

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHACKMORE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
(VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) FIRST
SCHOOL**

Buckingham

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110410

Headteacher: Mrs S. Hughes

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. E. Hall
21750

Dates of inspection: 13-16th March 2000

Inspection number: 197155

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4-9
Gender of pupils:	mixed
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Postcode:	MK18 5JE
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Hornby
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr E. Langford	Lay inspector		Equal opportunities Attitudes Parents
Mr C. Scola	Team inspector	English Information technology Geography History Music Religious education	Special educational needs Curriculum Care of pupils

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chackmore Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School is situated on the rural edge of Buckingham. The school serves an area of mainly privately owned housing. The majority of children attend the on-site playgroup and pre-school and then attend as full time pupils from the beginning of the term of their fifth birthday. There are currently three pupils under the age five. Attainment of children on entry to the school is generally above average in early speaking and listening and in social development, and average in reading, writing, number, physical and creative development.

The school has 62 pupils which is much smaller than average. There has been a slight fall in the number of pupils on roll in the last 3 years. The age range of pupils in the main school is from 4 – 9. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (6%) is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (19%) is average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. There is a very high proportion of children from high social class households. The school is organised into 3 classes, a mixed R/Y1 class, a Y2 class and a Y3/4 class. The school is not required to set targets for 2000, as there are no pupils in the school aged 11. The headteacher was appointed this term and all the other teaching staff and school secretary were appointed in the previous term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school that is undergoing a period of rapid improvement. This follows a very unsettled period of decline and staff changes. During this period the rate of improvement has been unsatisfactory. The leadership of the newly appointed headteacher is very good and with the good standard of teaching this is adding stability to the school and helping to raise standards of attainment. Overall standards are average in all areas except in reading, science, history and geography where standards are above what is expected of pupils at the age of seven and when they leave the school at the age of nine. With the income per head of pupils being above average and standards mostly average the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment in reading, science, history and geography is above average for the age of the pupils.
- Teaching is good with a significant proportion being very good.
- The leadership and management of the head teacher and key staff in re-focussing the priorities of school development upon the raising of attainment is very good.
- The attitudes of pupils, their behaviour and relationships are all good.
- Parents are supportive of the school and the contribution they make to pupils' learning is good.
- Welfare procedures and the promotion of appropriate behaviour is good.

What could be improved

- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of planning, teaching and learning;
- The procedures for assessment and the use of assessment information to ensure that planning meets the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment ;
- The effectiveness of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and in acting as a critical friend to the school by holding it to account for the decisions made;
- The use of all available accommodation to support the development of the curriculum and the standards of attainment of pupils;
- The school's reporting of the standards of attainment in end of key stage assessments achieved in the school, which currently do not meet statutory requirements.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The previous inspection of the school in November 1996 indicated that at that period the school was very successful. Since this time a period of decline followed where standards of attainment fell and many aspects of leadership and management remained static.

The school has made insufficient improvement in updating long term planning structures, including schemes of work and in ensuring opportunities for evaluation reflect the use of systematic assessment. The use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning to match work to pupils' abilities is ineffective. The revision of the framework for school development planning to identify criteria which impacted upon teaching and learning was not successfully achieved.

School improvement has been unsatisfactory. This is in the key areas identified in the previous inspection, the decline in standards achieved and the in-effectiveness of several areas of leadership and management. The governing body has been slow to develop their roles in the strategic management of the school. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher, teaching and administration staff, very rapid improvements have recently been made in these areas and the capacity for improvement is now good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Assessment information indicates that in relation to schools with similar characteristics in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the age of seven, standards in reading were below average. Standards in writing were well below average and standards in mathematics were amongst the lowest 5% of such schools in the country. Assessment information indicates that trends in attainment have fallen in recent years in all three areas but most particularly in mathematics.

Inspection findings are that there have been recent significant improvements in the progress pupils make across the school. This is predominantly linked to the good quality of teaching and planning for the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Standards in reading are now above average, with standards in writing and mathematics being average. Whilst there are no national assessment procedures for pupils when they leave the school at the age of nine the inspection confirms that standards show the same pattern as that in Key Stage 1.

Strengths in attainment include the good level of reading skill of many pupils. This provides a very firm foundation to support standards in other curriculum areas. Standards in science are above average and this indicates a significant recent improvement. Standards in information technology are generally average across the school although being less developed in areas of modelling and control than in other areas. Standards in religious education are in line with those of the locally agreed syllabus. With the exception of history and geography where attainment is above average, standards in all other subjects are average. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Whilst the school does not have to set targets for attainment and standards are not always as high as they should be, the pupils attainment is improving at a good rate.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in and out of the classroom, with only a small percentage of the older pupils occasionally lacking self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school and work well together. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good.
Attendance	Good. Pupils arrive at school in time for their lessons. A small proportion of family's take holidays in term time, which affects their progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
24 lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good with a significant proportion being very good. During the inspection 29% of teaching was very good, 50% was good and 21% was satisfactory. No teaching was unsatisfactory. This indicates that there is a higher proportion of teaching that is very good than at the time of the previous inspection. Very good teaching is seen at the end of Key Stage 1 and sometimes in Key Stage 2. The teaching of English and science is good. The good quality of teaching of literacy skills is having a beneficial effect on the quality of learning across the curriculum especially through the development of reading skills. The teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory. Teaching generally meets the needs of the range of attainment across the school with flexibility in groupings for pupils of higher or lower attainment to work in discreet groups. Most lessons are well planned and organised and the content is presented in an interesting way, which motivates pupils to make good progress in their learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, but there is a lesser amount of support for these pupils than is often seen.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum for pupils and generally meets statutory requirements. However, curriculum development especially in areas of physical education, music and some aspects of English, is affected by limitations in the use of available accommodation. Planning for the under fives is not based upon the recognised planning areas but upon the National Curriculum. This is not satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The work of the classroom support assistant is now linked to the planning of lessons and the quality of support is satisfactory. However, individual education plans and record keeping have failed to clarify specific areas for development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education. Provision for spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good in each area.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for supporting the welfare of pupils and promoting good behaviour. However, the procedures for, and use of, assessment are under-developed and unsatisfactory.

The school has established good relationships with parents and the support provided has a beneficial impact upon learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher is beginning to make a significant impact upon improving the management of the school. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff in the establishment of corporate working practices is now very good. The school has recently re-established the role of curriculum co-ordinators and staff have begun to undertake these responsibilities with enthusiasm and understanding.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Whilst very supportive of the school governors have been slow to develop their role in strategic management and forward planning. They have not been effective in accurately identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Governors do not fulfil all statutory duties in the reporting of assessment information.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall with areas of strength and weakness. The current evaluation of school performance by the headteacher and staff is good. However, the school's evaluation of overall performance until very recently has been weak and lacked rigour. The school has not yet established the principles of best value in financial management.
The strategic use of resources	The use of school accommodation to support curriculum development and the teaching and learning of pupils is unsatisfactory. For at least half the week the playgroup and pre-school group uses a large proportion of school facilities. The use of other resources including staff, computers and books is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents feel their children like school and are happy to attend. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or concerns Most parents are satisfied with the standards of work achieved and appreciate the many recent changes in school management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many parents feel that the school does not offer an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Several parents do not feel that they are well informed of the progress their children make.

The inspection team largely supports the views of parents. Pupils appear happy and parents have good relationships with the school staff. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is appropriate and the school is keen to extend these activities. The school has already begun to involve parents more in discussing the progress of pupils, especially those with special educational needs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of the children on entry to the school in the term of their fifth birthday is variable. There is no nursery in the immediate area, most children attend the local pre-school group. Baseline information indicates that attainment in speaking and listening and social development is slightly above the Buckinghamshire average. Attainment in early reading, writing, number, physical and creative areas is broadly in line with the local average. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is varied. By the age of five attainment is in line with what is expected of this age with several children having attainment that is above average in areas of development including language and literacy.
2. The standard of reading at the age of seven and when the pupils leave the school at the age of nine is above average. Standards in writing across the school are average, as are those in mathematics. This indicates an improvement from the standards attained in the National Curriculum tests in the last two years.
3. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests, the attainment of pupils in reading was average when compared to all schools but, when compared to schools with similar characteristics, was below average. There have been no significant improvements in the attainment of boys or girls. Whilst the proportion of pupils with higher than average attainment in reading was close to the national average standards have not been high enough.
4. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum writing tests the attainment of pupils was below that seen in schools nationally and well below that in similar schools. This showed a fall from writing standards in 1998. In 1999 no pupils in Year 2 reached the higher levels in writing tests. Several pupils in this year group now have attainment that is above average. This indicates previous underachievement but current progress that is good.
5. The end of key stage mathematics tests show that in 1999 attainment was well below that seen nationally. When compared to schools with similar characteristics attainment in mathematics was amongst the lowest 5 percent in the country. The proportion of pupils with attainment above average was well below average. To a large extent this reflected the standards seen in 1998 which were also well below average.
6. There is limited assessment information available to indicate why standards have fallen or risen in recent years. The school has only limited records to collate and analyse data to set targets. However, the previous two Year 2 classes were both in a very large mixed age class for their first two years in school. There were then several changes in the arrangements to teach the Year 2 pupils. Whilst there has been a slightly higher number of pupils with special educational needs in some recent year groups than in others there have been no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Similarly the proportion of pupils on the schools register of special educational need is in line with that seen nationally. The recent improvement in standards has partially been brought about by the consistency of recent arrangements for teaching pupils, particularly those in Year 2. Teaching arrangements of some cohorts have been fluid with pupils sometimes taught alongside those in other classes. Organisational changes and a lack of continuity have not always consistently supported the progress of these pupils. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is also having a significant impact upon the quality of

learning.

