

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Gilmorton Chandler CofE Primary School**

Gilmorton, Lutterworth

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120203

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Mary Ball

Reporting inspector: Dr Mike Williams  
19338

Dates of inspection: 3–6 July 2000

Inspection number: 197346

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

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane  
Gilmorton  
Near Lutterworth  
Leicestershire

Postcode: LE17 5LU

Telephone number: 01455 552343

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Maureen Sillifant

Date of previous inspection: 8 – 11 September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mike Williams	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Geography	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements.
		History	How well is the school led and managed?
		Physical education	What should the school do to improve further?
Barry Wood	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Glesni Thomas	Team Inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
		Under fives	
Graham Johnson	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Art	
		Music	
		Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

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Inspection Quality Division  
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London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Gilmorton Chandler Primary School is a rural co-educational Church of England Aided School south of Leicester, founded to educate children specifically in a Christian atmosphere. It has 204 pupils, 101 boys and 103 girls, aged between 4 – 11 years. The school takes children from seven surrounding villages, with most parents living in owner occupied housing and working in local businesses or professional occupations. Most children enter the school with above average levels of attainment. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups. Very few pupils receive free school meals. The proportion of pupils on the special needs register, 25 per cent, is slightly higher than the national average. Three have Statements of Special Educational Need. Most are identified as having moderate learning needs. The school has strong ties with the local community.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is an effective and improving school in which pupils make sound progress in their learning. Standards, by age 11, are above average overall. They are also above average at age 7. The school provides a sound quality of education. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with a significant amount of good teaching. The school has an appropriate curriculum in all subjects. Leadership and management within the school are good. Governors' management of the school is sound overall. Both governors and staff are committed to raising standards. The school provides sound value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good.
- Attendance is very good.
- Pupils' attainment is above average in most subjects taught, including English and mathematics.
- The provision and teaching for children under the age of five are good.
- A significant amount of the teaching in the school is good or very good.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school is well led.

#### **What could be improved**

- The school's and governors' relationships with the parents.
- Longer-term planning by governors.
- The teaching and learning of skills, as opposed to factual knowledge, including opportunities for pupils to apply these.
- The provision and teaching for the higher-attaining pupils.
- The use of assessment for improving the quality of the school's provision.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in September 1997, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Greatly improved leadership and management, notably over the past year, have provided the impetus and direction for this progress. Academic standards are much improved throughout the school. This year's national test results are considerably higher than last year's. The quality of education is sound following significant improvements to the management of the curriculum and to the guidance provided for teachers to raise standards of teaching and learning. Much of the teaching is good or better and the school's provision for the majority of pupils is effective in raising standards. Greatly improved systems for monitoring progress now enable the school to identify its successes and to target future improvements. Still lacking, however, is a clear strategic vision of the school's future upon which to base shorter-term planning. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, previously judged to be good, are now very good. In contrast, the school's relationships with its parents, a strong feature of the school in 1997, are now unsatisfactory.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**National Curriculum Test results for 2000:** These results have not yet been moderated and should therefore be treated as provisional.

Performance in:	% of pupils at Level 4 and above	% of pupils at Level 5
English	87	43
Mathematics	89	43
Science	92	57

Judged on the basis of the school's 1999 national test results, standards of attainment overall are close to the average for all schools nationally but low when compared with similar schools. However, the 1999 results are not in line with results in previous years. This is partly because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs in the 1999 cohort. But, it is also caused by the fact that since 1997 fewer pupils, each year, have reached levels of attainment above the national standard. By 1999, the school's results for such pupils fell below the national average in all subjects. Similar schools do much better in this respect, hence the significantly different picture that emerges of the school's academic performance when benchmarked against such schools.

The publication of the school's 2000 results, during the inspection, shows attainment to be significantly higher than in 1999. This includes the number of pupils exceeding the national standard for 11-year-olds which is hugely improved. Nearly half the pupils achieved at this level in English and mathematics and almost 60 per cent in science. However, it should be noted that pupils benefited from substantial levels of targeted support prior to this year's tests. Inspectors' findings largely confirm these improved standards, but not fully. Pupils' skills, and their application, are not as well developed as their factual knowledge. The impact on the higher-attaining pupils is to limit the standards they achieve in areas where they could be made to think for themselves more. Nevertheless, standards of attainment in six of the ten subjects taught at Key Stage 2 are above those expected nationally. This level of achievement is broadly matched at Key Stage 1, including pupils' results in the tests for 7-year-olds and also in the standards achieved by the under five children.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour throughout the school is very good. Pupils are courteous, polite and helpful.
Personal development and relationships	Children under five make good progress in their personal and social development. For older pupils, their personal development and their relationships, with adults and between themselves, are very good.

