

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hereford

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116883

Headteacher: Mr J D Griffin

Reporting inspector: Mr F Carruthers
21285

Dates of inspection: 22-26 May 2000

Inspection number: 197321

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	5 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Boycott Road Hereford
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Martin Donnelly
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr F Carruthers	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? Equal opportunities
Mr D Haynes	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs J Underwood	Team inspector	English Art Geography History	The curriculum Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This voluntary aided school serves the southern part of Hereford, caters for pupils aged five to eleven, and has 202 pupils on roll. These pupils come from the immediate locality, which consists of rented and privately owned homes, and from the wider area. All pupils speak English as their first language and a number are from families whose parents are based at nearby Army barracks. As a result of the nature of their occupation, some pupils (up to ten per cent of the roll each year) start school and others leave to go abroad with their families at various times during their primary school years. Overall, there is an approximate balance of boys and girls but currently there few girls in Year 6 and few boys in Year 5. There are four pupils with statements of special educational needs and 16 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, which is about average for schools nationally. On entry to school, the children have an average range of attainment, as measured by an initial assessment. Most attend nursery classes or pre-school playgroups before admission. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils' families vary. Most pupils come from three areas south of the River Wye where the proportion of families from higher social class is below the national average and the proportion of children coming from overcrowded homes is above the national average. There is no provision for hot school meals and those pupils entitled to free meals are provided with packed lunches which are made on the premises. The take-up of free meals is very low. The locality is benefiting from Single Regeneration funding and the school is part of an Education Action Zone, which was created in September 1998.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The pupils make satisfactory progress, the great majority of them achieve standards of work in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. The pupils have good attitudes to school and the quality of teaching is good. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, as is the improvement since the last inspection. The cost of educating a pupil is about the same as the national average. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the school is judged to be satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching of reading is good throughout the school and the pupils gain much confidence discussing their work with others.
- Provision for the children under five in the reception class is good, as is the quality of teaching.
- The school makes good use of teachers' expertise to teach their specialisms to classes across the school. This happens with good effect in science, art, music and physical education.
- Support staff make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Teachers use their skills well and the assistants work well with individual pupils and small groups of pupils.
- The school's ethos supports the pupils' personal development well. The pupils behave well and take on a good deal of responsibility in the daily routines.
- The school's partnership with other schools in the local Education Action Zone is helping the pupils by providing them with additional benefits such as more support from classroom assistants and activities in school holidays. Teachers' professional development is being improved by a partnership with a local 'beacon school.'

What could be improved

- The achievement of higher-attaining pupils.
- Standards in writing.
- Standards of presentation of pupils' work, which are variable across the school.
- The use of procedures to assess pupils' progress to help teachers plan challenging work.
- The involvement of the governing body in monitoring the school's effectiveness and planning its future.
- The amount of time available for the teaching of non-core subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the last inspection, in September 1997, the school was judged to have significant weaknesses, particularly in relation to how the school was led and managed. A follow-up visit by a member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate one year later found some progress had been made but some issues were still unresolved. Since then, all remaining issues have been fully resolved and the school has made satisfactory progress overall. On some issues, for example developing the roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators, progress has been good. In addition, over the last three years standards in national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen broadly in line with the national rise. The proportion of good teaching has improved and provision for information technology, including laptops and personal computers, has

improved. There has been an improvement in the levels of unauthorised absence during this school year. Good work has been completed on re-roofing the building and re-surfacing the playground.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

The comparison with similar schools is based on a group of schools with broadly similar levels of entitlement to free school meals. However, because the school does not offer free hot meals, the take-up of the free sandwich meal option is very low. Almost all pupils bring a packed lunch from home. Information provided by parents voluntarily indicates that the overall proportion of families entitled to free school meals is much higher than that taken up. The school is in a category of schools with the lowest proportion of free school meals. Such schools have above average proportions of pupils whose families are from higher social class. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils' families in the school are much broader than that. Consequently, a comparison with schools in this category is unreliable.

Standards in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2, but few pupils achieve above the expected levels for eleven-year olds in each subject. Whereas the achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory, higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they should be and this is reflected in end-of-key stage test results. Standards in speaking and listening skills and in reading are good throughout the school and this is because teachers give the pupils confidence to talk and discuss their work and they promote a love of reading. Standards in writing have been a target for improvement by teachers and this is beginning to take effect, especially in Key Stage 2. There is potential for further improvement. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory and pupils' skills of mental arithmetic, using the four rules of number and solving problems develop appropriately. The school's targets for standards in English and mathematics are sufficiently challenging but there is a need to focus on how much the higher-attaining pupils can achieve. Standards in science are in line with the average of schools nationally. The trend over the last three years in these subjects has been for standards to rise broadly in line with the national trend. Attainment in information technology is in line with that expected of pupils at the age of eleven. New improved hardware and software is benefiting the pupils' experience of various applications of computers. Attainment in physical education is above average and this is the result of the good quality of teaching and coaching available. Attainment in all other subjects is in line with that expected of pupils at the age of eleven. Religious education is the subject of a separate inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning and to school. A small minority of pupils are easily distracted and find difficulty concentrating. They are helped well by support staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good in classrooms and around school and as a result most lessons have good pace and the pupils learn well.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is good. As the pupils get older, they take on responsibilities for younger pupils and for some of the daily routines. They display good levels of responsible behaviour. Relationships are good throughout the school.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are in line with the national average. This year, as a result of positive procedures the school has undertaken, levels of unauthorised absence have fallen to below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	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.

Overall, 64 per cent of the teaching is good or better, of which eight per cent is very good. Thirty-three per cent is satisfactory and three per cent is unsatisfactory. The amount of good or better teaching has improved since the last inspection. All the teaching in the reception class is good and this is a strength of the provision. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The teaching of reading is good. However, the teaching of writing skills and writing for different purposes is not as well developed. The weaknesses have been recognised by the staff and an increased emphasis is helping to extend the range of pupils' writing in English and across subjects such as history and design and technology. Teachers make good use of support staff to help individual pupils with special educational needs and groups of pupils. There is good specialist teaching of science, art, music and physical education by subject co-ordinators to classes other than their own and this benefits the quality of learning for the pupils. Across the school, however, staff are inconsistent in the standards they expect of presented work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and covers all subjects of the National Curriculum plus religious education. However, because of the emphasis on the core subjects and religious education, the non-core subjects, such as art, design and technology and music, do not have sufficient time for tasks to be completed properly. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. There is good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory and classroom assistants provide good support. Pupils have individual education plans but they are not specific enough in defining when a pupil has achieved the goals set.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and for their moral and social development, through the positive ethos of the school and the good role models presented by staff, it is good. Provision for the pupils' cultural development, which was judged to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection, is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a satisfactory level of care for the pupils. Procedures for promoting good behaviour, in the form of school rules, merits and awards are good. Procedures for monitoring the pupils' progress are satisfactory but staff do not use them well enough in planning pupils' work. Some aspects of recording authorised and unauthorised absences are unsatisfactory.

The school has improved aspects of its links with parents since the last inspection, for example, how it informs parents of what is being taught each term. Information to parents on how pupils are progressing is good and the parents contribute much appreciated funds to support the school. Some parents, having worked in school voluntarily, have taken courses and are now employed as classroom assistants.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is satisfactory and there have been a number of key improvements since the last inspection, for example in developing the role and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators so that they take more part in school management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Aspects of the role of governors have developed well during the last twelve months and they fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily.

Aspect	Comment (Continued from previous page)
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory overall and there is scope for further involvement of governors in evaluating performance and planning future developments.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of funding for building improvements and special educational needs. Additional funding provided by the school's partnership with the Education Action Zone is benefiting the pupils well, for example by providing more classroom assistants.

Staffing levels are good and the accommodation is spacious and used well. Learning resources are satisfactory overall but there are some deficiencies for the teaching of geography and history. The school applies principles of best value satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school. • Children behave well, make good progress and are expected to do well. • The children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consistency with which homework is set. • How extra-curricular activities should cater for girls as well as boys.

Inspectors support the positive views expressed by parents but note that higher-attaining pupils could be achieving more. In relation to concerns about homework, inspectors have brought this to the attention of the school and note that there is a planned review of provision at the end of this term. Inspectors confirm that the school is aware of principles of equal opportunities for all pupils and encourages girls to take part in many activities normally organised for boys, such as cricket. Inspectors are confident that the school will keep such principles under review.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children join the one reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. The attainment of the children on entry, as measured by an initial assessment, is average in all areas of development and there is a spread of ability among the children that is typical of most schools. The standards that the children achieve by the age of five are very securely in line with those expected in all areas of learning. This is due to the very careful assessment of their attainment on entry to school and the good teaching, which moves their learning forward successfully. Speaking and listening skills develop well, as do skills of reading and writing. Most children count confidently to twenty and beyond and a good proportion can carry out simple addition and subtraction calculations by the age of five.