7. In the last two years the school has introduced the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. Initially this made little impact upon raising attainment in these areas. However, recent improvements in the planning and teaching in these areas has begun to raise standards. The schools implementation of the strategies now provides a good framework for the development of appropriate skills. The good standards in reading enable the pupils to make adequate, and often good, progress in other subjects. Whilst in some year groups the attainment of girls has been below that of boys there is no significant reason for variations. Pupils with special educational needs make suitable progress. There are no formal procedures to identify gifted and talented pupils. The school does not set targets for an improvement in attainment as there are no pupils aged 11 in the school.
8. Throughout the school most pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills and many pupils use a wide and interesting vocabulary. Nearly all pupils have a good level of interest and competency in reading. Many pupils develop a good range of strategies that give them confidence to tackle unfamiliar words. All pupils take home reading books and library books on a regular basis. Most pupils share these with their families and make good progress in their reading. The school makes good use of volunteer helpers to hear pupils read on a regular basis as well as within Literacy Hour sessions, this is having a positive impact upon the quality of learning. The development of writing skills is satisfactory. Handwriting is reasonably well formed and spelling is appropriate. Pupils throughout the school undertake a good range of writing activities for different purposes across the curriculum. For instance in the reception and Year 1 class the pupils record their observations of a broad bean's growth in a Bean Diary. This supports the development of writing skills and scientific observation.
9. The development of numeracy skills is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils learn how to use numbers of increasing size in an appropriate range of activities. However, the development of mental mathematics skills is not as effective as are formal calculation skills. Pupils do not gain as much fun or confidence in mental calculations and playing with numbers as is often seen. Pupils make good use of numeracy skills across the curriculum as when making tally and frequency charts of what noises in school are acceptable and unacceptable. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of shapes and measures is average.
10. Attainment in science throughout the school is above average. The pupils enjoy a well-considered range of activities that involve cross-curricular work, which is relevant to their own experiences. Older pupils understand how to conduct a fair test .
11. Standards in information technology are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, with pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 making more regular use of computers than those in reception and Year 1. Pupils make good use of appropriate data handling and multi-media programs to support work in science and geography. Several pupils extend the skills taught in school when using computers at home.
12. Attainment in history and geography is above the expectations for these subjects often linked to the pupils' well-developed skills in reading and the well considered opportunities to write for a specific purpose. Attainment in all other areas is average. However, attainment in music, physical education and drama is restricted by the unavailability of the school hall for at least half of the school week. This not only limits opportunities within lessons but also for activities such as choir or gymnastics club during some lunch or after schools times. Progress in art whilst satisfactory is limited by some lack of subject knowledge.

13. The current average standards in writing indicate a fall from the standards of the previous inspection. Standards in mathematics remain as previous though standards in science have improved. The level of challenge provided for pupils is generally good throughout the school and especially in Year 2; this helps pupils to make good progress in many subjects. Pupils understand what they are asked to do and they are able to build on what they know, understand and can do.
14. The school has little assessment information to use as indicators of whether progress has been continuous. There has been limited use of formal assessment to track the progress made or to indicate where pupils may require additional support. The new headteacher, who is also the special needs co-ordinator, has rightly identified the need to improve assessment procedures across the school in order for information to be available to support the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. Satisfactory support is provided for such pupils with the classroom support assistant now following specific planning. There are currently few procedures to measure the progress made by gifted and talented pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils enjoy coming to school and display good attitudes to the school and to their work. They listen well and many demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work and this has a positive impact upon learning. The great majority of pupils show themselves to be well-motivated and enthusiastic learners able to sustain good levels of concentration during lessons. Most show a good degree of confidence and self-discipline in undertaking their work and collaborate well with others in group and paired activities.
16. The standard of the pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good and helps to promote the developing good relationships between staff and pupils. However, on occasion a minority of the older boys become easily distracted and indulge in behaviour in the classroom that requires the focussed attention of the teacher to maintain lesson pace and progress. The informal behaviour management procedures operated by the teachers and the associated systems of rewards and sanctions, are clearly understood by pupils. They are applied in a consistent manner by staff and are proving to be very effective in managing the overall behaviour and ongoing personal development of the pupils in the school.
17. There have been no pupil exclusions since the previous inspection and no evidence of any bullying in the school. Pupils are aware of the need to inform adults of any oppressive behaviour and incidents are quickly identified and swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved.
18. Pupils co-operate well together and display good levels of consideration to each other and to adults in the school. All demonstrate by their actions that they know right from wrong. Many pupils display a natural sensitivity and awareness to the needs of others and good examples were seen of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils, in particular during lunchtime and in the playground.
19. Of worthy note are the good relationships that exist between pupils and adults in the school with, for example, friendly greetings being regularly exchanged and doors being held open for others to pass through. Pupils happily take turns without question, and are seen to willingly share and treat property and learning resources with care. In particular, the pupils demonstrate very good levels of respect for the values and beliefs considered by others as important to their lifestyle. This welcoming atmosphere of consideration, care and tolerance of others permeates the whole school.

20. Good opportunities are provided for the personal development of pupils during their time in school. A range of whole school responsibilities are undertaken by the older pupils who help staff at lunchtime and clear up and tidy away at the end of the lunch period. Of particular note is the support the older pupils provide to the younger pupils through paired reading and computer related learning activities. These activities benefit both sets of pupils and enhance their personal development and learning opportunities.
21. The good attitudes, relationships and behaviour patterns demonstrated by the pupils have been maintained since the previous inspection and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' social and academic progress and development.
22. Pupil attendance at school is good and shows improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils arrive punctually and settle quickly in class so that lessons can start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The teaching of pupils throughout the school is good and this has a significant impact upon the quality of pupils' learning. The teaching of the small number of children under five, within the mixed reception and Year1 class is good, although not yet based upon the required areas of learning for this age group.
24. Teaching in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good with the best mostly in Year 2. The sample of pupils work from earlier in the current year indicates that whilst teaching in some subject areas including history and geography has been good that teaching in other areas including mathematics has been less effective and has had an impact upon the rate of progress that pupils made. However, recent staff changes and a significant focus upon the quality of planning have improved the quality of teaching.
25. In the lessons observed teaching was very good in 29 percent of lessons, good in 50 percent and satisfactory in 21percent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The amount of very good teaching has risen from six percent in the previous inspection to 29 percent. Indicating that the quality of teaching has substantially improved.
26. The quality of teaching in lower Key Stage 1 is good. There is a good level of challenge in the activities with good emphasis on the development of early reading and writing skills. The planning of group activities is well considered and effective in providing opportunities for pupils of similar ability to work together, this ensures that the level of challenge is relevant to pupils' understanding. Tasks are set clearly and the teacher makes apparent what pupils' are expected to do. In a good discussion, about aspects of the past, the teacher makes good use of questions and a collection of old toys that are important to her or other friends of the school. This made a big impression on pupils who subsequently handled the toys with great care, saying to each other "be very careful they are delicate". The management of pupils is good and ensures that pupils stay on task to complete their work. Very occasionally the lack of emphasis on the standards of presentation of work results in poorly formed writing or untidy artwork.
27. Teaching in Year 2 is very good and this significantly impacts upon the progress pupils make. Two skilled teachers who both have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve provide the teaching. They have friendly but effective management of the pupils. The organisation of teaching is well considered to make the most of subject specialisms. The knowledge and understanding of these teachers is complementary and is very good. Both teachers have well-established relationships with pupils and high expectations that motivate the pupils to try hard. This is well illustrated in very good music teaching where

the class teacher's subject knowledge enables the pupils to make very good progress in recognising the contrasts of fast and slow through the development of the beating out of a rhythm on their knees and on percussion instruments. Similarly very effective teaching is seen in a religious education lesson where children discuss things that are special to different people. The good use of humour motivates the pupils to concentrate well and enjoy looking at the teacher's collection of family wedding photographs, trying on a wedding veil and studying artefacts from other religions.

28. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. Two part-time teachers work and plan very conscientiously together. There are very good links between the lessons of either teacher who spend considerable time in ensuring the planning of lessons builds on previous skills. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and make good use of appropriate vocabulary to enhance learning in the range of subjects. This is exemplified in a very effective literacy activity where pupils extend their understanding of words with opposite meanings by writing alternatives to traditional stories. The tasks offer a good level of challenge to pupils with a range of attainment so that when using a game lower attaining pupils identify words such as in and out whilst higher attaining pupils use interior and exterior. The excellent use of a range of strategies to encourage pupils to respond included an amazing range of facial expressions, which maintained the pupils' absolute attention. Similarly in a good science lesson the teacher makes good use of questions to check pupils understanding and encourage them to use correct descriptive language when identifying the properties of solids and liquids.
29. The newly formed staff team have all started work in the school in the last six months and work with the support of a long serving classroom assistant. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, who shares a heavy teaching commitment, the staff team have worked extremely hard to establish corporate planning and teaching routines that now fully address all subjects of the National Curriculum. The staff team are very supportive of the new headteacher and newly introduced teaching routines. There is a very clear sense of a team with flexible and mutually supportive working practices that make the most of subject expertise. Staff share a determination to improve standards of attainment. All teachers share high expectations of the pupils, both in terms of attainment and behaviour. The planning of lessons is good and there is a good level of understanding of meeting the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress. Teachers make consistently good use of questions to spur the pupils on in their thinking. The methods employed are all having a significant impact upon the improved consistency of teaching.
30. Staff have a good understanding of developing the skills of writing across the curriculum and of the need not to rely on photocopied materials. This is helping to develop pupils' skills in writing. The quality of teaching during literacy hours is good. The teaching of reading is good and parents appreciate the progress made in often daily opportunities for many pupils to read in addition to sharing texts. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately. However, as yet the mental mathematics 'warm up' activities are not always as effective as they could be. Summing up sessions at the end of lessons are usually appropriate although on occasion little use is made of pupil demonstration or detailed discussion of what they have found out. The overall quality of the teaching of literacy activities is better than that of numeracy.
31. Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory support from the classroom support assistant. This is now planned by the class teachers and ensures that such activities are relevant to the curriculum. However, on occasion this support is not fully effective in that the adults complete the pupils work, such as painting for them. The completion or 'improvement' of work by adults does little to raise pupils' self-esteem. The school has few procedures to support the teaching of gifted and talented pupils.

32. As a result of the consistently good quality of teaching, particularly in Year 2, pupils make good progress in their learning. The rate of progress made by pupils has recently improved and almost all pupils now make as much progress as you would expect. A consistent strength of the teaching is the management of pupils. The school generally makes good use of homework to support project work as seen in recently produced book reviews for World Book Day. The recent improvement in the proportion of very good teaching and the stability in teaching arrangements has had a beneficial influence on the raising of attainment. Parents have already expressed appreciation of the hard work of teachers in bringing about stability and high standards after a period of many changes.

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

33. The curriculum for children under five is broad, balanced and relevant. Whilst planning is not based upon the nationally recognised Desirable Learning Outcomes, it includes all the areas of learning for children under five, apart from outdoor play, where resources are unsatisfactory.
34. The quality of the school curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. At Key Stage 1 and by the time the pupils leave, the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum in which all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education are included. This has a beneficial effect on the pupils' progress and attainment. Health and the use and misuse of medicines are taught as part of science and personal and social education. The governors have decided that sex education is not to be taught explicitly except where relevant.
35. The school has begun to re-develop policies and some schemes of work to guide teachers in their planning and makes good use of the documents produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. At present, there are no schemes of work for art or music and the school has very recently put in place interim schemes. The development of long term planning through clearly identified topic cycles and schemes of work for all subject areas was a Key Issue in the previous inspection report. It is only very recently that the school has started to remedy this. The teachers' medium term planning is now good and the way in which part-time teachers ensure continuity of the pupils' learning by planning their lessons jointly, is especially good. Particular emphasis is given to the planning of literacy and numeracy and this ensures these areas, particularly literacy, are taught effectively.
36. The provision the school makes for the assessment and support of pupils with special needs is satisfactory. Effective procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs have been very recently implemented and are currently being developed. The special needs co-ordinator plans individual detailed work programmes that are beginning to have a positive impact on the progress of those pupils who have been identified. However, the quality of Individual Education Plans is variable.
37. The school makes good use of the resources in the community. It has strong links with the local playgroup. The expertise of parents and other local resources are well used, such as in pottery, music or sport. Visits take place throughout the school year to enrich the curriculum. Events such as dressing up as a favourite story character on World Book Day enhance pupils' learning. The school has good links with its secondary school and Stowe School, and the pupils enjoy various activities there and mutual benefit is gained from students on work experience.

38. There are opportunities for a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and the school has recently introduced lunchtime choir and recorder sessions. A football club and short tennis, run by parents, operate on two evenings a week and support the development of physical skills. During the school year, various seasonal activities take place. However, a considerable proportion of parents would appreciate more extra-curricular opportunities being available for the pupils.
39. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. The school makes good provision for the spiritual development of pupils. All pupils join in with prayers and hymns in school assemblies. Music is used effectively as a focus for contemplation and reflection such as when the playing of a flute to a composition by Bach "brought tears to my eyes," according to one pupil. Well-planned lessons in all areas of the curriculum stimulate the pupils' interest and create moments of excitement. The teachers value the pupils' ideas and through skilful questioning lead them to think seriously about other people's ideas and beliefs. The school makes good use of cross-curricular links to extend the pupils' sense of awe and wonder at the world in which they live.
40. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The pupils are taught how to distinguish right from wrong and their behaviour reflects this. Although currently there is no agreed code of conduct, each class having its own system, the school is in the process of drawing up a whole school approach to behaviour with an emphasis on positive reinforcement. There is also a weekly celebration of success of the pupils' achievements both in and out of school.
41. The provision for social development of the pupils is good. Pupils are taught to take responsibility from an early age and their help and collaboration ensures classroom and school routines are very smooth. Older pupils take responsibility for caring for the younger ones before school and during break and lunchtimes. The partnered reading and information technology scheme is particularly effective. There are very good links with the community where the pupils are involved in organising a party for the village's senior citizens making cakes and gifts as well as putting on a Christmas Concert. Over the year the school supports several charities.
42. The provision for cultural development of the pupils is good. The pupils' appreciation of their own and other cultures is furthered by lessons in art, music, history and geography. The school takes every opportunity to extend the pupils' appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures. The study of world religions such as Judaism and Hinduism is an important part of the religious education curriculum and helps develop the pupils' understanding and appreciation of a multi-cultural society.
43. The school makes good provision to support the equality of opportunity for pupils across the curriculum. Boys and girls have equal access to all activities and lower attaining pupils receive support to allow them to make appropriate progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school is a caring community where the provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety has created an atmosphere of security, harmony and well being which provides a strong foundation for raising standards. However the school's use of the hall in physical education, dance drama and music is limited by its multi-use and the intrusion of chairs, tables, bookshelves and other equipment into its potential teaching space. The poor storage facilities for physical education equipment require a disproportionate amount of attention to safety procedures by the teachers and pupils, to make the most effective use

of the hall during physical education lessons.

45. The parents report that they and their children feel supported by the school and almost all of them, responding to the parent questionnaire, report that they would find it easy to approach the school with any questions or problems to do with their children,
46. Relationships throughout the school are characterised by mutual respect enshrined in both the school's declared main aims and in its Mission Statement. The school knows its children well, aided by the support of parents, the community and the school itself.
47. The personal safety of the pupils is safeguarded by a comprehensive Health and Safety policy. This policy includes regular risk assessment, fire drills and procedures for identifying and reporting hazards around school. However, working practices do not always support safety. Staff are very aware of Child Protection Procedures. There is regular training and the school has good links with outside agencies. Accident procedures are very effective and four staff have first aid qualifications.
48. The effectiveness of the school's measures to monitor personal development is seen in the enthusiasm with which the pupils individually and collaboratively apply themselves to their work without direct supervision. The pupils are also very good at accepting responsibilities and readily share with others. The effectiveness of the school's measures for promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality is well demonstrated by good levels of attendance and punctuality. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the parental questionnaire stated that their children liked coming to school.
49. The school is in the process of updating the whole school approach to behaviour and currently there is no agreed code of conduct. Individually the teachers have very effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Their approach is not so much through the imposition of sanctions, as through rewarding good behaviour and encouraging consideration for others. This ensures that standards of behaviour throughout the school are high and that there are no instances of oppressive behaviour or bullying.
50. Procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. The lack of appropriate records and assessments to inform teachers about the pupils' past performance severely limits the teachers' ability to ensure curriculum planning is continuous and progressive. The school's arrangements for assessing and recording the pupils' attainment and progress, including those pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, are unsatisfactory. Apart from assessment when they enter the school and National Curriculum test results in Year 2, there is very little information about individual pupils long term attainment and progress. National Curriculum test results are not analysed so that areas of weakness can be remedied. The only exception is the pupil's annual school report, which does identify areas for development and sets some targets. The development of systematic assessment and planning were both Key Issues in the previous report and it is only very recently that the school has started to address these issues. The school meets the statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs and all pupils have access to the full curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school welcomes and encourages all parents to become fully involved in their children's learning and education. Teachers appreciate greatly the voluntary contribution of parents and helpers who provide a valuable input to the classroom activities of the pupils. These volunteers are well briefed and used effectively for the greater benefit of overall class learning and individual pupil development. The close working liaison that exists between the teachers and many of the parents has a significant impact on the continuity and quality of pupils' learning and the good progress the pupils make. This increasing level of parental involvement in the school helps to improve the children's learning and academic achievements.
52. Parents receive a good range of information about school and pupil related matters including for the induction of pupils new to the school. In response to parent requests the quality and timeliness of information circulated to parents has been improved and provides greater opportunities for parents to be fully aware of and involved in all aspects of their child's time in school. This includes a greater involvement of the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Good and effective arrangements are in place for parent and teacher consultation meetings to be held each term to discuss the progress made and pupil achievements especially in English and mathematics. Parents praise the extent to which teachers willingly listen and give time in responding to any queries or concerns raised with them about an individual pupil's progress.
53. No formal home-school agreements are in place and the governors' draft policy has recently been circulated to parents for comment. However the pupils' home reading books and homework are used well to provide parents with regular opportunities to review and comment on their child's progress and achievement. End-of-year progress reports are highly valued by parents and are detailed and informative about individual pupils' targets and achievements, including pupils' own comments on their work and attainment in school. However, several parents do not feel that they are well informed about how their children are getting on at school. The school has very recently extended the links with and information for parents of pupils with special educational needs.
54. The ongoing development of the school's partnership arrangements with parents helps to promote the good name of the school and provides significant benefits and enrichment to the pupils learning environment and personal development opportunities. Parents are particularly appreciative of the induction procedures for new pupils.
55. Good and improving opportunities have been established for the development of closer working partnerships with parents to extend their full and regular involvement in all aspects of their children's education and personal development.
56. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive a good quality of care and education during their time in school. Parents are pleased with the standards and high expectations for good behaviour set by the teachers.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. In the previous inspection many aspects of leadership and relationships were very effective. Since this period the school has undergone a steady decline in both the standards achieved and in management practices. Whilst the school undoubtedly has several areas that are now strengths the organisation and recording of many aspects of school activities including pupils work had many gaps and the sharing of information has