Attendance	Attendance continues to be very good and is better than the national average.
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Pupils' very positive attitudes towards school, in and out of lessons, help them to learn. They are respectful, attentive and enthusiastic and behave well as a matter of principle and not just of sanction. Their values and relationships with others are strengths of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Approximately 40 per cent of the teaching seen was good and of this around 20 per cent was very good and one lesson was excellent. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in four per cent. Good or better teaching is found in all subjects and is good overall for the children under five. Literacy and numeracy skills are soundly taught and in some classes well taught. Teachers value pupils' efforts, which results in high levels of pupils' interest and motivation and ultimately in good learning and achievement. In the best lessons, teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and provide them with tasks well matched to their abilities. Teachers' expectations are high, as are the standards pupils achieve. In the less effective lessons, teachers are not so precise about what pupils are to learn and how this is to be achieved. Expectations are sometimes too low, especially for pupils capable of higher attainment. The teaching of skills is not always prominent enough in teachers' objectives and planning. This is a weaker aspect of pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching and make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for the under fives is good. For pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, it is satisfactory. The school achieves good coverage of the full range of National Curriculum subjects. Insufficient emphasis is given to the teaching of skills when planning the school's provision. Activities planned in the split-age classes are not always appropriate for the needs of the older, more able pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs. The Individual Educational Plans and the support provided for these pupils enable them to achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultural traditions beyond their own is still given too little emphasis.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community and has effective procedures to ensure the health and welfare of its pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are sound; for monitoring and promoting good behaviour they are very effective.

The school has made considerable progress in developing its curriculum and this has had a significant impact on raising standards. The school realises the need to continue this work in order to ensure that its provision challenges all pupils and that a more suitable balance is achieved between the teaching of skills and factual knowledge. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. The school is very alert to the welfare of its pupils and to their personal development as maturing individuals. Relations between the school and parents are currently under strain and do not provide a satisfactory basis for enhancing pupils' learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management within the school, especially that of the (acting) headteacher, has been a key factor in taking the school forward since the last inspection. Staff have played a full part in this.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors give the school sound support and are increasingly aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They are beginning to monitor the school's performance effectively. Their failure to provide the school with a clear development strategy for the next few years is a continuing weakness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The emphasis given to monitoring and evaluation has had a sharp impact on standards and the school's planning and decision-making.
The strategic use of resources	The school's accommodation and learning resources are adequate and well managed. The number of staff is barely adequate and there is considerable staffing instability. This has seriously disrupted the learning of pupils in one of the classes. Class sizes are generally high. The school makes sound use of the funds available to it.

The sharp improvement in standards in the school, particularly in the current year, is the result of effective management and very good leadership. However, in the longer-term this improvement is put at risk by the school's (governors') failure to produce a clear plan of action for the future in order to reduce the financial pressures on the school. Too much of the decision making continues to be focused on short-term solutions to immediate problems, many of which result in high levels of discontinuity and instability within the school. Purchasing decisions are effectively guided by the principle of best value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic standards are improving in the school.</li> <li>The children enjoy coming to school and are well motivated to learn and the school cares for their well-being and personal development.</li> <li>Behaviour is very good throughout the school and expectations of the children are high.</li> <li>The good quality of some of the teaching.</li> <li>The range of after-school sporting activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication and links between the school and parents, and the governing body and parents.</li> <li>The high levels of staff turn-over, which disrupt children's learning in the class(es) concerned.</li> <li>More consistency in the quality of teaching.</li> <li>Adherence to the school's homework policy by all teachers.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support the positive views of the school held by parents. They also feel that parents are justified in expressing concerns about the items they identify as requiring improvement.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The previous inspection report judged that standards of attainment were generally in line with nationally expected standards, apart from English at Key Stage 1 where standards were above average and design and technology and information technology where standards were unsatisfactory. It also noted that pupils' numeracy skills were weak in Key Stage 2 and that attainment by the more able pupils was generally lower than it should be in many subject areas.
2. Based on current inspection findings and the school's results in this year's national tests (2000), standards have improved sharply at Key Stage 2 and have been successfully maintained at above average levels at Key Stage 1 and in the reception class. At Key Stage 2, the school's results this year in English, mathematics and science are significantly higher than last year's (1999), both in the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard and in the proportion exceeding it. They are way ahead of anything the school has achieved previously.
3. Inspection findings confirm the higher achievement this year but not quite at the levels indicated in the school's test results. Inspectors find the standards achieved overall in Year 6 to be slightly lower than those reflected in the test results and to be much lower than this in one of the Year 5/6 classes. In both classes, there are traces of underachievement among the higher attaining pupils in a number of subject areas and the older pupils' independent study skills are still not sufficiently developed for their age and abilities. One explanation for this difference in judgement is the impact on pupils' test performance of substantial amounts of well-targeted support specifically designed for this purpose. This proved highly successful.
4. Even so, improved standards are evident right across the curriculum. This applies to both key stages. Satisfactory or better standards of attainment exist in all subjects, including design and technology and information technology, throughout the school. Of the ten subjects inspected at Key Stage 2, the point of exit from the school, six show standards of attainment at levels above those found in the majority of schools nationally. In the 1997 inspection, only one subject, art, was in this position.
5. The major factors leading to this improvement have been:
  - the determination of the acting headteacher and staff to raise standards;
  - the implementation in Key Stage 2 of setting by ability for English and mathematics and the introduction of specialist teaching;
  - better curriculum provision and guidance for teachers' planning, including the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;
  - improved levels of teaching in most lessons.
6. The judgement that achievement in the school is on an upward curve, especially at Key Stage 2, is largely dependent on the school's performance this year. Judged on the basis of the school's results between 1997 and 1999, the trend in Key Stage 1 is mainly positive but in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 1, standards are generally above the national average. Even so, standards in reading have not kept pace with the rate of improvement nationally. On the other hand, the proportion of pupils doing better than the national standard in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 has climbed steadily year-by-year and is now consistently above national averages. The 2000 results help to confirm this positive trend on a more consistent basis.
7. The picture at Key Stage 2 is more complex. The school appears from its test results for 1997 and 1998 to be achieving well. Then in 1999 there is a sharp downward turn in the school's performance, due in part to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the cohort concerned. But this does not tell the whole story. If looked at in terms of the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in English, mathematics and science, the school performed above the national average in 1997 and 1998. However, if judged on the basis of the proportion of pupils achieving beyond the national standard, the picture is very different.