National tests at age seven and eleven

2. In this report, the school's results are compared with the results of all schools but not with schools with similar intakes. This is because the indicator, the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, which is usually used to assign the school to a particular category, does not accurately reflect the socio-economic circumstances of the majority of families, which vary. Most pupils come from three areas south of the River Wye where the proportion of families from higher social class is below the national average and the proportion of children coming from overcrowded homes is above the national average. There is no provision for hot school meals and those pupils entitled to free meals are provided with packed lunches which are made on the premises. The take-up of free meals is very low. An enquiry by the school, in which parents volunteered information about their entitlement to free school meals, indicates that approximately fifteen per cent of pupils may be entitled to free meals. Other schools, which draw upon pupils from the same area and which provide hot school meals, have higher proportions of pupils with free meal entitlement, at around 30 per cent of the school roll. A further factor making it difficult to compare the school is the relatively high pupil mobility. Pupils whose parents work for the Armed Forces leave and return to school as a result of postings overseas. There had been, for example, more than twenty changes to the roll of pupils who entered school in 1992 and who took their end-of-Key Stage 2 tests last summer.

Key Stage 1

3. Standards in reading are above average at the end of the key stage and the pupils are developing good skills including those for researching information. Writing skills are in line with the national average but there are few pupils achieving at a higher level. Most pupils write in sentences and use interesting vocabulary but skills of punctuation, spelling and handwriting are more variable across the age group. The 1999 tests in reading and writing reflect these judgements. Generally, over the last three years, standards in reading have been higher than those in writing. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well and standards are generally good. Overall, standards of literacy are satisfactory.

4. Standards in mathematics are close to the national average but there are few pupils achieving at higher than expected levels. Almost all pupils can calculate using numbers to 20, they recognise and can order numbers to 100 and are aware of odd and even numbers. Average and above average pupils can multiply numbers and are beginning to set out sums in different ways, for example vertically as well as horizontally. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory overall. The pupils' knowledge of shape and measures is appropriate for their age. These findings are reflected in the results of national tests over the last three years. In the current Year 2 there are more pupils achieving the higher level than in previous years. In recent test results boys performed better than girls in reading and in mathematics. However, there was little evidence of such variation in the current Year 2.

5. Standards in science are broadly in line with the national average. Across a range of topics, for instance electricity, materials and physical processes, the pupils' knowledge and understanding are at least satisfactory and often good. Skills of investigation and recording are not so well developed, however. These findings are evident in teachers' assessments over the last three years, in which almost all pupils achieved the expected level. However, none achieved higher than that in the 1999 or 2000 tests.

6. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of the key stage. Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, including those with special educational needs, but there is scope for higher attainers, through better planning to challenge them, to achieve more.

Key Stage 2

7. In English, standards are close to the national average but there is only a small minority of pupils achieving at the higher level. Standards in speaking and listening and in reading are good and all pupils become independent readers. This is the result of the good quality of teaching of reading throughout the school. Standards of writing are in line with the national average and it is evident that, with more emphasis recently given to the skills of writing and providing opportunities to write in other subjects, standards are rising further. Standards of literacy are satisfactory overall. In tests in recent years, standards have fluctuated but were lower last year than previously. The school is likely to be close to reaching its challenging target of 77 per cent of pupils achieving the expected level or better in this year's tests.

8. Standards in mathematics are broadly average. Most pupils have a good understanding of the four rules of number and are usually successful in applying these when they are solving problem, for example about money. They can handle problems concerning fractions and percentages; they can add and subtract numbers with two places of decimals; and they know about angles and degrees of turn. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. Most pupils attained the nationally expected level in last year's end-of-key stage tests. However, there were few pupils achieving the higher levels. Over the past three years, standards have varied from above to close to the national average but there has been no uniform trend, largely because of variation in the nature of year groups. In the current Year 6, most pupils are working at levels expected for their age and the school is on course to reach the target, which is sufficiently challenging, for 69 per cent of the pupils to achieve national expectations or above.

9. Standards in science are in line with the national average, but there are few pupils achieving levels above the nationally expected level. Investigative skills are generally good and the pupils have a satisfactory grasp of concepts such as forces, the properties of materials and living things. Over the past three years, standards have generally been about the national average.

10. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall and progress for the great majority of pupils is satisfactory. However, standards of presentation of pupils' work vary and some work is untidy and poorly set out. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as a result of the quality of classroom support they receive from teachers and support staff. Boys and girls perform equally well in tests in mathematics and science and girls perform better than boys in English, which is similar to national trends. There is scope for raising the achievement of higher-attaining pupils further. No gifted and talented pupils have been identified by the school.

11. Attainment in physical education is above expectations and in all other subjects it is in line with that expected of pupils at the age of eleven. However, no judgement has been made about standards in music because of insufficient available evidence.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Overall the pupils' attitudes to learning and to the school are good. The values instilled by the school and the attention paid to personal development are good. Children in the reception class are keen to come to school. They show independence, for example when changing for outdoor play or physical education by doing so with the minimum of adult help. They are given responsibilities for tidying up after activities or handing out equipment. They take turns fairly and move sensibly around the class and the school for house assemblies, worship or lessons in physical education. The majority of pupils in all classes arrive on time and following registration quickly settle down to lessons. However, the attitude to learning of a small minority of pupils can be variable. When the teaching is good and delivered at a brisk pace, the pupils' attention and concentration can be very good but the attention of a minority wanders and their attitude to learning and their behaviour can suffer. This is most evident in Key Stage 1. Support staff help to keep the pupils on task.

13. Overall the school has maintained the good levels of behaviour found in the previous inspection. Pupils' behaviour is good both around the school and in the playground. There have been no exclusions. The house system and the award of merit points play a large part in encouraging good behaviour and also bring across to pupils the impact of their behaviour on others. The school has policies for behaviour and bullying but there were no incidents during the inspection when these had to be applied. There is no evidence of vandalism and the pupils show respect for property, each other and adult staff. Parents indicate that they are pleased with the emphasis that the school places on behaviour.

14. The school's aims and values are supported by the parents and are well taught. During house and whole-school assemblies, personal values, behaviour models and the impact of self on others are openly discussed. These discussions are conducted with groups of pupils drawn from all year groups. Older pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility by mentoring the younger pupils, a duty they take very seriously. Other pupils help with distributing milk,

arrangements for lunch boxes, register distribution, and with the introduction of the new library, pupils are learning to operate the computer-controlled lending system.

15. The overall attendance of pupils is satisfactory and in line with national averages and there are very few latecomers. During the period since the last inspection the level of unauthorised absence was very high at nearly one per cent. At the beginning of the current school year, the school reminded parents of the action required regarding absences and the level of unauthorised absence for the winter and spring terms is now satisfactory at approximately 0.1 per cent.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good or better in 64 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 33 per cent of lessons. Three per cent of the teaching observed (one lesson) was unsatisfactory. The proportion of good or better teaching has improved since the last inspection.

17. In the reception class, all the teaching is good. The class teacher and support staff work closely together to provide a wide range of well-planned learning opportunities that develop the children's learning. They have a very good understanding of how young children learn and use this well in their planning. In Key Stage 1, teaching is satisfactory overall. Staff teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well and make good use of support assistants when they are timetabled to work in their classes. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed, the teacher did not achieve the learning objectives for the lesson and was not sufficiently well prepared to extend the pupils' knowledge and skills. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good overall, three quarters of lessons are good or better and the remainder are satisfactory. Lessons have good pace and purpose and as a result the quality of learning is usually good. Support staff are well briefed and make an effective contribution to the learning of different groups of pupils, for example, lower attainers.

18. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2, with a minority of lessons being very good. The teaching of reading is good. The teachers encourage the pupils to be confident when they speak in groups and they are particularly good at promoting a love of books by their enthusiastic introductions of chosen texts. As a result, standards are good in these aspects of English. However, the teaching of writing skills and writing for different purposes is not as well developed. The weaknesses have been recognised by the staff and an increased emphasis, which is particularly apparent in Key Stage 2 classes, is helping to extend the range of pupils' writing in English and across subjects such as history and design and technology. Across the school, staff are inconsistent in what they expect of standards of presentation of work.

19. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Planning is consistently good across both key stages and the pace of lessons is good in the majority of lessons. As a result, the quality of learning is generally good. However, there are occasions when teachers spend too much or too little time on one element of the numeracy lesson and this means that there is insufficient balance in the lesson and the objectives are not fully met. In Key Stage 2, there are examples of teachers' expectations being not high enough and there is no consistency of approach to how the pupils should present their work.

20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall with good features, for example, learning support assistants make a good contribution to the pupils' progress. Most of the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is carried out in class and in addition some groups are withdrawn for specific teaching. This is appropriate use of the staff's time. All staff have good expertise in helping pupils who have hearing impairment. Consequently, the school has developed a good reputation for supporting such pupils.

21. Teaching of science is satisfactory or better in all classes. Skills of investigation and how to record findings are better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. This is one of a number of subjects in which specialist teaching by subject co-ordinators helps to develop skills throughout the school. Other subjects taught in this way are art, music and physical education. In these lessons, pupils learn well, they are set challenging tasks and respond well to them. Access to laptop computers and the introduction of new personal computers are helping to provide teachers with the breadth needed to teach a range of applications of information technology, including research using the Internet. Teaching is satisfactory in geography in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teaching is good in history in Key Stage 1 but it was not possible to form an overall judgement about the teaching of history in Key Stage 2 or about teaching design and technology in either key stage, because few lessons were observed during the inspection.

22. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory and there are some good examples of the policy being used to good effect to inform pupils about how they can improve the quality of their work. This was evident for example in Year 3. The contribution homework makes to standards in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and history is satisfactory.

However, some parents find the setting of homework has been inconsistent over the school year. The school is due to review homework provision at the end of term.

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

23. The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory. The curriculum for children under five covers the nationally recommended areas of learning and provides a good range and balance of learning experiences. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broad and relevant. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, providing a range of worthwhile and often high quality experiences. The richness enables pupils of different levels of attainment to take part in the lessons as well as promoting self-esteem and motivation. However, there are occasions when the higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. The curriculum planning is based on a yearly cycle, each class being a single age group. Teachers in each key stage plan together. The school has recently decided to use nationally recommended guidelines as a framework for their curriculum. These schemes have helped teachers to ensure that there is progression in the pupils' acquisition of skills and that tasks planned become more demanding as they build on pupils' previous learning. The previous report highlighted the need to ensure that schemes of work provide a greater range of activities for pupils of differing abilities. This has been achieved for the average and lower attainers but still needs addressing for the higher-attaining pupils.

24. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. The time allocated for the teaching of the core subjects is in line with recommendations but, because of the emphasis on these and religious education, the non-core subjects do not always have sufficient time for tasks to be completed properly. There is a daily act of collective worship, which meets requirements. Pupils usually have opportunity to reflect and think about aspects of their lives.

25. Sex education is not taught formally but questions are answered sensitively when asked, and the school nurse talks to the pupils in Years 5 and 6 about health and sex education as issues arise. Pupils in Year 6 have also received a course on drugs, smoking and alcohol abuse, presented by the local police.

26. The school has effectively planned for literacy and numeracy lessons, which are well established and, because of the positive attitude of the teachers, the detailed planning and consequently the thorough structure of the teaching, are helping to raise pupils' attainment. They are beginning to influence other subjects and the school has established clear links between literacy and history, technology and science and between numeracy and geography and science.

27. The Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is met. The school's provision, in terms of teachers, assistants and the curriculum, reflects the needs of these pupils. They are supported well, integrated fully into the school community and have equal access to all subjects of the National Curriculum. Pupils are occasionally withdrawn from class although the majority of support is given in small groups within the classroom. Each pupil on the register from stage 2 upward has an individual education plan, which lists areas for additional work. Although these are in place, they are too general and vague and are not specific in defining when a pupil has achieved the goals set. The school is aware of this weakness and plans to adopt a new format in the near future. Training has already been organised for this purpose.

28. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are well supported by the pupils. These include sports practices, musical opportunities such as recorder or keyboards and art. Links with the community are good with a local firm sponsoring the sports kit, coaching provided by the Football in the Community Officer and by the Worcestershire Youth Development Officer for cricket. Liaison with the Roman Catholic high school is limited to pastoral visits, but the local sixth form college organises a fun games session for pupils from surrounding primary schools which is very successful and enjoyed by all. Liaison between playgroups and nursery and the reception teacher is good. Members of the community are invited to talk to the pupils. For example, an elderly resident talked about memories of her childhood and another talked about India.

29. Provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory and for their moral and social development it is good. School worship makes an appropriate contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. There are opportunities for reflection when pupils have time to consider wider issues of the spiritual dimension of life. They readily expressed a sense of awe and wonder during an assembly when slides of eagle chicks were shown. However, there is little evidence of such spiritual moments being planned into the curriculum, although in some classes a microscope is set up so pupils can see a variety of natural things. Pupils are taught tolerance and positive attitudes towards the society in which they live.

30. The provision for moral development is good and teachers provide good role models for their pupils. Assemblies are used to ensure that pupils know the difference between right and wrong. This is reinforced through the school rules and the behaviour policy, in which rewards and sanctions are used to support good behaviour and effort. As a result,

pupils are quite clear about the action that will be taken to promote their successes and to address inappropriate behaviour. Classroom rules are displayed and reinforce the school expectations and code of conduct. In Year 6, pupils debate issues such as corporal punishment and school uniform.

31. The school encourages the pupils to relate effectively to others and they are given opportunities to work co-operatively and share ideas and resources. The older pupils are expected to look after the younger ones, helping to put on their outdoor clothes or playing with them during wet play or lunch times. A variety of responsibilities around the school are available for pupils in Years 5 and 6, including running the library, selling milk, supervising pupils at the lunch tables and being a prefect. Most classes have monitors for tasks such as tidying areas or taking the register to the office. Pupils are allowed to take the initiative to raise funds for charities, in particular for a Blue Peter Appeal and for the people of Mozambique. This helps pupils appreciate the problems other people face. A residential course involving orienteering encourages pupils to work together.

32. Provision for the pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. In order to increase pupils' awareness of other cultures the school has a two-week input about different religions and customs. Stories from other cultures feature in assemblies and further information is given during history and geography lessons, covering India, Ancient Greece, Egypt and other countries. The pupils hear visitors talking about India, Peru, Bangladesh, Africa and the preparation of the Passover meal. Visits to local museums, the Cathedral and the study of the surrounding area help to enhance the pupils understanding of their own culture. Visits from an artist, percussion player, the police and visits further afield all enrich the pupils' curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory level of care for its pupils. The support, guidance and personal development of the pupils are good. A strong feature of the school is that both teaching and support staff know the children very well and operate an open-door policy should parents wish to meet with teaching staff. The staff in the school office handle contacts with parents confidently, receiving information for teaching staff and answering questions of a general nature.

34. The school has a health and safety policy and there were no obvious health and safety issues apparent during the inspection. However, regular risk assessments are carried out but not formally logged and health and safety is not a regular feature of governors' meetings. There is insufficient correct signage of fire equipment and fire exits. First aid provision is adequate but training for the office staff is insufficient, as they are frequently the first point of contact for pupils. There is a rolling programme of training for staff, including office staff. Parents are happy with the school's approach to behaviour and adequate policies to address any issues are in place. Provision for child protection is satisfactory. The designated child protection officer is the head teacher who knows the children very well. Adequate supervision is provided at lunchtime and playtime by teaching staff and lunchtime supervisors and good personal and social conduct is recognised by the award of merit marks.

35. Procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are satisfactory overall. Staff assess the progress of the children in the reception class well and make good use of the information to set challenging work. In both key stages, the staff have a good knowledge of the progress the pupils make, through pre and end-of-topic testing in subjects such as mathematics and science, through optional testing in Years 3, 4 and 5 in the core subjects and through further standardised testing in, for example, reading. The staff use these assessments to set targets for the pupils but how the information is used to guide teachers' planning varies across classes and is currently insufficient. For example, there are instances when higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged. There is further scope for analysing testing information, for instance in relation to how well boys and girls achieve. There is currently no whole-school approach to recording the information collected. The staff are aware of this weakness and have begun to plan improvements. The staff have good procedures to identify pupils who have special educational needs and their progress is monitored satisfactorily by the co-ordinator's assistant.

36. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for themselves and others, to distinguish between right and wrong and behave in a manner appropriate to the circumstances. There is no whole-school approach to monitoring personal development but aspects of personal development are discussed with parents and an appropriate course of action agreed, records are maintained and follow-up meetings held with parents. Reports to parents have provision for comment on pupils' personal as well as academic progress.

37. The recording of attendance by the class teacher at registration is carried out promptly and correctly and registers are returned to the office where any latecomers must register. The office staff hold records of notified absence and complete the registers accordingly. A system of identifying pupils coming to school unaccompanied is operated; any

absence of these pupils that has not been notified is followed up immediately. The school does not have a policy to improve attendance and the maintenance of records of authorised and unauthorised absence is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient guidance for office staff on what aspects of attendance to monitor and when and what action to take regarding absences or lateness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents continue to hold the school in high regard and the school has made good progress on the issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection. The school prospectus and the governors' report to parents meet statutory requirements. The school now issues newsletters each half term providing general details of topics to be covered in the forthcoming term and how parents can help at home and in school. Help in school is requested in the form of items that can be used to enrich the curriculum or in the form of parental help in the classroom. A number of parents work as classroom support assistants but there are very few voluntary helpers. Parents are active in supporting the school through the Friends Association that organises social events and raises much appreciated funds for the purchase of additional resources, which have included re-carpeting classrooms.

39. Information contained in the annual report to parents is now good. There are clear reports on academic and personal progress, areas for improvement, and an opportunity for parental and pupil comment. Parents are happy with the standard of communication and recognise the improvement made by the school. Individual teachers work with parents on matters concerning behaviour or with children with special educational needs and where necessary individual education plans are agreed. The involvement of parents in reviewing the progress of pupils with statements of special educational needs is satisfactory. However, there are occasions when parents are not involved as early as they might be when pupils are on the register of pupils with special educational needs.

40. The school has listened to parents and the community and agreed to a number of proposed changes. The entrance to the school is now restricted to one gate, away from the main road, and a policy on unaccompanied pupils has been adopted to help the monitoring of absences. A home-school agreement is in place. It states clearly what is expected of the parent, the child and what the school provides but has had a return rate of only 40 per cent. The school's approach to homework is unclear. It is different across the years and during the school year and parents see the provision as inconsistent. Homework is the subject of review by staff before the start of the next school year. Some parents are concerned that girls are not allowed to join all sports activities after school. However, inspectors consider the range of opportunities is satisfactory and the school monitors the interest of girls in activities such as cricket. Workshops for parents have been held for science and literacy and workshops for numeracy and information technology are planned. Parents are appreciative of the time and effort the school puts in to these workshops.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and this is an improvement since the last inspection when significant weaknesses were identified. The school has successfully addressed all the key issues from the last inspection.

42. Subject co-ordinators now have clear designated powers and, according to the priorities in the school improvement plan, have opportunities to monitor classroom practice, standards of attainment, levels of resourcing and overall provision in their subjects. A rolling programme of monitoring has been identified for the three-year period of the plan and all subjects are included. Progress has been good and has resulted, for example, in the staff focusing attention on how well they are teaching mathematics. As a result of classroom observations, teachers now pay closer attention to the correct use of vocabulary. After analysing test papers at the end of Key Stage 2, staff now emphasise teaching skills of handling data in both mathematics and science. Appropriate duties have been devolved to office staff, so that the headteacher has more time to focus on the overall management of the school. There is scope for extending the delegation of tasks even further. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

43. The headteacher and all teaching staff have appropriate job descriptions, which contain a good level of detail and specific targets for individuals to achieve in a given time period. The issue to produce a detailed school development plan has been well resolved and the current plan has clear targets, with review procedures, success criteria and budgetary implications to ensure the school has an appropriate long-term commitment to improvement. The plan lays good emphasis on raising standards and improving the overall management of the school. Governors are well involved in the process. There is a recently appointed chair of the finance committee who is developing a sound over-view of finances. There is a stronger emphasis on planning and an awareness that improved software for budget control and pupil data is necessary to bring the school in line with other schools in the local education authority. A recent deficit budget has been turned into a surplus through efficient deployment of staff. For this school year, the headteacher

teaches the Year 5 class part-time, sharing the role with a part-time teacher. Governors have drawn up a policy on teaching sex education and have taken all appropriate measures to correct omissions in the school prospectus and their annual report to parents.

44. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher have improved since the last inspection. For instance, the sharing of important roles amongst them and other members of staff, such as key stage managers, is helping the staff to operate as a team. This improvement has also been the result of the headteacher taking a management course for serving headteachers and both headteacher and deputy undertaking a course on school self-evaluation. Overall, their leadership is satisfactory and has good potential to develop further.

45. Likewise, the role of governors is satisfactory and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The pace of development has increased during this school year, during which time a new chair, who has clear vision and much skill, has been appointed, a committee structure begun and links between governors and specific subjects of the curriculum introduced. The governors' monitoring of the school's effectiveness is satisfactory and with recent developments in place, has the potential to be very effective. All members of the governing body and staff now share a clear commitment to match the day-to-day operation of the school with its aims and values. With many of these aspects of development being only recent, there is scope for consolidating improvements and making the governing body more active in managing change.

46. The number of qualified and experienced teaching staff is appropriate for the school and they are well supported by classroom assistants and special needs staff. Good use is made of the special expertise of staff in physical education, science, art and music to enhance the curriculum for a wide range of pupils across different age groups. Classroom assistants give good support to teachers and to pupils with special educational needs. There is an informal induction process for new staff and a new policy and scheme for the appraisal of teaching staff based on the new threshold arrangements is being planned. Links have been established with a local 'beacon school' to enhance the professional development of staff. The site manager, cleaners, school meals and supervisory staff help to provide a safe and healthy environment for pupils and make a valuable contribution to their well-being.

47. The overall accommodation is good and shows the benefit of recent funding of new building and a rolling-programme of decoration by parents. Classrooms are being carpeted and the new library / computer suite will be an asset to teaching and learning in the school when completed. The new entrance area provides a secure and bright focus for visitors. The hall is spacious and used well for physical education lessons. The outside areas of the school are good. There is a good-sized playground area, much of which has been re-surfaced since the last inspection, and the grassed areas are used for physical education and games as well as supporting work in science, geography and art.

48. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory in quality and quantity in most areas of the curriculum and good in music, the early years and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. History and geography resources lack artefacts to help bring life to the subjects but co-ordinators are aware of these deficiencies and plan to remedy them.

49. The school makes good use of grants and other resources to improve the provision. A specific grant for improving the buildings has been used, for example, with the support of funds raised from parents and the diocese, to re-roof the school with maintenance-free cladding. The school is benefiting from its partnership with schools in the Education Action Zone and funding is providing additional resources, such as activities during school holidays, and more learning support assistants. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately. The school satisfactorily applies principles of 'best value' by comparing its standards to other local schools and satisfies itself that competition is fair when it buys contracted-out services.

50. Attainment of the children on entry to school is average and the pupils make satisfactory progress, the great majority achieve standards in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching is good and the pupils have good attitudes to school. The cost of educating a pupil is about the same as the national average. The school provides satisfactory value for money and this is a similar finding to the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. Governors and staff should:

- improve the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils, through, for example, more specific planning to meet their needs (paragraphs 23, 73, 80, 87);
- sustain the recently introduced strategies to raise the standards of writing of all pupils (paragraphs 62, 73);*
- set consistent expectations for the presentation of pupils' work (paragraphs 18, 70, 80, 86);
- make better use of assessment of pupils' attainment to plan work and develop a whole-school approach to record-keeping (paragraph 35);
- increase the role of the governing body in monitoring the school's effectiveness and planning its future (paragraph 45);
- review the time available for teaching the subjects of the curriculum in order to achieve a better balance between the core subjects and religious education and the remaining subjects (paragraph 24).

52. In addition, staff should include in their action plan the following points for improvement:

- the provision of homework (paragraph 22);
- methods of recording and monitoring authorised and unauthorised absences (paragraph 37);
- targets in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs should be more specific (paragraph 27);
- resources for history and geography when finances allow (paragraphs 48, 99, 103);*
- the formal logging of risk assessment checks and safety signs around school (paragraph 34).*

* Features in the school improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	56	33	3	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	202
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34

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	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	10	19	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	26	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (96)	93 (88)	97 (88)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	26	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (93)	93 (92)	97 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	8	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	10	13
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	17	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (87)	70 (61)	87 (74)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	13
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	16	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (78)	70 (78)	83 (87)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	169
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30.6
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	313537
Total expenditure	324595
Expenditure per pupil	1690
Balance brought forward from previous year	7378
Balance carried forward to next year	-3680

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	202
Number of questionnaires returned	78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	45	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	35	3	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	55	9	1	0
The teaching is good.	59	40	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	50	10	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	32	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	35	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	53	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	33	49	14	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	46	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	53	15	3	8

Other issues raised by parents

- The consistency with which homework is set.
- How extra-curricular activities should cater for girls as well as boys.

