes significantly to their considerable enthusiasm for art. In the one lesson seen, pupils were developing their work on using squares and arches from an earlier lesson in which they had studied the work of Paul Klee. The teaching was very effective because pupils were shown how to improve their skills. They were asked to evaluate their work and look for ways to improve it, and made very good progress as a result. Sketchbooks are used very well for developing skills and ideas. Pupils make good use of their artistic skills in other subjects, for example, the carefully observed Greek vases and the 'Up in the Air' paintings of balloons, birds and butterflies. The large illustrations of harvest displays in the hall showed a steady development of pupils' skills from year to year, from the nursery children's collage of bees to the detailed individual pattern work Year 6 pupils put together to create an Islamic landscape. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection, when weaknesses in the provision for art were identified.

236. There were no opportunities to observe **design and technology** lessons during the inspection, although they are timetabled on a regular basis in all classes. Judgements are based on discussions with teachers, on a scrutiny of pupils' previously-completed work and teachers' planning, and on an evaluation of the work on display. The evidence indicates that the standards attained by pupils are in line with what is expected for their ages and that they make satisfactory progress. During Year 6, pupils undertook a project to design and build models for a fairground. They considered appearance and function effectively at the proposal stage, and used appropriately labelled sketches to show detail. Their work shows that they had developed sound skills in exploring and testing a range of materials, and made accurate judgements about the suitability of different materials for a particular purpose. They evaluated their own products well, and carried out improvements. The policy for the subject is due to be reviewed. The scheme of work is based on nationally recommended guidance, and provides appropriately for pupils' skills to develop.

237. No lessons were observed in **geography** or **history**, and so judgements are based on the evidence of curriculum planning, discussions with teachers and pupils' previously completed work. This indicated that pupils make satisfactory progress in geography and good progress in history. Pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected for their age in geography, and above expectations in history. Pupils have done more work relating to history than to geography, which is why they do better in this subject.

238. Both subjects are taught largely through well-planned themes which cover several other areas of the curriculum as well. For example, pupils develop their skills in English through the wide variety of written tasks set in history, and survey work in geography contributes to pupils' skills in numeracy. Teachers make extensive use of homework projects to develop pupils' knowledge during Key Stage 2. Challenging tasks are set, and very good information is provided to guide pupils' independent research. The pupils' good response to this work, and the support of their parents, contributes much to their progress, particularly as these subjects are given relatively little lesson time this school year due to the school's prioritising the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The history curriculum is planned well to develop pupils' historical knowledge and skills systematically. Resources for history are good, and are well used. In particular, pupils have good opportunities to learn from historical evidence. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils have the chance to examine and try on Victorian clothing. Theme days, which focus on historical periods, are much enjoyed by pupils. The curriculum is further extended by visits to places of historical interest, which usually also offer opportunities for geographical work. For instance, Key Stage 2 pupils made very good models of the Bewl Water area, as part of a study of the area. In geography, pupils develop a sound knowledge of different places during both key stages, making increasingly detailed comparisons. Pupils fill in maps by labelling and colouring them, but have too few opportunities to develop their skills in drawing maps of their own. Their work in environmental studies, for example towards the 'Green Action' competition, is well-planned and has led to some work of high quality being produced.

239. In the lessons observed, pupils made good progress in **music** because their response was good. They listened well, and joined in singing and playing with obvious enjoyment. They have attained the standards expected for their ages. At Key Stage 1, pupils sing tunefully in assembly. They clap a rhythm and keep the beat successfully. They watched the puppeteers' performance of 'Peter and the Wolf' attentively, and could remember the characters when listening to the music again in a later lesson. At Key Stage 2, the older pupils sustained a part well when singing a round, and have learned to write rhythm patterns in their music books. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a variety of musical instruments, and to play together in the school's orchestra. The recorder group is making very good progress, especially in reading music and using musical terms confidently.

240. The school has recently employed a specialist music teacher for one day a week to teach all classes, enabling pupils' knowledge and skills to be developed systematically from year to year. The teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory. Music lessons were well planned, with a good variety of activities such as listening to different types of music, singing, clapping rhythms and playing instruments. Pupils are taught the correct musical vocabulary and to read music. Music from different times and cultures is played at assemblies, which contributes to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Specialist instrumental teaching and performances further enrich the provision made for music.