The proportion falls each year and by 1999 the number of higher attaining pupils at Gilmorton is below national averages in all three subjects. The impact of this underlying weakness becomes even more significant when the school's results are compared to those of schools of similar intake and character. By 1999, the school's results indicate that:

- standards are well below average in English and very low in mathematics and science;
  - many pupils arrive at Gilmorton with higher than average attainment but few leave with standards of attainment at this level.
8. The 2000 results represent a huge reversal of this trend, both in the proportion of pupils achieving national standards and in the proportion of pupils exceeding them. These results highlight the school's very real progress in raising standards as well as pointing the way forward. The majority of current Year 6 pupils now make sound or better progress and achieve appropriately or well for their age and abilities. This was not the case at the time of the last inspection. But the school is yet to demonstrate that the quality of its provision, without the intervention of additional measures, is consistently strong enough to maintain these standards. There is evidence of this quality in Years 3 and 4 but this is not sufficiently sustained in Years 5 and 6 at the moment.
  9. The youngest children in the school successfully capitalise upon their prior knowledge and their abilities during their short stay in the reception class. The school makes sound provision for these children and by age five they comfortably attain the nationally recommended learning targets for their age and begin to follow the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1. Children make good progress with their personal and social skills. Their language and literacy skills are well developed. They read simple texts, display above average speaking and listening skills and write simple sentences. Children have good counting skills. They count in tens, order numerals and solve simple number problems. They make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and satisfactory progress in their creative and physical development. They are well supported by good teaching and an effectively planned curriculum.
  10. At Key Stage 1, pupils successfully build on this good start and develop a good range of basic skills. Overall, most make sound progress and achieve appropriately. They continue to reach standards of attainment above those nationally expected for their age but of more average level when compared to pupils in similar schools. They do slightly better in reading than writing. By the end of the key stage, many read fluently and discuss the plot of the book they are reading. A significant number are achieving above the national standard for their age. This is not the case in writing where only a small minority of pupils have acquired the skills of writing coherently, imaginatively and accurately. The fact that the Literacy Hour is not used frequently enough to support writing in subjects other than English does not help this situation. In mathematics, pupils have a good knowledge of their multiplication tables and above average ability in mental arithmetic. However, the progress of the higher-attaining pupils is sometimes restricted by the limited scope of the tasks they are given. Standards in science are above average, both in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the material covered and in their investigative skills.
  11. The high standards that pupils achieve in Key Stage 1 are also evident in their attainment in other subjects. In design and technology, geography, information technology and art, standards are above nationally expected levels and in most cases have improved since the last inspection. The school has been very successful in ensuring that the national focus on literacy and numeracy has not been at the expense of the wider curriculum. Good planning and a lot of good teaching enable pupils to do well right across the curriculum. In music, physical education and history, standards are in line with national expectations.
  12. In Key Stage 2, although the majority of pupils continue to make sound progress and achieve appropriately, there is variability in the rates of progress pupils make in Years 5 and 6. Most pupils continue to develop good reading skills but by the end of the key stage the average and above average readers do not receive enough guidance in their choice of literature to achieve as well as they should and this limits their progress. Likewise in mathematics, the vast majority of pupils have well-developed numeracy skills but those in the higher ability groupings are not always sufficiently challenged by the work set. In science, there are significant differences in the standards achieved by the two Year 5/6 classes, as well as differences in the rates of progress achieved between the higher-attaining pupils and the rest of the pupils. The key factor here is the quality of teaching. In one class, the teaching is largely good and all

pupils, apart from the higher attaining pupils, achieve at least in line with their abilities. In the other class, weak teaching prevents all but a few pupils making the progress of which they are capable. There is much greater consistency in pupils' achievements and learning in Years 3 and 4, mainly due to the good teamwork and partnership that exists between the two teachers. The impact of the school's improved structures and provision is clearly evident in the standards pupils achieve in these two classes. In the 1997 inspection report, progress in Year 3 was judged unsatisfactory.