been inconsistent. There are now several areas of strength but some aspects that remain under-developed and unsatisfactory. The current impact of the leadership and management of the new headteacher and key staff in identifying areas of weakness is very good.

58. The complete change of all teaching staff led to some parental concern. However, all staff appointed have very quickly adjusted to their roles and have a very marked commitment to the school and enthusiasm to improve standards.
59. The staff have worked very hard to re-focus the educational direction of the school upon raising standards. Good improvement is being made. The headteacher has already carried out an audit of school systems and produced a short-term school improvement plan, which accurately identifies major areas for development. However, many of these areas require substantial improvement. Governors and parents were largely unaware that the school had been slow to adopt many current management practices.
60. Whilst the school has started to make improvements in many areas as yet the monitoring and evaluation of standards of planning, teaching and learning is at an early stage and is not fully effective. Similarly the procedures for, and the use of, assessment information to inform planning is unsatisfactory. Whilst the school has begun to update schemes of work across the curriculum some of these do not reflect current national guidelines and are out of date.
61. The staff have already begun to implement many identified improvements. The school now has re-established the role of subject co-ordinators. The school has moved rapidly on the need to improve information technology and is now working as part of a national project. The staff have already implemented new short term planning in the form of lesson plans and identified the need to improve schemes of work, including art and music, through a planned programme of in-service activities. The headteacher has also started the process of monitoring numeracy and literacy teaching and the curriculum.
62. The staff have begun to monitor informal targets and improvement through daily assessment and further record keeping, and are at a very early stage of building up individual pupil and class profiles. An induction programme of support for the newly qualified teacher has been extended and work has begun on introducing the early learning goals for children under five. The headteacher has begun the process of assembling information for a staff handbook and an updated school brochure. The headteacher and staff have also very rightly extended discussions on the priorities for the use of accommodation including the school hall and old kitchen. This process of the identification of areas for school improvement has been well considered and whilst changes have been swift they have been thoughtful and accurately identify priority areas for development.
63. The special educational needs co-ordinator has identified that the assessment and record keeping procedures for pupils on the school's register of special educational need required considerable improvement. This has begun and the school has started to involve parents in these discussions. Teaching and support staff have begun the process of improving the quality and use of individual education plans.
64. The headteacher and local advisor have begun to monitor the quality of teaching. This has been valuable in identifying which aspects of literacy and numeracy activities have been most and least successful. The school is keen to extend these activities and give such opportunities to subject co-ordinators. The school has rightly identified the need to improve teaching skills in information technology and art.

65. Many areas of leadership and management are now very good. These include the reflection of the school's aims and values in its work, the delegation and contribution of staff with specific responsibilities, the shared staff commitment and capacity to succeed and the induction of staff new to the school. The capacity for further improvement in these areas is good. However, there are many areas of residual weakness that remain. The school was very slow to make improvements in the areas identified as key issues in the previous inspection and improvement since this time has been unsatisfactory.
66. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is unsatisfactory. The school has had the support of several long-serving governors who share a very caring commitment to the school and its pupils. Some governors are well informed of the day-to-day life of the school and visit the school on a regular basis to provide much welcome classroom support. This has been particularly valuable in helping pupils to make good progress in reading and is much appreciated by staff. However, some governors have found it difficult to prioritise areas for development and decide between competing priorities in an objective manner. Several governors are not well informed as to the procedural responsibilities that they are now required to undertake. This is in several areas including strategic and financial management. Governors have been very slow to develop the role of critical friend of the school by holding it to account for the decisions made. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and taking effective action is unsatisfactory.
67. Several years ago the governing body made the decision not to report the standards achieved by pupils, in end of key stage tests, because of the relatively small groups of pupils. There is no formal record of the governing body re-visiting this decision even in the light of legislation that requires this information to be available to parents. The school no longer has small cohorts of pupils and has failed to inform parents of such information. This is unsatisfactory and does not ensure the parents have the information that they are legally entitled to.
68. The governing body has also been slow to ensure the very best use is made of all available space in the school. Whilst information is available to show that the school has made attempts to seek funding for the development of the old kitchen area this has not been pursued with rigour and governors have been very accepting of the difficulties they encountered. The school has until very recently been very slow to adapt to curriculum changes and to provide the best accommodation possible to support teaching in the range of subjects. Currently more than one third of the school accommodation is out of use for the pupils for at least half the week. In the past, the school has prioritised the development of community links through the expansion of pre-school facilities at the expense of curriculum development for the pupils that the school is built to serve. The newly established staff team has very rightly identified this issue as an important area for improvement. Whilst there are many benefits from the school maintaining on-site early learning or nursery provision the school is now rightly aware that the use of all available accommodation to support the curriculum is a major priority and legal requirement.
69. The school has a good number of teachers who are suitably qualified and with a range of experience. There is adequate accommodation and resources, with a satisfactory number of computers. The school library is appropriately stocked. The lack of suitable outdoor play equipment limits the development of physical skills for children under five.
70. The recently appointed headteacher has made a good start in ensuring that the school makes best strategic use of its resources and has put in place effective financial planning. An initial audit of the school's strengths and weaknesses has been undertaken and effective short and long term school improvement plans drawn up. These very clearly set out the main priorities for the school, both for the immediate future, and in the longer term. They are carefully costed and priorities are set. Responsibilities, time deadlines and how the school intends to monitor and judge the success of these

initiatives are clearly documented.

71. The finance committee meet regularly to monitor spending, and decisions are presented to the full governing body. But the governors lack a clear overview of the school's finances and until very recently governors were unaware of any formal success criteria to judge the effectiveness of budget decisions. This has made it difficult for governors to be aware of whether best value for expenditure is assured. The school has only very recently exploited the opportunities presented by the availability of such grants as the National Grid for Learning. An auditor's report was unavailable at the time of the inspection, but the school is taking action to remedy this. The recently appointed secretary very efficiently carries out the day-to-day administration. The school has already begun to apply the principles of best value to its use of resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to further improve the quality of education that the school offers to its pupils, and to accelerate the rate of improvement, the headteacher and staff together with the governing body should:

1) develop an effective system to enable the school to monitor and evaluate the quality of planning, teaching and learning in order to further raise attainment across the school by:

- requiring subject co-ordinators to undertake rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures so that they can influence standards and pupils learning in the subjects for which they hold responsibility. (paragraphs 60, 62, 101).

2) develop a whole school approach to assessment that supports the raising of attainment by:

- ensuring that pupils attainment is assessed regularly and systematically; (paragraphs 14, 50, 63)
- extending the use of assessment information in informing future planning to meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress, including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. (paragraphs 50, 63, 90, 101, 109, 136)

3) extend the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school by:

- ensuring that the governing body meet all statutory requirements, including the reporting of the standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1; (paragraph 67)
- considerably extending the involvement of the governing body in school development planning, strategic development and the monitoring and evaluation of the standards achieved throughout the school; (paragraphs 66, 68, 71)
- making optimum use of all available school accommodation to maximise curriculum development in the range of subjects of the National Curriculum. (paragraphs 68, 82, 137, 142)

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

- Continue to update schemes of work on a regular basis to ensure their relevance to national guidelines and school priorities; (paragraph 35, 60).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	29%	50%	21%	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR- Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		62
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR- Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		8

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance 1998/99

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	99 (98)	12 (12)	7 (7)	19 (19)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9 (7)	12 (10)	12 (10)
	Girls	2 (4)	4 (6)	3 (5)
	Total	11 (11)	16 (16)	15 (15)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	54 (58)	84 (73)	75 (74)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10 (12)	10 (12)	11 (11)
	Girls	4 (4)	5 (3)	6 (3)
	Total	14 (16)	15 (15)	17 (14)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (84)	79 (79)	89 (74)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	60
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year – 0

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	20

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	23

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	124,208
Total expenditure	127,656
Expenditure per pupil	1,850
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,060
Balance carried forward to next year	12,612

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

61

Number of questionnaires returned

42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	26	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	57	0	2	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	52	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	48	12	2	2
The teaching is good.	43	45	2	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	48	24	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	52	2	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	30	2	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	38	33	10	0	19
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	5	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5	26	62	2	5

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents are generally supportive of the school but indicate a wish for further extra-curricular activities and more information as to how their children are getting on at school.