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

53. Children join the reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were seven children still under the age of five in the reception class. The following judgements are based on the achievements of these children and a larger group of pupils who have recently reached statutory school age. The attainment of the children on entry, as measured by an initial assessment, is average in all areas of development and there is a spread of ability among the children that is typical of most schools. The standards that the children achieve by the age of five are very securely in line with those expected in all areas of learning. This is due to the very careful assessment of their attainment on entry to school and the good teaching, which moves the children's learning forward successfully.

54. Recent funding, provided by the school's participation in the local Education Action Zone, has enabled the Early Years co-ordinator to undertake pre-school visits to parents, playgroups and nurseries. This has benefited children who enter school on a part-time basis and so quickly become familiar with class and school routines. They are welcomed into a secure and friendly environment that recognises the potential of all children as individuals.

55. Most of the children learn to work and play together harmoniously. They learn to cooperate with each other and develop their social skills through playing language and mathematical games. They show independence, for example when changing for outdoor play or physical education by doing so with the minimum of adult help. They are given responsibilities for tidying up after activities or handing out equipment. They take turns fairly and move sensibly around the class and the school for house assemblies, worship, or lessons in physical education.

56. From the earliest opportunities, children's speaking and listening skills are well developed. They learn to enjoy rhymes and songs, which are used effectively when gathering children together for group sessions. The children quickly learn to recognise their own and others' names, for example, when choosing their book bag. By the age of five, the majority of children enjoy the 'big book' story sessions and a good proportion are well established in reading simple texts. Most are able to retell the main points of well-known stories. Pencil control for writing is established early on and well supported by classroom assistants who are very effective in helping children to move from basic letter shapes to writing their own names and, eventually, simple sentences.

57. The majority of children in the reception class can count confidently to twenty and beyond. A proportion of higher-attaining children know number bonds up to ten and show an ability to carry out mental calculations, for example, when numbers of children present or absent at registration are calculated. They can recognise numerals on a clock face or a calendar. The majority make good progress in learning to understand mathematical language such as 'more', 'less', 'smaller than' when playing with construction sets. Some have learned how to enter simple commands to make a programmable toy move. They learn simple measuring when making wrapping paper for presents. Children demonstrate a wide range of attainment in numeracy by the age of five. The class teacher and support staff record the progress of all children in a detailed and comprehensive manner which helps them to know when children are ready for the next stage of learning.

58. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developed through a wide range of well-planned activities. Through 'play' activities they learn about the properties of sand, water and play-dough and learn to use appropriate vocabulary to describe them. Children were seen making careful observations of the development of tadpoles and recording their work through drawings and simple writing. Another group explored their sense of smell while making a muslin bag of various scented plants and materials. Following an earlier visit to a farm, children were seen making their own model tractors from waste materials and talked knowingly and sensibly about the ways they could improve their models. They have looked at far-a-way places such as Australia, Africa and India and seen how other people live. By the age of five, they are able to move confidently around the school and its immediate environment.

59. The issue of the lack of a secure outdoor play area and suitable equipment identified in the last report has now been addressed and all children benefit greatly from the increased range of opportunities they can now enjoy. All enjoy physical education lessons in the hall, as was seen in one lesson that very successfully developed their catching and throwing skills. They listen well and respond to directions and instructions safely and with enthusiasm. They persevere and try hard to complete the tasks set for them. They develop their manipulative skills well through the use of construction kits and are able to handle scissors with a good degree of control.

60. All children join in and sing along with a wide range of songs and rhymes. They express themselves with confidence in painting and collage work and show good skills of control of brushes and pencils when colouring their

drawings of daffodils. Many talk imaginatively about what their work represents and are pleased to talk to adults about what they have done. They have made fabric book marks and glove puppets. In their painting, drawing and collage work, the great majority of children are well on their way to achieving the recommended desirable learning outcomes. Well structured role-play in the home-corner through the 'Travel Agency' and 'School Medical Centre', for example, provide many opportunities for children to experience imaginative play.

61. All of the teaching is good and this is consistent across all areas of learning. The class teacher and support staff work closely together to provide a wide range of well-planned learning opportunities that develop the children's learning at an appropriate pace. They have a very good understanding of how young children learn and use this well in planning an appropriate curriculum for them. By the end of the year, the children have already been introduced to the more structured format of the literacy and numeracy lessons that they will experience in Key Stage 1. Children's learning is continuously and carefully assessed and staff are always aware of when children are ready to move on. The results of these assessments are used to plan the next stage of learning and this ensures a good pace of learning for the great majority of children in the reception class.

ENGLISH

62. In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, attainment was close to but below the national average. The results achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 in reading were above the national average. However, writing results were below average. Analysis of results over the last three years shows that the standards in the school have fluctuated. In Key Stage 1, standards in reading have remained above average and inspection evidence confirms that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in reading is in line with the national average. However in writing, the number of pupils achieving the expected level is average but that achieving the higher level is well below average. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are close to the national average but only a small minority of pupils are achieving at a higher level. The school is likely to be close to achieving its target of 77 per cent of pupils achieving the expected level or above in the 2000 test.

63. More detailed analysis of the test results for Key Stage 2 over the past three years shows that the performance of boys was below the national average and the girls was close to the national average. Analysis of test results for Key Stage 1 over the last three years show that boys' reading was well below average and writing below average, whereas the girls' was closer to the national average.

64. The effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the implementation of the 'literacy hour' have been successful, with teachers having clear ideas of the most effective ways of teaching. There is an appropriate balance between guided reading and guided writing. Good quality teaching particularly in Key Stage 2 is helping to ensure the development of reading and writing skills. Links between other subjects are being developed and there is evidence of good opportunities for writing in history, design and technology, science and art.

Speaking and listening

65. The standards of speaking and listening are above average across the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are becoming confident, articulate speakers. When given the opportunity, they readily respond to questions and volunteer information, for instance about the tongue-twister poems they chose in an English lesson or about their families during a history lesson. Pupils listen carefully to teachers reading stories or giving instructions and are beginning to respect the views and ideas of others.

66. The older pupils offer detailed answers to questions and participate well in both class and small group discussions. They are willing and keen to express their opinions and views. Pupils are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to explore the use of language. An example of this was observed in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were looking at gangster films and devised short scenes in American slang. The results were very reminiscent of the film.

Reading

67. Standards of reading are above average in Key Stage 1. Books are handled with care and a variety of texts are read, some fluently with understanding and expression, others with less skill. All pupils are developing strategies for reading unfamiliar words and using other clues in the books. Some are able to talk about their favourite books and explain why they enjoy them, but do not always remember the authors. Others can retell the stories they have read or heard. All pupils are beginning to develop research skills and can explain how to use a reference book. They are familiar with the contents page, index and glossary. However, they have had limited opportunities to use these skills for individual research.

68. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils are independent readers, enjoying a wide variety of poetry, stories and reference books. Many are fluent and accurate and a few read with expression. Pupils are able to discuss the plot, characters and their favourite part and make predictions as to what might happen in the story. Opportunities for independent research are given, particularly for history. For example, pupils had to find out about the life and work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Most have the appropriate skills of skimming and scanning.

Writing

69. Writing in Key Stage 1 is in line with the national average but few pupils achieve above the expected level. Pupils are able to write interesting stories but many fail to use punctuation effectively, omitting full stops, capital letters and speech marks. Most pupils write in sentences and use interesting vocabulary. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 1, although taught a cursive script have yet to transfer these skills to their everyday work.

70. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards of writing are average. Pupils write for an increasing variety of purposes, in different styles and formats. They write interesting newspaper reports about the Spanish defeat in the Armada, satisfactory journals on books that the pupils read, well-constructed play scripts, television interviews and their imaginative writing, including poems, is often of good quality. Pupils make suitable plans when writing stories that lead to well-constructed narratives. Some of the independent work has imaginative content and increasingly expressive vocabulary, for example, "it had a silent presence that was always there" and "oily well-practised voice". For some pupils knowledge of spelling rules are secure but others still spell common words incorrectly. Pupils have a good understanding of grammar and frequently use complex sentences. There were some interesting examples on display of literacy used in other areas of the curriculum: writing on Isambard Kingdom Brunel in history, describing how to make a model of a Tudor house in design and technology and how a torch works in science. The quality of handwriting and presentation across the school varies but on the whole much of the work seen is in need of tidying up and dating.

71. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They gain knowledge of reading and spelling patterns through additional support within the classroom, carefully amended tasks and occasional withdrawal.

72. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their literacy sessions and are keen to participate. They listen well, with interest, during the introductory part of the lesson and often respond with much enthusiasm to teachers' questions and the ensuing discussions. When asked to co-operate with each other in group discussion, they do, sharing ideas and respecting the views of others. The great majority of pupils are able to work sensibly on their own with little adult supervision. They remain on task and concentrate for the appropriate length of time. They share resources and often help those who are unsure of the task set. Most pupils are well behaved during lessons. The great majority of pupils express pleasure in reading and many read regularly in school and at home.

73. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2, with a minority of lessons being very good. Teachers plan well and use the structure of the Literacy Strategy to good effect. They promote the love of literacy and enjoyment of language with enthusiastic introductions of the chosen text. Teachers provide suitable activities that are well matched to the attainment of most pupils, although they often fail to provide sufficient challenge for the higher attainers. The final sessions in lessons are used effectively to reinforce the learning objectives and to share pupils' work. In Key Stage 1, teachers make good use of the text to encourage pupils to explore language in the form of tongue twisters and humorous poetry. Opportunities are provided for pupils to use a framework to assist them in writing stories and poems, but fewer opportunities are provided for them to redraft work or discover mistakes for themselves. Pupils write for a limited number of different purposes including retelling well-known stories, weekly news and creative writing. The school is aware of the need to raise standards in writing and is addressing the problem. Teachers provide tasks to develop grammar, spelling and the pupils' knowledge of letter sounds but prefer to discuss the use of punctuation with each child, using the individual's work as an example. In Key Stage 2 teachers give the pupils confidence by listening to and valuing their written and oral contributions. All teachers have a good relationship with their classes and make good use of questioning to increase pupils' knowledge and extend their understanding. Learning support staff are briefed about the work they are expected to carry out with their groups and pupils' learning is enhanced by the teachers' close liaison.

74. Since the last inspection, progress in improving provision has been satisfactory. The school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy well and a new library area is currently being completed, with a computer-controlled lending system. There is a knowledgeable and committed co-ordinator who regularly monitors teachers' planning to promote continuity and progression. She has also observed some teaching and this is having a positive impact on quality. Pupils have first-hand experience of drama when they perform the Christmas plays or class assemblies. Visits by theatre groups, book week and visits to the pantomime all enhance the pupils' language curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

75. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils attain the nationally expected level or better and this was confirmed in last year's end-of-key stage tests. However, there were few pupils achieving the higher level in those tests. Over the past three years, standards have varied from above to close to the national average but there has been no uniform trend, largely because of variation in the nature of year groups. Boys and girls performed equally well. From evidence in sampling work in the current Year 6, most pupils are working at levels expected for their age and the school is on course to achieve the targets that have been set of 69 per cent of the pupils to achieve national expectations or above.

76. At the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils achieve the expected level but there are few pupils achieving the higher level. This has been the trend in the performance of pupils in the end-of-key stage tests over the last three years. From a scrutiny of work in the current Year 2, standards are average and there are more pupils achieving the higher level.

77. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly average. Most pupils have a good understanding of the four rules of number and are usually successful in applying these when they are solving problems, for example about money. They can handle problems concerning fractions and percentages; they can add and subtract numbers with two places of decimals; and they know about angles and degrees of turn. In a lesson on probability, the pupils displayed a satisfactory understanding of terms, such as likely and unlikely, and could relate these to a scale of 0 to 1. Pupils of average and lower attainment are working at expected levels for pupils of their age but with varying success. Higher attainers can do more complicated calculations, for instance finding common denominators in fractions. The achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory across the key stage. For example, almost all pupils are working at levels appropriate for their age. Pupils' skills of mental arithmetic are developing well as a result of the emphasis teachers now place on this aspect.

78. The pupils show good attitudes to the subject. They enjoy using resources such as digit flip charts in the lessons and a feature of all lessons is the confidence with which most pupils answer questions and demonstrate what they can do at the blackboard. This is the result of the good teaching in this key stage, where pupils are encouraged to give an answer without fear of making a mistake. The pace of lessons is generally good and the pupils complete a good amount of work. However, higher attainers could achieve more and standards of presentation vary. The work in exercise books, while satisfactory overall, does not always indicate that the pupils have a real pride in their efforts and on occasions, standards deteriorate as the year progresses.

79. By the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils can calculate using numbers to 20, they recognise and can order numbers to 100 and are aware of odd and even numbers. Average and above average pupils can multiply numbers together and are beginning to set out sums in different ways, for example vertically as well as horizontally. The pupils' knowledge of shape and measures is appropriate for their age. Across the key stage, the pupils' achievement is satisfactory and most pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. A minority of pupils in both year groups find it difficult to concentrate in lessons and need to be supported by classroom assistants in order to remain on task. There were examples in lessons observed of such pupils receiving good support. As in Key Stage 2, there is scope for pupils of above average attainment to achieve more.

80. The quality of teaching is good in the majority of lessons in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. A strength of the teaching is the teachers' planning, which is consistent across both key stages and identifies well the needs of pupils of lower attainment and those with special educational needs. The pace is good in the majority of lessons and as a result the quality of learning is good. Support staff make a good contribution to the teaching as they work with groups of pupils. They were well briefed on what to do. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, this is often because the teachers spend too much or too little time on one element of the lesson and this means that there is insufficient balance in the lesson and the objectives are not fully met. In Key Stage 2, there are examples of teachers' expectations being not high enough and there is no consistency of approach to how the pupils should present their work. There are good examples of teachers marking pupils' work with detailed helpful comments, for example in Year 3, and the sharing of objectives for lessons with the pupils. These factors help the pupils to be aware of how well they are doing. More could be done, however, to involve the pupils in identifying goals for their own learning.

81. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and staff began planning for it prior to the start of the current school year. The school now uses more standardised and optional tests in order to monitor the pupils' progress and the staff have begun to identify gaps in the pupils' knowledge through a close scrutiny of test papers. As a result, staff put more emphasis, for example, on teaching the pupils how to use data in their work in mathematics and science. This year, the co-ordinator has had extensive opportunities to monitor the introduction of the new strategy, by observing in classrooms and sampling pupils' work. As a result, she is aware of the quality of the provision and standards throughout the school and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

82. The subject co-ordinator is making a good contribution to the provision and the school has planned the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy well. Classroom observations and the monitoring of teachers' plans are positively contributing to raising the staff's awareness of how to use the methods recommended by the strategy and feedback to teachers about their performance is having a good effect on, for instance, the use of correct terminology. There is a good range of assessment procedures, including standardised testing as well as pre and post-topic testing, but there is more to be done with such assessments to plan for higher-attaining pupils. A new computerised record of progress is currently being introduced which is clear and helpful for setting targets for individual pupils.

SCIENCE

83. The results of the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds were in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was below the national average. Assessment by teachers at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of attainment was well above the national average. However, no pupils reached higher than expected levels and this was well below the national average. Since the last inspection standards have not shown any significant change at either key stage. There has been no improvement in the proportions of pupils at either key stage attaining the higher than expected levels. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls at either key stage.

84. Only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 during the inspection but from this lesson and the scrutiny of pupils' work it is possible to say that current standards are broadly in line with the national average. Younger pupils in Year 1 have studied the conditions for growing plants such as beans and sunflowers and can correctly sequence a series of pictures of their own growth pattern. Pupils in Year 2 are currently looking at healthy eating and were observed making good use of information technology in a class survey of how much fruit they eat. The majority of pupils by the end of the key stage can classify and sort materials by their properties such as texture or whether they are natural or man-made. They can identify common sources of light and sound in their everyday surroundings and make a simple electrical circuit. However, their skills of investigation and recording are not so well developed and are below average.

85. By the end of Key Stage 2, investigative skills have improved and the work of pupils in Year 6 shows the benefit they have gained from an increasing emphasis on investigation and experimentation. Pupils are able to set up their own experiments and demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding of what they are required to do. They show good understanding of mixtures and solutions and use this well in devising experiments. Pupils in Year 4 show clear understanding of how to make a test fair. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can classify objects as solids, gases or liquids and use this knowledge to sort a variety of objects and materials. They can identify the main organs of the body and know their functions and have a good understanding of the effects of healthy eating. Higher-attaining pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of forces and can explain their observations clearly and with an increasing scientific basis. All groups of pupils can draw a circuit using the correct symbols and know how shadows are formed. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils have a sound body of scientific knowledge that they are able to use in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 used their knowledge of electricity when making torches, and pupils in Year 6 used their knowledge of materials when designing slippers, in their design and technology work.