13. Although making sound progress, pupils' learning overall in Key Stage 2 is limited by the lack of emphasis on the teaching of skills, as opposed to factual knowledge. This applies more to Years 5 and 6 than to the younger pupils in the key stage and particularly to the higher attaining pupils. In the main, pupils display very good levels of factual information but much less confidence when asked to apply this knowledge. This is especially noticeable in the development of pupils' investigative skills in science, history and geography. The good start pupils make in these subjects in Key Stage 1, and carry through to Years 3 and 4, falls away in the top classes.
14. As in Key Stage 1, a strength of pupils' attainment is that it extends across the majority of subjects. In Key Stage 2, this achievement is considerably assisted by the introduction of specialist teaching in art, music, physical education and design and technology. In these subjects, standards are consistently above nationally expected levels. In some aspects of physical education (for example, games), standards are very high, particularly amongst the girls. In information technology, geography and history, standards are in line with national expectations.
15. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers provide effective Individual Education Plans for these pupils, which are well supported by the ancillary staff. All but a very small number of pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with the national standards for their age by the end of Key Stage 1. They maintain this progress in Key Stage 2. The contribution of the additional literacy support for these pupils has enabled them to make good progress in their basic literacy skills, as has the focus of the Numeracy Hour on basic number skills. The school also makes specific provision for its more able pupils through a school policy and register. This is a new development and is yet to make any significant impact on the quality and consistency of pupils' achievement and learning, especially in Key Stage 2.
16. The school sets overall achievement targets in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in conjunction with the local education authority. The targets set for 1999 and 2000 were unrealistically low, having already been comfortably achieved in 1997 and 1998. They served no useful purpose as a strategy for improving standards and are in the process of review. Until recently, the school's commitment to high achievement was not reflected in the targets that it set itself.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. The previous report stated that pupils' attitudes were positive and behaviour was good, with occasional reservations. It judged that pupils' personal development was sound and that relations were harmonious, with no aggressive behaviour evident. These occasional reservations no longer apply. The school has very high expectations of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and pupils respond accordingly. Parents strongly approve of the school's performance in this respect.
18. Pupils are very happy to attend school and arrive in a calm and purposeful mood. They have very good attitudes. Most pupils, including the younger ones, concentrate well and realise that sustained effort will help to produce good results. All listen well and quickly develop the confidence and skills to participate effectively in lessons. Pupils respond readily to instructions and move between tasks without fuss or disruption. This is a particularly strong feature of the physical education lessons in Key Stage 2 where pupils' very positive and responsive attitudes are key factors in the high standards of performance achieved.
19. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good. Following the implementation, this year, of a new behaviour policy, the introduction of class discussion sessions (circle time) and of the School Council, pupils display a greater acceptance and understanding of the need for good behaviour than previously. The result is a calm and productive working atmosphere

throughout the school. In the early years class, there are no displays of sulking or over-boisterous behaviour. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are mature and are very aware of the need for self-discipline. Behaviour around the school is also very good. There have been no exclusions from the school in the last three years.

20. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils, and older and younger pupils, is very good. There is consistent evidence of trust and empathy. Pupils and staff are bound by a strong sense of community and mutual respect for each other. In the classroom, pupils share resources, are helpful with one another and are invariably courteous and polite. Boys and girls relate effectively to each other. They play successfully together in mixed sports teams, supporting each other with a refreshing absence of silliness and disrespect. Pupils welcome visitors to the school, engage them easily in conversation and take pride in their school and their work.
21. Pupils' personal development is very good throughout their time in school. This is a caring community in which pupils look after each other and have an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves. The award made at an assembly to a pupil for his outstanding care to others at a Millennium Cubs' camp provides a good example of this awareness. The contribution of the School Council is another. On their own initiative, pupils organised a sponsored silence to complete the collection of moneys for their sponsored charity, "Send a cow to Africa".
22. The previous report indicated that attendance at the school was very high. This has continued over the last four years. All classes have attendance rates above the national average and many pupils have exemplary attendance records throughout their time in school. Historically, unauthorised absence has been very low but during the last year some inaccurate coding in a few teachers' registers has spoiled an otherwise very good picture. Family holidays taken during term-time are a significant reason for authorised absence. Pupils are punctual in arriving at school and lessons begin promptly.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