Other issues raised by parents

Several parents indicate it was not possible to answer some questions, as staff are very new to the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

73. There are currently three children under the age of five who were admitted with two other children then under five at the beginning of this term. Most children attend the on-site playgroup and pre-school group. Children are admitted to a mixed age reception and Year 1 class. A newly qualified teacher is responsible for the class. Children under five also receive a small amount of support from a long serving classroom assistant. Baseline information is not readily available for all recent intakes of children. However, the information which is available, indicates attainment to be quite variable within year groups. On the whole attainment in speaking and listening and social development is slightly above average, whilst that in other areas of development are at the level expected for children of four. Inspection judgements are that the attainment of the children currently under five is in line with what is expected of children of this age. The planning for these children is not based upon the nationally agreed areas of learning for this age. On admission to the school children immediately begin work on the subjects of the National Curriculum. Whilst the curriculum is broadly satisfactory in some respects it limits the pupils opportunities for social, language and physical development.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

74. Children enter the school with positive attitudes to learning and are able to mix with others and share equipment happily. Induction procedures to support the integration of children into the class are good with developing links with pre-school and reception class staff. Children interact well with each other for example when observing the growth of their broad beans or when carefully examining a range of old toys. The class teacher has recently introduced a class shop and class office to encourage role-play activities to support social and language development. However, as yet there is no home corner or opportunities to use role-play clothing for such activities. Children feel secure and approach adults and ask for help. They move around the classroom confidently and enjoy taking part in assemblies and occasional activities in the school hall. The four and five year olds are happy to work on their own for periods of time and sustain their concentration well. The children tidy away as best they can at the end of sessions and make reasonable attempts at dressing themselves. The quality of teaching is good in this area as is the progress children make. In their personal and social development, the children are on course to exceed the expected desirable learning outcomes.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

75. Standards in language and literacy are in line with what is expected with a significant proportion of children exceeding the expected standard by the time they are five. Most are confident in speaking and can make their needs and ideas known to others when discussing old toys a reception child perseveres in bringing to the attention of anyone who will listen that he recognises the Flying Scotsman. Speaking skills are quite well promoted through class discussions although limited by the lack of some role play facilities. The school places a high priority upon the development of early reading skills. Children have access to a range of graded reading materials and are encouraged to take these, and a selection of library books, home on a regular basis and share this with their families. Adult helpers hear children read on a regular basis and many children make good progress in reading. From admission to the school children take part alongside older pupils in daily literacy hour activities. Children can write their first names unaided; their letters are usually legible, but not always correctly formed as yet. Children enjoy

using the 'Chackmore office' area for related activities. They all enjoy stories; listen with interest and join in reading words they are familiar with. Some of the higher attaining children recognise letter sounds and know these can sometimes be used to help find out a word that they do not know. Most children enjoy joining in class activities using big books and protest when the teacher pretends to turn over the pages that they like. The quality of teaching in this area is good with the teacher making good use of questions to encourage the children to describe what they think.

MATHEMATICS

76. Standards in mathematics are in line with those expected for children aged five. The children practise and develop understanding of counting and numbers in a variety of activities. They take part in games by recognising number cards to five and to ten and make good attempts at writing these numbers. They join in whole class activities by suggesting which order pupils are to stand in when using cards with numbers to ten. Several children can use the numbers on dice to make simple addition sums. Children recognise and name simple shapes such as squares, circles and triangles and can match a small shape to the equivalent large shape. They develop appropriate use of mathematical language such as larger and smaller. Higher attaining five year olds recognise 1p, 2p, 5p and can buy one item for 5p. These children recognise straight and curved shapes and can occasionally recognise and name three-dimensional shapes. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Very occasionally children take part in activities that offer only limited challenge.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

77. The children have an average understanding of the world around them by the age of five. They enjoy observing how quickly their individual broad beans grow and several explain that their beans need water to grow. Several are able to name the flower, leaf and roots on a picture of a growing plant and explain which are lettuce and which are broad beans. They have good opportunities to look at historical artefacts when examining old toys and discuss how these work and what they are made of. Some children offer examples of similarities and differences between old toys and their own toys. Children have access to a sand tray and an appropriate range of construction materials. Teaching in this area of learning is generally good especially in early science and history where the level of challenge in observation and discussion tasks is good.. But the sample of children's recent work shows fewer examples of work in design and technology and information technology than is generally seen and this is a weakness.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

78. Standards in physical development are in line with those expected for children age five. The children use simple tools for cutting and shaping materials, but skills in cutting out vary, some making good attempts to cut along lines, and others struggling to control scissors. Most children have reasonable pencil control but colouring is not always as neat as it could be. Pupils have access to the range of indoor gymnastics and games equipment on a weekly basis. However, there is no separate area for outdoor play for the youngest children. There is no access to climbing or sliding equipment or that where they can ride on and pedal, push or pull a range of suitable large play equipment. There are no planned daily opportunities to use small equipment including bats balls, beanbags or quoits with, for instance, the classroom assistant. This limits the development of children's physical skills. Staff are rightly examining the opportunities to extend the physical skills of these pupils through more regular access to facilities on site. Teaching in this area is satisfactory due to an appropriate range of classroom opportunities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

79. The children's creative development is broadly average but not as well planned as other areas of the curriculum. The children have opportunities to add a range of collage materials to group collages of springtime. However, there is little demonstration of the techniques to use or of creating a design and therefore children simply stick paper and mixed items in a haphazard manner in work reminiscent of children of a younger age. Children are able to draw and colour simple illustrations of their growing beans and colour pictures of flowering plants. All children have had the opportunity to make impressed patterns on clay tiles. Samples of children's work around the classroom show that some pupils have had the opportunity to decorate cereal boxes and drawings of pigs to illustrate the story of the Three Little Pigs. However, there are few individual samples of children's work and that on display does not identify the specific development of art or craft skills. Teaching in this area is satisfactory but the tasks undertaken lack imagination.
80. The teaching of children under five was not reported upon in the previous inspection report. Whilst the curriculum has historically been based upon the National Curriculum the staff have identified the need to base planning for the future intake of children upon the appropriate nationally recognised areas of learning. Given the limitations of access to some of the school's facilities and the lack of suitable outdoor equipment the staff make good use of what facilities are currently available. Staff have created a friendly and welcoming environment for children to enter full time education. The teacher has a good relationship with the children and manages their behaviour well. Parents are appreciative of the quality of teaching of the school's youngest pupils.

ENGLISH

81. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 in reading show that the pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national averages. The results of tests in writing show that below average standards were attained. Inspection evidence, however, shows that that in the current Year 2 there has recently been a significant improvement in attainment in English and this is in line with national expectations. By the time they leave school the pupils in Year 4 attain average standards.
82. Trends over time show that in most recent years attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was close to the national average. Taking the four years from 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of girls was slightly below the national average while that of boys was slightly above. This is different from the national trend.
83. Standards of speaking and listening are good throughout the school. The teachers take opportunities to provide activities that stimulate the pupils' imagination and require them to listen carefully to each other and to adults and then respond appropriately. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the pupils had to listen very attentively to respond to extracts from the "Mog and the Vee ee tee" to decide and give arguments to justify whether the book was fiction or non-fiction. By the time they leave the school in Year 4, the pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening. The school provides them with many opportunities to develop these skills, for instance, when the pupils prepare and perform a short play on the story of Esther as part of a religious education lesson. However, the opportunity to take part in regular drama sessions is limited by the unavailability of the school hall for large parts of the week.
84. Reception pupils enjoy listening to stories and retelling familiar ones in detail. They predict what might happen next and recognise familiar words. They learn the names and sounds of letters. Most year 1 pupils read simple text accurately and some are fluent

readers. In the present Year 2 standards of reading are good. Most pupils have a very positive attitude to books and make good gains in accuracy and understanding.