241. Pupils make good progress in **physical education** during both key stages, and their attainment is above what is expected for their ages. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils devised a variety of ways to travel across mats on various parts of their bodies, with good control of their movements. They showed agility and control in jumping and landing. In dance, they moved

confidently and used their imagination to create interesting body shapes using hoops. Older pupils used their gymnastics skills well in making sequences of movements when working in small groups. In dance, they responded imaginatively to music and worked with co-ordination and poise. Pupils of all ages were enthusiastic, and worked hard to improve their skills. They listened well, concentrated hard, and worked safely as their behaviour was very good. Their progress is helped by the specialist teaching of dance and gymnastics.

242. Teaching was usually good, and sometimes very good, in the lessons observed. Each element of the lesson was planned in detail. Lessons were well paced with an appropriate warm up, well-developed progressive activities, and a calm ending. Coaching points enabled pupils to improve their performance. An appropriate amount of time was given to each activity, giving pupils adequate time for practice. Praise and encouragement were used well. Physically disabled pupils were given every encouragement and support, and so joined in the lessons well. Pupils' enthusiasm for physical education is indicated by their good participation in extra-curricular activities and competitive sport.

243. The strengths in these subjects have been maintained since the last inspection, and satisfactory improvements have been made to the areas of weakness. The available evidence shows that the under-achievement which was previously reported is no longer a concern as pupils make better progress. Teaching is much more consistently effective, and the improved curriculum planning is being implemented well. Standards are higher, particularly in history. In this subject, the improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school is well-placed to continue the improvement in these subjects.

244. **Swimming:** the inspection of this school included a focused review of swimming, which is reported here. The school makes very good provision for pupils to learn to swim. Pupils of all ages have regular swimming lessons during the summer term, using the school pool. The older pupils have also benefited from weekly lessons at a local pool. This regular teaching of swimming enables all to make steady progress and to achieve the standards expected by the National Curriculum. Additionally, physically disabled pupils go swimming each week at a nearby hydrotherapy pool. Pupils' learning is planned well, and an appropriate amount of curricular time is given to swimming. The school takes care that the swimming activities are well organised, and that pupils' progress is assessed systematically. Other opportunities for pupils to take part in swimming activities are good. In particular, the older pupils compete in competitive galas, pupils can attend swimming activities after school in the summer, and the pool is open to local families during the summer holiday. Swimming was not taught during the term of the inspection, and so the quality of teaching could not be judged.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

245. The inspection was carried out over a period of four days by a team of four inspectors who spent a total of fourteen days in the school. Thirty-four parents attended the parents' meeting prior to the inspection, and a questionnaire was returned by the parents of 107 pupils. This information from parents was used by the inspectors to guide their work. For most of their time in the school, the inspectors visited classes and talked with individuals and groups of pupils. Fifty lessons or part-lessons were observed, taking thirty-six hours altogether. The work of a sample of pupils from each class was evaluated, and pupils from most classes were heard reading. A sample of pupils from each year group discussed their work and experience in the school with the inspectors, who also held many informal discussions with pupils in lessons and at other times. Planned discussions were held with teachers, the headteacher and other staff and six governors. Many documents were scrutinised, including school policies, planning, and records.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	198	10	87	11
Nursery Unit	21	0	9	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	9.76
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked each week	248

Qualified teachers (Nursery class)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Education support staff (Nursery class)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	55
Average class size:	28

Financial data

Financial year:	1998-99
	£
Total Income	351,729
Total Expenditure	342,064
Expenditure per pupil	1,669
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,429
Balance carried forward to next year	30,094

The above table excludes the additional grant received by the school for the physically disabled pupils. The funding for the physically disabled pupils was £7,948 per pupil in 1998-99, a total of £79,480. Expenditure was £7,894 per pupil. £2,298 was brought forward from the previous year, and a balance of £3,884 was carried forward to the next year.

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

159

Number of questionnaires returned:

107

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	77	22	1	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	61	34	3	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	21	34	43	2	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	38	51	10	1	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	26	60	14	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	37	52	11	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	38	49	11	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	16	45	32	7	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	55	38	5	1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	44	47	9	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	64	34	2	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

- The school provides a high standard of education.
- The quality of teaching and care provided by staff is very high.
- Children with physical disabilities and special educational needs are taught and cared for very well indeed.