23. Overall, during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory. It was very good in 18 per cent of lessons seen, good in a further 20 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 55 per cent. Of the remaining lessons observed, one was excellent and the other two unsatisfactory.
24. The learning of children under five is good as a result of the good quality of teaching they receive. This is at its best in the areas of personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding, due to well focused planning and high expectations. In the areas of creative and physical development, children's learning is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in the area of physical development is limited by the lack of a dedicated outside play area for these children.
25. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and this leads to sound achievement and learning on the part of the pupils. In terms of the individual subjects, teaching is:
  - good in science, art, geography and design and technology;
  - satisfactory in English, mathematics, music, history, physical education and information technology.
26. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but this masks some significant variations in quality between the two Year 5/6 classes. It also masks large amounts of very good teaching in both Year 3/4 and in Year 5/6. The younger pupils in the key stage make steady progress overall. In design and technology, physical education and music, they make good progress and this carries through into Years 5/6 as a result of very good teaching. Lessons in these subjects are taught throughout the key stage by the subject co-ordinators. Where lessons in Year 5/6 are taught by the classteachers, the quality of pupils' achievement and progress is highly variable. In one of the classes, standards fall away sharply as a result of weak teaching. In Key Stage 2 as a whole, teaching is:
  - very good in music and physical education;
  - good in art and design and technology;

- satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and information technology.
27. This represents a considerable improvement in the standards of teaching since the last inspection in 1997 when over 30 per cent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory and less than ten per cent judged to be very good. The previous inspection report noted that teachers lacked confidence in teaching information technology and design and technology. This weakness has been successfully rectified. The main reasons for the higher individual standards of teaching and the improved consistency in the quality of teaching across the school are:
- the development and application of a whole-school teaching and learning policy, including specific guidance about lesson planning and clear criteria for improving teaching;
  - the introduction of specialist teaching in music, design and technology, physical education and art at Key Stage 2;
  - the effective monitoring of teaching by the acting headteacher, the subject co-ordinators and the local authority advisor;
  - a secure curriculum, including literacy and numeracy strategies, to underpin teachers' planning.
28. Nonetheless, these improvements are undermined by weaknesses in the school's current staffing arrangements. Two classes have operated with temporary teachers for the whole of this year, one of the classes having had four different teachers during this period. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents voiced major concerns about this, and justifiably so. The unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection was in one of these classes. Efforts to bring greater consistency and quality to the school's teaching are significantly hampered by this situation.
29. The key feature in the most successful lessons is the clarity of the teacher's objectives, which remain tightly focused throughout the lesson. This was well illustrated in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson on the equivalence of decimal and fractional values. The teaching motivated and inspired pupils, promoted learning of the highest quality and helped pupils to attain standards which were well above average. At the end of the lesson, when asked what they had learned, various pupils contributed, saying:
- "I've learned you can get decimal and fractional values which are the same";  
 "I've learned what equivalence means";  
 "I've learned how to add and take away decimals";  
 "I've learned how to add mixed fractions" ;  
 "I thought that hundredths were easy, but it was more difficult".
30. A Year 2 science lesson displayed similar strengths. The learning objectives were shared with the pupils in a well focused introduction at the start of the lesson and remained central to the lesson's development and pupils' learning thereafter. Pupils made good progress.
31. The least effective lessons, in contrast, lack clarity of purpose and focus. Teachers are less clear about what they want pupils to learn and how this is to be achieved. Tasks are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' prior attainment and abilities. In the unsatisfactory lessons, these failings are more acute and for a considerable number of pupils, especially the more able pupils, underachievement results. Even where the teaching is otherwise satisfactory, there is a tendency for teachers to underemphasise the development of skills in favour of the learning of factual information. The effects of this imbalance are more pronounced at the top end of the school where the opportunities for the Year 6 pupils, especially the higher attaining pupils, to achieve at appropriate levels for their age and abilities are constrained. This weakness is most evident in science, geography and history where pupils' investigative and independent study skills are not as good as they should be.
32. Throughout the school, teachers' management of pupils is good. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond accordingly. In most lessons, teachers create a purposeful climate for learning. As a result, pupils are positively motivated and concentrate well. Teachers' own interest and expertise in the subjects they teach adds to pupils' positive motivation. The good teaching seen in the under fives is characterised by good knowledge and understanding of children's emotional, social and intellectual development. Under fives benefit from challenging learning opportunities in a secure and nurturing environment:

consequently they make good progress. Good subject knowledge is also a strong feature of the very good music and physical education teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers are able to identify precisely the skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn in order for them to evaluate and improve their own performance.