85. By the time they leave school in Year 4 the most able pupils have reached a high standard in their reading. They enjoy reading and talk confidently about their preferences for books and authors. Across the school, records of their reading are kept for each pupil and these include comments by teachers and parents as well as by the pupils themselves. This has a positive effect on their progress. However, for a minority of pupils, particularly those who find reading more difficult, the match between the book and the pupil's ability is not always appropriate and their learning does not progress at a satisfactory pace. The more able pupils have good reference skills and access reference material using an index to find the appropriate Dewey number to locate the book. Lower attaining pupils use the topic headings for this purpose, but these are too general at the moment and need further development.
86. Reception pupils form most letters correctly and spell some common words accurately. The early skills of writing are systematically taught and most pupils are able to sequence words in simple sentences using the basic punctuation of capital letters and full stops. In Year 2 the pupils write for a good range of purposes and have a good understanding of, for example, how to structure their own fairy story. They experience a range of poetry and understand rhyme and alliteration, composing their own tongue twisters. Good use is made of cross-curricular links to develop the pupils' understanding of audience and purpose. Writing to express feelings and emotions is developed effectively through listening and responding to the work of Erik Satie. Factual accounts are made more interesting by links with history where the pupils write their own versions of Samuel Pepys' diary. This effective approach continues and is further developed in Key Stage 2.
87. By the time they leave school the majority of pupils have achieved a satisfactory standard in their writing and a small minority of higher attaining pupils are achieving well above this level. They produce consistently well-punctuated and paragraphed work, develop good structure and interesting plot and reveal a mature sense of audience. Although some pupils have developed a fluent legible style of handwriting there is no consistency across the school and a significant minority of pupils are not able to write in a cursive joined script and have unsatisfactory letter formation. Information technology is used effectively to support the pupils writing, for example when finding out about the wives of Henry V111 or using word processing to enhance their presentation.
88. For all pupils, there has been marked recent improvement in their writing but pupils of lower ability have made slow progress and could achieve more. This slower progress is linked to a lack of assessment to show what stage each pupil is at in writing and the use of this information to set targets for improvement.
89. In the previous inspection a key issue for the school was to make more effective use of assessment. This was also an issue regarding the teaching of English. Although the school has very recently improved the use of assessment in day-to-day teaching, currently, the use of assessment across the school is unsatisfactory. The school has no long term records of the pupils' achievement and this makes it difficult for the very recently appointed teachers to plan work that is well matched to the pupils' ability. This is particularly relevant for those pupils with special educational needs, several of whom, have only very recently been identified and been set appropriate targets and work that matches their individual needs. This is, however, an issue of which both the English co-ordinator and the headteacher are aware and already some improvements have been made and a programme of further development has been devised.
90. The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers have high expectations. They use questions very well to keep pupils on task, elicit and develop their

response. Lessons are well paced. But there are still odd occasions when too much time is spent managing the silly behaviour of older pupils. Short term planning is very good and teachers are skilled at providing an accurate match of work to challenge the pupils at the most appropriate level. This was demonstrated when the teacher provided each pupil with a word that was very well matched to that pupil's individual ability level and enabled a class word game to proceed which included everyone yet provided the maximum individual challenge. The structure of the National Literacy Strategy and the way in which the school has implemented it, has enabled a team of teachers, the longest serving of whom has only been in post since September, to become very effective. This has had a big impact on the pupils' rate of learning.

91. However there are still several shortcomings and areas for development in the subject. The lack of appropriate pupils' records and assessments to inform the teachers about the pupils' past work means that long term planning is more difficult and less effective than it should be. For the most recently appointed teachers the lack of clear identification of pupils with special educational needs has meant that those pupils are not always provided with the most appropriate work. This situation is however, being improved by drawing up interim individual educational plans that have clear targets and learning goals with suitable strategies and resources identified.
92. The very newly appointed co-ordinator has made a very good start. She has carried out an initial curricular audit and identified priorities, some of which are already being addressed. Planning is being monitored and an audit of resources has been undertaken. All teachers are very aware of the shortcomings in the subject and have the ability and commitment to remedy them. The use of information technology to support the teaching of English is satisfactory with most pupils' having reasonable skills in word processing.

MATHEMATICS

93. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 was well below average when compared to all schools. In comparison to schools with similar characteristics attainment was amongst the lowest 5% of schools in the country. This reflected that a well below average proportion of pupils attained both the expected standard and at the higher levels in such tests. A similar picture of attainment that was well below average was also seen in the 1998 national tests. Whilst there were a slightly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs within the 1999 cohort of pupils this largely reflects proportions seen nationally. There is no national test data available for pupils at the age of nine when they leave the school.
94. On the basis of the inspection findings, attainment in mathematics is in line with the expectations of pupils at the age of seven and when they leave the school. This indicates a slight fall in attainment from that in the previous inspection when standards were good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The pupils start school with average skills and currently make satisfactory progress. The inspection findings indicate a significant improvement in attainment during the current year largely due to the school's implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is providing a well-structured approach to the teaching of mathematics. The strategy is used to plan lessons appropriately with staff beginning to plan more mental mathematics activities than previously. This is starting to help pupils become faster at solving mental problems. The sample of pupils' work also indicates that pupils in some year groups have made more rapid progress since recent staffing changes. This is indicated in both the quality and quantity of recent work.
95. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other areas of the curriculum. This includes in

science where pupils in Year 2 produce a block graph of their favourite fruit and older pupils take measurements when testing rocks for permeability. Similarly in geography older pupils produce block graphs of the noise levels around the school.

96. Pupils in the reception and Year 1 class identify numbers that are odd and even and use a number line to 20 to identify which numbers are missing. They match numbers and number words to ten and to twenty. From a range of items they identify which cost 3p, 4p and 6p. They name simple two and three-dimensional shapes and when weighing a range of items are able to estimate which are heaviest and lightest. They identify what time it is when using clock faces marked in hours. Pupils' understanding is secure and standards are appropriate.
97. Pupils in Year 2 add and take away ten from a range of numbers, with higher attaining pupils able to count back in tens from 202. When studying the number of the week such as 24 they carry out a range of calculations that give the answer 24. When using clocks many pupils understand the hour, half-hour and quarter-hour times and complete statements related to the passing of time such as one year is how many months? Pupils' understanding is often good and they explain what they know and how to carry out calculations with confidence.
98. In Years 3 and 4 pupils identify that if the answer is 3642 that they can work out the missing number of 3000 when given 600, 40 and 2. When given the digits 3,2,5 and 4 pupils make the largest and smallest possible numbers. They often work out numbers when doubling and the difference between numbers such as 99 and 114. Pupils' recognise shapes with at least one line of symmetry and match the names of pentagons, octagons and hexagons to the correct shapes. Lower attaining pupils identify number bonds to twenty and add three numbers below 20 together. They identify the missing sign from a range of addition and subtraction sums and work out the number of centimetres in one and a half metres.
99. The progress that pupils make is satisfactory overall, with that made recently often being good. Progress is best in Year 2 where the sample of pupils' work and pupils' response in lessons to number activities, indicate that the teaching of the mathematics co-ordinator is boosting the pupils mental mathematics strategies. Similarly in Years 3 and 4 mental 'warm up' activities are improving pupils confidence in this area. Discussions with teachers indicate that the speed with which pupils are able to carry out mental calculations has improved recently.
100. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in mathematics lessons is good in both key stages. They behave sensibly and most listen appropriately. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy answering questions and are often keen to suggest what to do to their friends. Most pupils use weighing equipment sensibly and the standard of presentation of the pupils' work is mostly neat. Pupils enjoy working together and do this well by taking turns and helping their partner. However, very occasionally some older pupils continually call out whilst other pupils contribute little to whole class discussions.
101. The quality of teaching of mathematics is satisfactory which indicates a slight decline from the previous inspection where teaching was usually good. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and use this and other resource materials, including a published scheme of work with reasonable confidence. However, this confidence is often less than the same teachers show in other subject areas and the school is wisely considering extending In-service training to boost teachers' confidence in mental mathematics and plenary activities. Teachers have satisfactory expectations of pupils and plan activities within groups to meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress. Good planning provides a clear structure to

lessons. Consequently all pupils including those with special educational needs make suitable progress. Very occasionally work for pupils in all classes is at a level that does not offer sufficient challenge to the higher attaining pupils. The marking of pupils work is of a satisfactory standard and is best when completed with pupils. Day-to-day assessment and verbal feedback clearly tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

102. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator has a good grasp of the challenges that lie ahead to raise attainment in the subject further. However, whilst the school has plans to monitor the quality of planning, teaching and learning this is at an early stage of development. Similarly the procedures for, and use of, assessment are under-developed. The school has no formal system for compiling individual pupil profiles and there are no portfolios of assessed work. The use of information technology to support the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory in Years 2, 3 and 4 but limited for younger pupils.

SCIENCE

103. Pupils' attainment in science as noted in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments was well below the national average in all aspects of science. No pupils were assessed as having attainment above the expected level. Evidence from the inspection indicates that there has been considerable improvement in the standards achieved. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and when the pupils leave the school at the age of nine is now generally above average and the progress made by most pupils is good. Recently appointed staff have worked hard to improve the planning of work to cover all aspects of the science curriculum and raise expectations of what the pupils can achieve.
104. Pupils in the reception and Year 1 groups carry out detailed observations of how their individual broad beans grow. They know that the dry bean drinks the water in the jar and that this starts to make the bean grow. They know that when the bean splits a root starts to grow and that this is important for the bean to get more water. Pupils in Year 1 explain that if they put the bean in the cupboard it will probably die, as it will not have any sunlight. These pupils identify the roots, stalk, leaves and flower of a growing plant and write quite detailed observations of the changes occurring in their growing bean. When discussing old toys pupils use their knowledge of materials to indicate which toys are metal, wood or card and which will stand up to the wear and tear of play. Older pupils explain why certain materials were used and others not. These pupils have a good grasp of these activities.
105. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils identify some of the main changes that have occurred in their development since they were a baby. When two babies and two toddlers visit the school pupils understand and identify similarities and differences between them. Pupils also know how to look after a pet.
106. By the end of Year 4 pupils study rocks and soils. They find out about individual types of rock such as granite, sandstone, marble and how coal was formed. They test rocks for how easily they can be worn away and permeability. When finding out about soil pupils make comparisons from the sample that they have brought from home with that of their friends. Recently pupils have also carried out work on light and shadows and in work connected with geography have found out about the weather around the world. Currently pupils are exploring the differences between solids and liquids by looking at examples and sorting solids. Pupils have a good understanding of the work they have undertaken.