86. Only a limited number of lessons were observed during the inspection but in both key stages the teaching was satisfactory or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, which is used well in questioning of pupils and in the giving of explanations. As the school adopts the new nationally approved scheme of work, teachers' planning has clearer learning objectives, which are well conveyed to pupils at the start of lessons. This enables them to know what is expected of them and they settle to their tasks more quickly. Good use is made of resources and support staff, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. Further improvement is needed in the recording of observations and the results of experiments. They are not always presented clearly and neatly.

87. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The current curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The whole-school approach to the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress currently exists in draft form only and is not yet implemented. Some recording has been started but it is not yet done in a planned, systematic way that will enable teachers to use the information to plan the work of different groups of pupils, especially higher attainers. Current resources are adequate for the teaching and learning of the subject but the co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve these when the scheme of work is fully implemented.

ART

88. Standards are in line with expected levels at the end of both key stages and these findings are similar of those at the last inspection. No teaching was observed in Key Stage 1 and very little in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on

evidence of work seen around the classrooms, teachers' planning and talking to pupils and the co-ordinator. Together they demonstrate that a range of appropriate experiences is being given to the pupils, using a variety of materials, tools and equipment. Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress developing their skills. The pupils in Key Stage 1 have used charcoal to good effect for observational drawings of teddy bears. Colour mixing helps the pupils to understand how to make various colours. They have also completed observational drawings of good quality of houses and places in Hereford, seen on a walk by the River Wye, paying attention to the detail.

89. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have experimented with colour to produce paintings of the Spanish Armada. Older pupils have successfully copied their favourite paintings covering a wide range of artists from Gauguin to Van Gogh and others. They have used different media and written about their reasons for choosing a particular picture and how easy or otherwise they found the medium to use. The pictures illustrated how carefully and closely the pupils had studied their chosen paintings. Other pictures related to topic work show how pupils try to draw as accurately as possible and how they have opportunities for developing their observational skills. Pupils also have the experience of working with clay although the school does not have a kiln and air-drying clay is used. Sketchbooks provide an additional support to the artwork and in Key Stage 2 there were examples of pupils using perspective well.

90. Although few lessons were observed, pupils expressed enjoyment in their work and in the only lesson seen it was clear that pupils are keen to produce a good piece of work. In Year 4, pupils are beginning to appreciate how to mix colours and use techniques to copy, as accurately as possible, a Monet painting. Conversations with the pupils indicated that they had really enjoyed this challenge and they worked hard to finish their picture before the lesson ended.

91. The teachers enable the pupils to acquire new skills and techniques within a narrow range of media. At present there is limited opportunity for the pupils to use textiles or to look at non-western art, although pupils were able to explore rangoli patterns as part of a project on India. The newly appointed co-ordinator is keen to implement the national guidelines which will help to ensure that there is progression in the acquisition of skills and a range of activities offered. These will also help with the assessment of pupils' attainment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Owing to the way the subject is timetabled, no lessons were seen during the inspection. Only a small sample of articles made by pupils was available, together with a small album of photographs of work done by other pupils. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. Other judgements are based on the available evidence and discussions with the coordinator and other staff, talking to pupils and a study of planning for the subject.

93. The quality of work seen shows that standards are similar to those expected of pupils at the age of eleven. These findings are similar to those at the last inspection. Pupils are able to develop some skills in the making of their models and artefacts and the design process is becoming more established throughout the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have made a 'map' of their visit to a working farm and showed appropriate skills in cutting and joining various kinds of card, paper and cloth. These have been further developed by the end of the key stage, when Year 2 pupils designed and made bridges for a variety of different purposes. In Key Stage 2, pupils' work has been closely integrated with other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 have designed and built torches in their science work on electricity. Pupils in Year 5 have taken pictures of Tudor buildings and then designed and made their own versions of them. By the end of the key stage, pupils have designed and made slippers using a wide range of materials and methods of construction. Some pupils in Year 6 recently demonstrated their skills at an exhibition where they made a working model of a lift controlled by a computer. While pupils have done some evaluation of this work, the co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop further the design aspect of all pupils' work.

94. The time allocated to the subject is adequate but blocking it with other subjects throughout the year does not always support progression in learning. At present, the school has not fully implemented the nationally approved scheme of work, which would help to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is planned for and will support teachers' planning and help to assess the development of skills in a systematic and planned way. These aspects of the subject are similar to the findings of the previous report.

95. Current resources are adequate and will be enhanced next year when the subject is allocated resources in the school improvement plan. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to increase the range of materials available to pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding.

GEOGRAPHY

96. The learning is satisfactory and the standard of attainment is in line with what is expected at the end of each key stage. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have looked at their own home and other types of homes. They have drawn a map of the local park showing the various areas. They are beginning to understand the similarities and differences between their own lives and life in India. During the inspection week, pupils in Year 1 took part in a traffic survey that gave them first-hand experience of how much traffic uses the road nearest the school. The pupils were amazed at the number of cars and were very excited when a motorbike roared passed. The older pupils in Key Stage 1 have followed a trail by the River Wye, looking at pollution and learning the appropriate vocabulary. They have also compared the features of an imaginary island to those of their local area. This island provides a link between literacy and geography. Geographical skills of enquiry are being developed as pupils begin to appreciate the differences between two locations.

97. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to discuss holiday destinations, the climate and how it affects activities. Through using a series of characters whose holiday preferences for climate, travel and activities have been compiled, pupils were asked to locate appropriate destinations for them. They used well information from atlases to help in their choice. Many were able to find good matches for their characters. Pupils in Year 4 have studied the weather and rubbish in the school. They used computers well to record their findings. They make comparisons between homes in India and their homes. During the inspection, they were looking at the names of settlements and their origin. In order to appreciate what England was like in earlier times, the pupils plotted, on a small copy of a map of southern England, places with Anglo-Saxon names. To record what kind of settlement it was they were able to devise a key. The oldest pupils know about the water cycle and use of water. A river study formed part of this topic and pupils were encouraged to argue for and against the building of a new bridge. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and work with interest and enthusiasm particularly when given the opportunity of fieldwork. They are keen to respond to teachers' questioning and to express their views. When asked, they co-operate well and share resources and ideas. Pupils respond positively when asked to carry out research, especially if it means they can use the computer.

98. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned with appropriate activities although there is little evidence of work being set which caters for the different levels of attainment in classes. Questions are used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and reinforce their understanding of geographical skills. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and, particularly in Key Stage 2, teach lessons with enthusiasm. This stimulates the pupils and has a positive effect on their learning. However, in a few lessons, pupils' noisy enthusiasm detracts from the learning.

99. Since the last inspection, when the attainment in Key Stage 1 was considered to be below the national expectations, the standard of attainment has risen and provision has improved. Although the planning was acceptable at the last inspection, geographical skills, fieldwork and coverage were weak. There is a newly appointed co-ordinator, who is collating a portfolio of work to illustrate the development and understanding of mapping skills and all other aspects of the subject. This will give her a clear idea of standards. With the implementation of the nationally recommended guidelines, coverage has been increased and progress in the acquisition of appropriate skills has been improved. The school makes good use of visitors to help pupils' understanding. For instance, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed a very interesting talk from a visitor who had recently spent time in Peru. He brought artefacts for the pupils and answered their questions as fully as he could. Fieldwork now features more prominently, with the local area providing valuable first-hand experiences for the pupils, for example in the form of a river study. However resources within the school for the subject are unsatisfactory, particularly maps, topic packs and big books for links with literacy.

HISTORY

100. Pupils' learning is satisfactory in both key stages and the standard of work seen is in line with what is expected. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about famous people from the past, such as Florence Nightingale. They have written about her life and expressed their opinions as to why she went to the hospital and her work there. They also try to reflect her feelings about the hospital. They are aware of the differences between past and present. At present the older Key stage 1 pupils are investigating their family trees and learning about chronology and time lines. They are able to appreciate that when their great grandparents were young, they lived in different circumstances from their own. A local elderly resident was invited into school to talk to the children about her memories.

101. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to talk about life in Ancient Egypt and use pictures in books to deduce what life may have been like in those days. They realise that all available clues should be considered before making a final judgment about something from the past. Other periods of history studied are the Ancient Greeks, the Romans and the Tudors. Displays of pupils' work show their developing understanding of history. A collection of models of Tudor houses is an example of how history and design and technology can be linked. Older pupils understand that there are many sources of evidence: not just photographs but artefacts and actual buildings that might hold clues to the past. Pupils talk about the heritage of Hereford and the range of buildings from different periods to be found. The first-hand experience of looking at the city helps pupils understand the changes that have taken place. The older pupils are able to

use the Internet and books for research. A project on the life and work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel shows how much research the pupils have undertaken to produce such detailed work, full of information. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and talk with confidence and enthusiasm about it. In both key stages, they are keen to respond to the teachers' questions and to express their views. The older pupils enjoy the challenge of researching a topic particularly if they can use the computer and they enjoy the excitement of a visit to Hereford to look at the buildings. When asked to work together they share resources and listen to each other's ideas.

102. Few lessons were observed but from them it is possible to form a judgement that teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. No overall judgement is possible in Key Stage 2. In the Key Stage 2 lesson observed, the teaching was very good. Teachers' planning is satisfactory with clear objectives. In the very good lesson, a practical demonstration helped the pupils to appreciate that historical clues can be misleading and that they should not jump to conclusions too soon. For example, the teacher had collected together four or five clues to a person's identity, some of them related to more than one person so more clues were needed to finally pinpoint the person. Teachers are knowledgeable and where there is an interest in the subject it has a positive effect on the pupils' learning. Questioning is used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and to reinforce learning.

103. Since the last inspection a co-ordinator has been appointed and she is having a positive impact. With the implementation of the nationally recommended guidelines, continuity and progression in acquiring skills are improved. Assessment is also being developed utilising the same guidelines. Resources for the subject are unsatisfactory, however, as there is a lack of appropriate artefacts. Nevertheless, the school makes very good use of the local area and its range of historic buildings.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards are similar to those found in many primary schools. The majority of pupils attain the expected level by the end of each key stage. There was little direct teaching of information technology seen during the inspection but all classes have a computer corner and in most cases they were switched on. In addition, the school also has a set of networked laptops and these are timetabled for use by all classes during the week. Where observed, both teachers and pupils show confidence and competence in the programs they use. This reflects the findings of the previous report. The school's current hardware limits the range of opportunities it can provide but there is a satisfactory range of programs that enable pupils to use information technology to support work in other subjects. Plans are already underway to develop a computer suite, which will enable the school to improve support in this aspect of learning.

105. Computers are being used to good effect to support learning in some subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 made good use of the computer to record the results of a class survey about healthy eating in a science lesson. The information was recorded on a database and then printed out as a graph so that the class could compare it with a similar one from a previous lesson. Pupils in Year 5 set up a class database and information was recorded in the form of graphs. Pupils show they are able to use a variety of different fonts and styles of writing. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 have used an art package to draw pictures and then combine these with brief descriptions. Pupils in Year 5 were observed using the computer to support their work in a literacy lesson on letter writing. They were able to combine text and pictures in letters they were writing to send to pupils from Peru with whom they have been corresponding via the Internet. Other work in Years 4 and 6 also shows support for literacy and language work through poems and letter writing. Evidence of pupils' work around the school shows that the subject has been used in a history topic on the life and work of Brunel and on Victorian railways. Very effective use has been made by Year 3 pupils of a digital camera to make 'combined' self-portraits using computer images and freehand drawing. Older pupils have made their own millennium calendars combining art and text.

106. A scheme of work has been introduced since the last inspection but is still not firmly established across the school. When it is in place it will enable the school to address all the requirements of the National Curriculum in a systematic and planned way. There is some recording of pupils' attainment and progress but at the present time the monitoring of pupils' performance is still too fragmented and not systematically planned. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. Good use has been made of additional funding to update the current hardware, which is inhibiting the transfer of skills across year groups. The new computer suite has the potential to help significantly to address this particular problem.

MUSIC

107. There was insufficient evidence to judge attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 as no work in Year 6 was observed. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is similar to that expected of pupils in all schools. Standards have been maintained in the key stage since the last inspection.

108. Pupils in Year 2 can distinguish between opposites in musical pieces, for example, those where the tempo is fast or slow, where the dynamics is loud or quiet or where the pitch is high or low. They play percussion instruments to reflect these qualities. The pupils know a variety of simple songs and sing them satisfactorily. They are familiar with popular classical pieces such as Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons'. The pupils' achievement during the key stage is satisfactory and the pupils enjoy making music, though some pupils can be distracted in lessons.

109. During Key Stage 2, the pupils' appreciation and awareness of music increase. Pupils take part in short performances and develop a good understanding of musical elements. This was evident in the one lesson observed in Key Stage 2, when pupils in Year 4 began composing a melody using five notes and a specific rhythm. Pupils were able to use traditional notation to score their work and were becoming familiar with the value of notes and their place on the staff. Pupils are able to evaluate what they are doing and suggest improvements. In addition, the pupils have the opportunity to perform in choirs and learn individual instruments with visiting specialists or with members of staff in extra-curricular clubs. Pupils were observed making good progress in playing brass instruments and learning how to play keyboards. Pupils achieved well in the lessons observed. They had positive attitudes to the subject and were keen to do well. However, singing in the one whole-school assembly observed was disappointing, lacking enthusiasm and skill.

110. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed. In this lesson, the teacher did not achieve the learning objectives for the lesson and was not sufficiently well prepared to extend the pupils' knowledge and skills. Nothing new was learnt, despite the planning. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. The subject specialist and the teacher in Year 5 have good expertise to help the pupils make good progress. As a result, teaching is inspiring the pupils to take part in instrument teaching and to perform in concerts and festivals. However, the time available to teach music is limited in the week and as a result objectives for learning have to be strictly defined. There is often insufficient time to consolidate and evaluate what the pupils have experienced.

111. Since the last inspection, a new co-ordinator, who is a specialist, has been appointed and teaches the subject to pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6. At the time of the last inspection, she was working in school for one day per week with pupils across the age range. She has developed a satisfactory scheme of work, soon to be updated and has a very good overview of the provision. There is now a wider range of individual instruments being taught.

112. Subject co-ordination is good and there are good plans to make music a prominent feature in the life of the school, with concerts and performances in school and participation in town festivals and competitions. There is a good range of instruments in school and of particular note is the quality of keyboards purchased by the Friends Association. These are being used well by pupils in two extra-curricular clubs each week organised by the co-ordinator. There are further clubs teaching recorder, guitar and singing. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. During the period of the inspection only 3 lessons were seen. Although no swimming was observed, the majority of pupils are achieving the requirements for this aspect of the subject. Study of planning and discussions with the co-ordinator show that the school is providing a balanced programme of activities that fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils learn to play games, gymnastic activities and respond to music through dance. Particularly good use is being made of the specialist skills and knowledge of the co-ordinator who teaches the subject across a number of classes.

114. From the lessons seen standards are above those expected for pupils of similar ages. Standards and provision have been maintained since last inspection. The children in the reception class were seen developing their catching and throwing skills in a lesson in the hall. This was later mirrored in a Year 6 lesson, which concentrated on catching and throwing skills for cricket. It was noticeable that these particular skills built on the very good start made by the youngest pupils in the school. The very good teaching in the later lesson focused well on the particular techniques that the pupils could develop and practise. It showed clearly the good progression of skills throughout the school. In another outdoor lesson with a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class, use was made of a video camera to record pupils' work so that it could be viewed at a later stage to help them develop their skills at baton changing in a relay race.

115. The quality of teaching is good. All the lessons seen were characterised by a challenging pace which enabled the majority of pupils to develop their skills and a knowledge and understanding of exercise and how their bodies work. The lessons were obviously enjoyed by all taking part and were well controlled and supervised. This was helped in no small way by the very good relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils themselves. Lessons were well planned and with clear learning objectives that were well conveyed to pupils from the outset so that they knew what was expected of them.

116. The current curriculum is being revised in the light of new guidelines for the subject and the co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject for the current year. Teaching the subject across a number of classes in the school enables him to have an oversight of the development in the subject. Visits for older pupils are made to two outdoor recreation centres and the curriculum is enhanced by a number of extra-curricular activities and clubs including rugby, football, netball, cricket and orienteering. Both boys and girls take part and the activities are well supported by both pupils and parents. The local community is involved through sponsorships and coaching schemes and the school has organised 'Skipping for Health' and 'Aid for Mozambique' projects.