33. Good organisation is also a strong feature of most teaching. Teachers are clear about classroom routines and pupils respond appropriately. Time is not wasted with needless organisation. In the best lessons, the focus is on learning and generating high rates of activity, as, for example, in the Key Stage 2 games lessons that were observed. The pace was brisk, the organisation of time and resources was excellent, the expectations high and the learning outcomes very good. In contrast, occasional lessons in both key stages lack pace or have over-long introductions and as a result pupils' interest wanes and learning is not as effective as it could be. Good use is made of learning resources and support staff are appropriately deployed.
34. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory throughout the school and good for under fives because the children in this age group receive a higher level of challenge. In Key Stage 2, pupils are organised into higher and lower ability groups for English and mathematics over two academic years: Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. This works well for the lower ability groups. Pupils are suitably stretched and achieve to their capabilities. In the higher group, this is not consistently the case. The older pupils in each year group are not always sufficiently challenged, though the extension classes provided for Year 6 pupils are effective in this respect. However, these only take place once a week. This weakness is also evident in some Key Stage 1 lessons where the school's knowledge of pupils' prior attainment and learning is not accurate enough to ensure that teachers' planning is appropriately matched to pupils' needs.
35. Literacy teaching is always at least satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, there is occasional good teaching, for example, a Year 3/4 lesson in which pupils explored the use of persuasive language in a mobile phone advertisement. In Key Stage 1, teaching is sometimes constrained by the limitations of the task set. For instance, in a reception class lesson on devising a catalogue of stories about bears, not enough time was given to exploring the range of books which might be included before pupils began recording details of specific texts. Numeracy teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and there are several instances of good mental mathematics sessions in both key stages. For instance, in Year 2, effective questioning enables pupils to develop good levels of agility in mental calculation. In a Year 5/6 lesson, supermarket promotional material was used to good effect to emphasise the relevance of mathematics in everyday life.
36. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. These pupils are well supported, both in teachers' planning and by teachers and support staff during lessons. This enables them to make good progress.
37. Homework is a concern for parents, a number of whom are dissatisfied with the amount set. Evidence from the inspection indicates that parents are justified in their concern in so far as the school's homework policy is not consistently adhered to by all teachers, especially in Key Stage 2. This limits its effectiveness but so does the failure of a sizeable number of pupils to submit their homework on time. In most classes, homework is well used to support pupils' learning, especially in Key Stage 1 and reception. Pupils are actively encouraged to take books home and the vast majority become fluent and enthusiastic readers.

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

38. The school has successfully overcome the weaknesses in curriculum provision identified in the last inspection report and now offers a full range of learning experiences for its pupils. Previously identified weaknesses in the allocation of time to science, design and technology and information technology have been rectified and music now plays a prominent part in the life of the school. Teachers have access to well-designed schemes of work which support planning for each subject. The school has worked hard to ensure coherent coverage of the attainment targets for each subject, taking care that pupils do not unnecessarily revisit areas of

learning in successive years in the mixed-age Key Stage 2 classes. Statutory requirements are fully met.

39. The major factors leading to this improvement are:

- the strong focus on the curriculum in the school's post-Ofsted Action Plan in 1997;
- the direction and guidance provided by the acting headteacher in implementing the school's subject policies, schemes of work and planning arrangements;
- the increasingly effective use of the school's monitoring and evaluation system to assess progress and identify next steps.

40. Nevertheless, shortcomings relating to progression in the learning of skills still persist. For example, investigative skills are practised in mathematics and science but not with sufficient frequency to ensure that they become a regular part of pupils' strategy for problem solving. Similarly, pupils acquire good geographical skills in Key Stage 1 but these skills are not sufficiently extended with the result that the early momentum is lost. Teachers often focus too closely in their planning on the areas of knowledge they wish to cover without having a sufficient view of the skills they need to teach. This often leads to the asking of questions that anticipate the length and nature of the answers pupils are expected to give. A narrow focus of lesson content also sometimes limits the quality of learning among higher attaining pupils, because they are not challenged to practise the skills necessary to develop independent enquiry and self-expression at an appropriate level.
41. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are broadly effective, and pupils have a firm understanding of fundamental literacy and numeracy skills by the time they leave the school. The basic skills of reading, including the learning of letter sounds, are taught systematically. Literacy is sometimes used well to support other areas of learning, for example, science at Key Stage 1 and history at Key Stage 2, but this aspect of the curriculum is capable of further development.
42. The school provides a satisfactory, though somewhat unbalanced, range of extra-curricular activities. Sport and musical activities are well developed but there are fewer opportunities for pupils whose interests lie elsewhere. The school grounds are well adapted for environmental education, and the village is frequently used for historical study and art. The curriculum is sometimes enriched by visits from drama groups or music ensembles and visits are regularly arranged to the theatre, town and farm to support the English, history and science curriculums. Participation in local and regional sporting events is a strong feature of the school's extra-curricular provision.
43. The curriculum is well adapted for pupils with special educational needs so that they feel fully involved in the activities of the class. These pupils are well supported in their work, by both teachers and support staff. The school has good procedures for the early identification of particular needs; the headteacher, co-ordinator and teachers work well together to ensure that appropriate provision is secured, and the school confers regularly with the specialist staff of the local authority. Pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are making good progress towards the targets identified for them.
44. The curriculum is socially inclusive: each pupil has equal access to the curriculum and is offered appropriate opportunities to succeed. Satisfactory compensatory arrangements are made for those pupils who miss class work to benefit from specialist music teaching. The school makes good provision for the personal, health and social education of its pupils. At Key Stage 1, teachers mainly discuss significant matters of interest as they arise, sometimes using the key stage assemblies for this purpose. At Key Stage 2, pupils enter role-play or discuss relevant issues, such as bullying or isolation, in class lessons and assemblies. The school has appropriately considered its policies for drugs and sex education, which are principally dealt with through the science curriculum.
45. The school provides satisfactorily for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of its pupils. Provision for spiritual and cultural development has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now satisfactory, while that for moral and social education remains good. Subject leaders have identified particular areas of the curriculum that may be used to provide opportunities for these aspects of pupils' learning; this has made a positive impact on the overall improvement in quality.



46. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is principally promoted through the school's English, science and music curricula. For example, pupils at Key Stage 1 are encouraged to marvel at the daily growth of plants and to consider animals and trees with wonderment when they are asked to draw or write about them. Older pupils are sometimes required to reflect and comment on music, or to view theatre productions that evoke a strong emotive response. Prayers provide a point of reflection at the end of the day in all classes. The quality of collective worship and religious education at the school are inspected separately under Section 23 of the School Inspection Act 1996.
47. The school provides well for pupils' moral education, both in lessons and in the playground. Pupils are taught a sense of responsibility towards wildlife; for example, one class was told to be very quiet so as to avoid distress to the invertebrates they were handling in a science lesson. Pupils discuss moral issues in their personal writing, such as dropping litter and fox hunting. Teachers provide a good model for pupils, showing respect for their ideas and genuine understanding of their feelings. Throughout the school, there is an underlying expectation that pupils and teachers will treat each other fairly and with consideration.
48. The school also provides well for pupils' social development. The school instils a strong sense of community through the sharing of achievement in assemblies and through its promotion of fund-raising activities, which engender a sense of collective responsibility towards less fortunate communities in other parts of the world. A School Council has been established as a forum for pupils' suggestions and views. As they grow older, pupils are given increasing responsibility for tasks outside the classroom, such as preparing for school assembly. However, in lessons, the older, higher attaining, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to research information or pursue a line of study independently. Instead, teachers do the "thinking" for their pupils.
49. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactorily promoted. They are effectively introduced to their own cultural heritage: for example, through historical studies of Gilmorton and Lutterworth, or through visits to a local farm. Pupils' understanding of their linguistic heritage is sometimes enriched by theatre visits or presentations by drama groups. The history curriculum provides opportunities to learn about past cultures, such as those of the Indus Valley civilisation and Britain in Victorian times. However, although pupils learn about some aspects of Hinduism, there are generally not enough opportunities for them to learn about the cultural traditions of others and representatives of different cultures are not invited with sufficient frequency to share their experiences with the pupils.
50. The school has good links with the local community; these contribute well to pupils' learning. The school has close ties with the local church and has developed productive relationships with playgroups and secondary schools to support those that are entering or leaving the school. Close links with local primary schools and other establishments have been developed for sports' competitions and curriculum support.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The previous inspection report indicated that the support and guidance for pupils was generally good. Pastoral support was of high quality. In contrast, the monitoring and assessment of pupils' day-to-day academic progress was weak. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop and strengthen all aspects of its support, guidance and welfare arrangements. To this end, the school's aims are effectively met. This area of the school's provision is good and successfully contributes to pupils' academic achievement and personal development.
52. In spite of the comparatively high levels of staff turn-over, teachers make sure that they have a secure knowledge of all their pupils. In many cases, this is considerably assisted by the close links that exist between the staff, governors and families within the local community. The headteacher and her colleagues accept their pastoral role with enthusiasm, diligence and real commitment. As a result, pupils always feel well supported but without experiencing any constraint upon their freedom to develop personal independence and responsibility. Parents in turn feel that a good feature of the school is its provision of a safe, sensitive and caring environment. They trust the school and value its commitment to their children's welfare.
53. The school has introduced effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in all areas of the curriculum. The lack of focus in such procedures was a weakness at the time of the last inspection and the school has worked hard to ensure that it now collects much more information in order to form a clear view about the attainment and progress of each pupil. Nevertheless, these procedures tend to emphasise the acquisition of knowledge rather than the learning of skills with the result that teachers have a good understanding of what pupils know but are less clear about the skills pupils need to learn next. There is some variation in the assessment of pupils' skills in English; at Key Stage 2, for example, spelling levels are much more carefully monitored than the quality of handwriting. Also, assessment is not yet consistently used to guide teachers as they plan the learning for pupils of different attainment. While tasks for lower and average-attaining pupils are generally well matched to their learning needs, those set for the higher-attaining pupils often do not take sufficient account of their previous attainment.
54. The acting headteacher has worked hard with staff to devise means by which pupils' progress may be tracked across the school but these measures are too recent to have had much impact yet in raising standards of teaching and learning. Data from standard assessment tasks has been analysed to determine performance trends in English, mathematics and science and the establishment of booster classes and specialised teaching groups has helped to raise standards of attainment generally. The school has made a good start in providing itself with the means to use assessments, both external and internal, as a means for target setting and evaluating progress.
55. The procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are very effectively applied and take good account of the national Code of Practice. Teachers regularly assess the progress pupils make towards their learning targets, consulting closely with support staff and with the special needs co-ordinator. Individual Education Plans are regularly reviewed for pupils' personal and academic progress. The school takes full advantage of the specialised assessment facilities offered by the local education authority when these are appropriate.
56. Records of achievement files, for each pupil, are satisfactory and contain reports and relevant information for the pupil's time in the school. All pupil-based information is carefully updated by the school bursar and presented in such a way as to be helpful in the event of an emergency.
57. The school has a very good range of support, guidance and welfare policies, which have been reviewed by the acting headteacher and governors during the last year. These successfully guide and underpin the school's practice. Staff are well informed about them and implement them consistently. The school welcomes outside agencies to support pupils on a routine basis, or in the event of specific problems. The school nurse has had a long relationship with the school and is very effective in helping with the teaching of personal and social education, including sex education. The acting headteacher has received off-site child protection training during the present year and all staff have subsequently undergone training within school. Child protection procedures are now very good. The school is extremely vigilant and alert to possible problems in this area.