107. Pupils make good progress in science. In Key Stage 1 pupils are able to carry out careful observations of the changes that occur in growing things. They discuss the similarities and differences that occur between similar beans or babies and indicate some of the reasons why differences occur. In Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of how to conduct a fair test. Pupils develop a good scientific vocabulary and are able to use this when explaining how they voted when identifying the most unacceptable noises in school. This is well exemplified when higher attaining pupils explain that when conducting tests to find out about noises, that pupils have to try to control the conditions and variables that can affect the collection of information. Pupils are able to explain that whilst some find the most unacceptable noise to be that of the playgroup that others find the noise made by the door buzzer or scraping chairs as unacceptable and that whilst trying to be scientific these results are based on personal feelings. The organisation of such open-ended investigations promotes the progress pupils make.
108. Pupils' attitudes to science are good and many children have a high level of interest in the practical activities that they undertake. As the pupils move through the school they have good opportunities to carry out observations and experiments that have some bearing upon their own lives and this results in a high level of interest in many activities. Pupils work very well together and share ideas and equipment readily. There are sometimes well considered opportunities for pupils to pursue lines of investigation that have a bearing on their own interests. Very occasionally the recording of some pupils work is not as neat as it could be.
109. The teaching of science is good across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of how to ensure the curriculum is relevant to pupils' lives. The explanations that teachers give are clear and all teachers make effective use of questions to encourage pupils to describe what they observe or have found out. Teachers make good use of scientific vocabulary. The planning of lessons is good and tasks are set at different levels to take account of the different rates of progress that pupils make. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and tasks contain a good level of challenge to move the pupils on in their learning. Tasks are well considered and often open ended to allow pupils to describe their observations and findings; this encourages the development of descriptive writing.
110. The recently appointed co-ordinator has insufficient limited opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of planning, teaching and learning. Assessment is at an early stage of development and is unsatisfactory. There is no portfolio of assessed pupils' work to aid teacher assessment routines. However, the school has recently identified these aspects as priorities for development. The use of information technology to support the teaching of science is good in Key Stage 2 but rarely used in reception and Year 1.

ART

111. Pupils of all ages including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in art, and mostly attain the standards expected of pupils of this age. However, art is not a strong feature of the school especially in Key Stage 1. This indicates a fall in standards since the previous inspection. The specific teaching of skills in art is limited. Teachers give few demonstrations of how to improve techniques and sometimes praise the quality of work, which would benefit from more constructive criticism. The range of activities undertaken recently is comparatively narrow and to a large extent centres around drawing and simple painting activities. There has been a well considered and successful attempt to allow all pupils to work with a local artist to produce good quality impressed clay tiles but other opportunities are limited.

112. The activities are severely limited by the range of art materials in the school, including paper; card, ready mixed paints or printing inks. There are few decorative items to enhance even the simplest of collage items. There are few opportunities for two or three-dimensional work, print making, sculpture, textiles, graphic design or the use of more imaginative techniques such as batik or tie-dye. This restricts the opportunities for teachers to plan their work in the full range of the media in sequenced steps, building on what has been taught before.
113. All pupils in the school have recently painted a self-portrait for a whole school display entitled 'We are a small part of a very big world'. In reception and Year 1 pupils produce very similar work to that of the children under five. They make simple collages of spring using tissue and scrap papers, lentils and pencil crayons. Work on display shows that they have decorated figures and houses to illustrate the story of The Three Little Pigs and produced a colour wheel to illustrate the range of painted colours they can make.
114. In Year 2 pupils work in the style of Mondrian to produce re-creations of his work entitled 'Boogie Woogie' using paint, sticky paper or pencils. Pupils have produced very simple danger posters using powder paints and were observed copying and painting repeating patterns to echo the designs of a range of fabrics.
115. In Years 3 and 4 the sample of pupils' work is slightly better than in other parts of the school. Pupils study Turner's work entitled 'Sunset Tours' and try to create their own sunset picture by layering tissue paper, using chalks or paints, with several pupils using an art program on the computer to create a similar effect. Recent work includes examples of the pupils working in the style of Paul Klee and Van Gogh. Pupils have produced silhouette pictures of a tree or sun and symmetrical patterns and pictures using chalks and felt tips.
116. Pupils' attitudes to art are good. They enjoy the opportunity to take part in practical activities and are good at sharing materials and taking turns when using paints or coloured pencils. Most pupils have a good appreciation of the work of others although on occasion some older pupils concentrate less on the paintings that they are producing than on off task discussions.
117. The teaching of art is broadly satisfactory, though it is more effective in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Some teachers do not have the necessary subject expertise to fully develop the skills of more talented younger pupils. Few teachers use appropriate subject vocabulary to emphasise technical skills or to analyse pupils' work or the work of other artists. There is little demonstration of specific techniques including drawing, painting or collage to illustrate to pupils what to do in order to improve their work. The planning of individual lessons is satisfactory and shows an appreciation of the work of famous artists. However, longer term planning does not clarify the progressive development of a range of skills. Recent work does not show such development of specific skills through linked or progressive planning. Teachers manage pupils well. In some lessons the progress that pupils make is hindered by the over-enthusiastic support of adults who enhance pupils' paintings for them. This does not give a true reflection of the standard of work produced by the pupils and does little to raise their self-esteem.
118. The development of art has been a relatively low priority recently, although some work has been done on the display of pupils' work. However, this has not had a sufficient effect on the standard of work produced or the quality of presentation. The subject co-ordinator has limited opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of planning, teaching and learning across the school. In order to supplement the sometimes limited skills of teachers the school has invited a parent with a professional background in art to work with the pupils. This has been very successful and the school is considering other

similar activities. Staff are very aware of the need to extend both the scheme of work, teaching skills and to considerably extend the range of resources, which currently do little to spark imagination or creativity.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. The progress that pupils make in design and technology is satisfactory and the majority of pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. This shows a slight decline in standards from those seen in the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils and boys and girls make equal progress.
120. Pupils in the reception class have decorated cereal boxes by cutting and shaping materials to decorate the homes of the three pigs. Pupils have used and attached card to resemble bricks, straw for a roof covering and lolly sticks to represent pieces of wood. They have shaped, painted and attached yoghurt pots for the pig's noses and cut and attached materials for collage effect clothing. Pupils have regular access to construction materials, which they use to make a range of vehicles, figures and buildings such as a crane. Pupils are able to express opinions to each other and modify their constructions accordingly. However, as yet there is limited evidence of the design element of the programme of study receiving sufficient emphasis.
121. In Year 2 the samples of pupils' recent work show appropriate links to science in a garden design. Pupils have also produced their own 'tool books' with drawn and labelled examples of the tools available including pincers, safety gloves and vice. There are practice pieces to show how fastening including split pins, elastic bands and glue can be used. Pupils have recently discussed safety issues and made posters to warn everyone about the mis-use of a range of materials.
122. In Years 3 and 4 in recent work linked to studies of the Tudors and the story of the Pied Piper, pupils have produced satisfactory models of Tudor houses using cereal boxes and lolly sticks for decoration. To add to the display of these models in a food technology activity pupils have made sugar mice. In a spring display pupils have made frogs with folded zig-zag legs, sheep with curled paper fleeces, and chicks with curled paper tail feathers. Pupils have design and technology books showing designs for Tudor pockets / money holders. Pupils then subsequently made these using a range of materials and techniques. Some pupils simply added decoration to pre-shaped boxes whilst others used fabrics and sewing techniques to produce satisfactory items of their choice. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to undertake food technology activities making items to support work in religious education. Pupils have recently made award winning bird, bat and dormouse boxes and feeders. Samples of these show well designed and constructed rugged bird boxes that are now in use around the local area. The modelling and making skills of the pupils were substantially increased during this project.
123. Although it was possible to observe only incidental work in design and technology during the period of inspection the quality of recent work and discussion with pupils shows that pupils are interested in the activities that they undertake. Most try hard to produce good quality work and are often proud of the finished items.
124. It was not possible to observe the teaching of specific design and technology lessons but incidental or additional teaching activities such as the use of construction kits and food technology to support religious education were noted. These indicate that teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. However, the sample of pupils' recent work shows less evidence of the younger pupils carrying out activities than older pupils. There is

relatively little evidence of the design phase of activities. Evaluation procedures of how to improve pupils work are rarely recorded.

125. The very recently appointed co-ordinator has revised the scheme of work based upon the nationally recognised guidelines. The rolling programme for curriculum development allows for flexibility in coverage to link with other subjects and topic work. The school has a suitable range of resources but does not make sufficient use of them.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

126. Due to timetabling arrangements it was only possible to observe one history and two geography lessons. The evidence from these lessons, together with discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work show that achievement is above national expectations in both subjects. The progress that all groups of pupils make is good.
127. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have a good knowledge of the local area and use appropriate vocabulary to make observations of the physical features of their surroundings. They use maps to locate the main features of their local area and produce their own maps to show their routes to school. A computer programme is used to develop their mapping skills effectively. The pupils use atlases to locate the main countries of the United Kingdom and are encouraged to discover and develop their knowledge of countries further afield. In Year 1, for example, they use the travels of Barnaby Bear to extend their knowledge of other European countries and America.
128. History is closely linked to the work in geography. In reception and Year 1 pupils know that old and new toys can be used to distinguish between past and present. Older pupils use maps of London during various stages of the Great Fire, together with extracts from Samuel Pepys' diary, to develop the concept and sense of importance of secondary sources as a source of historical information. There are good links with the Literacy Hour when, for example, the pupils write their own first hand accounts of the Great Fire of London using these resources or assemble lists of appropriate adjectives such as luminous, flickering and inflammable to enhance the quality of their writing.
129. This developing understanding of a chronological framework and ability to research information are developed well in Years 3 and 4. The pupils use inventories, in Old English, as a source from which to extract information and make deductions about Tudor Life. Historical enquiry focusing on first hand evidence is successfully pursued through a visit to Sulgrave Manor. The pupils empathise and communicate their understanding of Tudor life very ably. A nice touch to one of the 'thank-you' letters to the National Trust Warden at Sulgrave Manor was to "hope your ruffs weren't as itchy as ours."
130. In geography there are good links with science, such as monitoring and recording noise levels when looking at factors that impact on the local environment including that in school. Geographical skills are taught and developed in a variety of interesting ways, for example, keeping a series of weather records and comparing this with information about transport and life in Arctic zones, and using the information the pupils have gathered on Rhyl as a contrasting locality.
131. From the previous inspection when the pupils' achievement in history was judged to be satisfactory, there has been an improvement. Good achievement in geography has been maintained.
132. The standard of teaching is good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons effectively. The links with other areas of the curriculum are particularly effective.

Resources such as information technology, the local environment, reference books, artefacts, maps and atlases are used well to stimulate the pupils' interest in finding out about their area and the wider world. The newly appointed co-ordinator has already established a good overview of the curriculum and has drawn up a relevant order of priorities to further improve the teaching and learning in these subjects.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

133. By the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave school, the pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations. The pupils make good use of their skills to support their learning in other subjects including literacy, numeracy and science. The progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory.
134. In reception and Year 1, the pupils use a variety of programmes to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum such as reading development and number activities. They are already developing keyboard skills. The majority know how to use the space bar, delete, shift and return keys. They have reasonably secure mouse control. Many know how to load a cassette into a tape recorder and press the play/stop button. These skills are consolidated and developed as they progress through the school. In Year 2 they use word processing programmes, such as "Map" to control text and graphics, when designing their own town. They load, save and access floppy discs and CDs competently.
135. By the time they leave school these skills are further developed. Year 4 pupils use spreadsheets to enter data. They print and save copies. They use a music program, produce bar graphs from their data handling as well as using CD-ROMs for research work in history and geography topics. They answer the telephone and take messages. They are confident in word processing skills and there are many good examples of the use of information technology around the school.
136. Although little direct teaching of information technology was observed it is evident that teachers plan a good range of activities to develop the skills of their pupils and to ensure their good progress. Good use is made of the limited hardware available and lessons are planned well and are designed to extend pupils of all prior attainments.
137. The co-ordinator has only very recently taken up her post. But already she has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and a clear view of what is required in order to raise standards. The national guidelines for the subject have been implemented and there is recognition amongst the staff of the need to develop the subject and assessment through the school. The school has recently become part of a national project for the development of the subject. There are very good plans for the long-term development of information technology, such as connection to the Internet and more than doubling the present number of computers available.

MUSIC

138. It was only possible to observe two music lessons during the inspection. However evidence from teachers' plans, indicates that a satisfactory musical curriculum is in place and all pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress in developing their musical skills in performing, composing, listening and appraising. Pupils enjoy music lessons, they join in enthusiastically and try hard to improve their performance. However, the progress that pupils make is on occasion limited by the

access of pupils to facilities in the school hall.

139. The pupils in Year 2 sing songs from memory. They make satisfactory progress in developing control of breathing, rhythm and pitch, as they sing songs such as “This little train goes up the hill” and “If you’re happy and you know it.” They improvise music patterns as they sing to a pupil conducting, speeding up the tempo and understanding musical vocabulary such as piano, lento and allegro. They select suitable percussion instruments to accompany their music.
140. By the time they leave the school, the pupils have made good progress in understanding rhythms and identify the sounds made by families of instruments such as percussion or wind. They improve their skills in appreciating music from a variety of cultures, such as music from the Andes and the sound of the Charring or by listening to the African Sanctums and identifying the Bongos, tambourines and choral chanting.
141. Teaching is good and this supports the progress made in music. There is a good level of musical expertise among the present staff. Planning is good with a balance of activities, which allow the pupils to participate in playing, listening and appraising. Whole school assemblies are used well to encourage listening and appraising skills. Each week the music of a different composer is introduced and the pupils carry out their own research sometimes using the Internet.
142. The talent of parents is used effectively. A parent introduced a variety of wind instruments, including the whole family of saxophones. Circuit breathing was demonstrated and the pupils increased their understanding and knowledge of different instruments. They listened to and compared a wide variety of pieces by different composers. The co-ordinator has been in post three weeks. She has put in place an interim scheme of work and suitable priorities have been identified in the school improvement plan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. The progress that pupils make is broadly satisfactory as they move through the school. However, progress in gymnastics and dance activities is hindered by limited access to the school hall and the space available within the hall. The progress that pupils with special educational needs make is comparable to that of other pupils and there is no difference in the progress made by boys or girls. This generally indicates maintenance of standards seen in the previous inspection
144. There was no opportunity to observe lessons in Key Stage 1. However, planning indicates that pupils have the opportunity to use gymnastics apparatus in the hall and games apparatus outdoors when weather permits. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 explore different pathways on the floor and on and between large equipment in the hall. Pupils demonstrate making zig-zag movements taking their weight on hands and feet. They can run, jump and sink into balanced positions and describe whether their pathway was direct, flexible or zig-zag. Pupils can climb and balance on climbing frames, ladders, benches and jumping tables. Whilst most pupils have an average level of skill few have high levels of skill.
145. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils in the lesson observed are good. Pupils are highly aware of the limited space available and the safety issues of moving around a crowded area. Pupils’ behaviour is sensible and considerate. However, pupils note a preference for outdoor activities “because you can run around without bumping into someone”. Pupils listen to lengthy instructions patiently. Pupils set out equipment very

carefully and are mindful of ensuring equipment is set up safely. This takes some considerable time but is carried out with patience and care. As it is not safe for all pupils to use equipment they take turns to work and then sit out and observe the standard of work of other pupils. This limits the time spent involved in physical activities, slows the pace of lessons and the progress made.

146. Teaching in the one lesson observed is satisfactory. The teacher makes suitable use of pupil demonstration to indicate to pupils how to improve the pathways they develop. The teacher has a very good awareness of safety issues and stresses safe movement, putting out and use of equipment. However, too long is spent discussing what is to be done at the expense of activity. The use of time within the lesson is restricted by the length of time necessary to set up and check the apparatus used.
147. The development of the physical education curriculum is severely affected by the restrictions placed upon the school by the use of the school hall. Not only is the hall unavailable for at least half of the week but the storage of materials around the hall creates major health and safety concerns. The facilities currently available to the school for the storage of large and small apparatus and the presence of staffroom furniture severely restrict the working space. The school has very rightly identified this issue as of major concern to the development of pupils' skills and health and safety. The school has an appropriate scheme of work that it is unable to provide on a regular basis due to the limitations of accommodation. As yet, the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to monitor and evaluate standards of planning, teaching and learning and there is little use of assessment to track the progress that the pupils make.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. By the end of the Key Stage and by the time they leave school, achievement is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils, including those with special needs make satisfactory progress.
149. By the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave school, the pupils have gained satisfactory knowledge of the major Christian festivals and ceremonies through stories and visits to the local Church. They know of the reasons for weddings and the significance of Christian occasions such as "Pancake Day" and compare the similarities and differences of celebrations in other world religions. In Year 2, for example, when studying the theme of special occasions, the pupils developed a good understanding of how Christian weddings are celebrated both now and a hundred years ago. They learned that although a Hindu wedding is celebrated differently, it has a similar importance for that culture and religion.
150. In Key Stage 2 the pupils develop a deeper understanding of the Old Testament and study other world religions. For example, in their work on Judaism they know about Jewish festivals such as Sukkoth, Shabbat and the Passover. By the time they leave school, through the themes of "Rites of Passage", "Special Books" and "Leaders and Founders" their learning is further developed.
151. In the three lessons that were observed the teaching was never less than good and one lesson was very good. The high standard of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. The teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly in line with the agreed syllabus and great attention is directed in ensuring that the work set challenges all pupils. Lessons are enhanced by cross-curricular links such as the link with food technology when making "Hamantaschen" for the Jewish Festival of Purim. The teachers make very good use of resources including reference books, artefacts and materials which interest and motivate the pupils and their learning improves at a good pace.

152. Although the co-ordinator has only been in post for a very short time, she has already carried out an audit of the curriculum and drawn up a list of priorities. Appropriate training has been planned and external agencies approached for input and advice. The school uses the agreed syllabus as a basis for planning and is developing a scheme of work. The school is now well placed to make further improvements to this subject.