58. The school continues to have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Its procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour have been recently reviewed under the direction of the acting headteacher. The revised policy gives increased and effective emphasis to the positive aspects of behaviour. Achievement awards in assembly, the golden book and the School Council encourage the development of self-discipline and personal responsibility, to good effect. The code of conduct is well displayed around the school and its implementation is consistent and fair. Pupils are happy with the expectations made of them.
59. Attendance procedures are good, apart from occasional inaccuracies of coding in the registers. This has helped to produce very good attendance figures over many years. Low rates of unauthorised absence are assisted by the efficiency of the school bursar, who telephones parents if pupils are absent. Parents are dutiful about their statutory obligations regarding their children's attendance at school. These obligations are made very clear in the school prospectus.
60. The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff, as indicated by the very low levels of reported accidents. However, the school has only one trained first-aider amongst its staff. This is inefficient. Apart from this, emergency procedures are effective. Health and safety procedures are generally good, under the guidance of an enthusiastic governor who undertakes inspections on a regular basis. Teachers pay very good attention to health and safety matters when using the external facilities, particularly with younger children. However, there are a few minor health and safety concerns which are known to staff but which have not received attention to date.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

61. The previous inspection report stated that the school's relationship with parents was generally good and improving, the only weakness being the school's failure to give parents a clear understanding of what was taught. The picture is no longer so encouraging. Parents' questionnaire returns indicate significant levels of dissatisfaction. Too many parents now hold negative views of the school which are aired in the local community to the detriment of the school in terms of pupil recruitment. Very occasionally this dissatisfaction has led to parents withdrawing their children from the school.
62. There are four areas that concern a significant number of parents:
- communication between the school, governors and themselves;
  - the arrangements for informing them of their children's progress;
  - the amount of homework set;
  - the range of extra-curricular activities.
63. On all four counts, parents have some justification for their dissatisfaction. The school does not communicate effectively with parents, particularly when they live at significant distances from the school or do not have access to teachers on a regular basis. Homework is not consistently set in all classes, as required in the recently introduced school policy. Equally, pupils are sometimes inconsistent in complying with the new arrangements. Many do not hand in their homework on time. The school's extra-curricular provision is narrowly based, focusing largely on sporting activities for pupils in Key Stage 2. Apart from music, there is no out-of-school provision in the expressive arts. The school has begun to expand its programme of visits but for a school of this size parents are justified in feeling that its out-of-school provision could be better.
64. The school's failure to communicate effectively with its parents limits the quality of its educational partnership. The mission statement, as developed in its prospectus, is not yet fully realised in enabling all parents to play a role in the school or affect the school's ethos. The school has an open door policy, whereby all parents are encouraged to come into the school at either end of the day but this is difficult for the two thirds of parents who live outside the village. However, the school does have approximately 30 parents who help in the school and they provide a valuable resource both inside and outside the classroom on a regular basis. Although some of the co-opted governors are also parents, with pupils at the school, there is only one parent governor and this gives insufficient balance to the governing body. The Parent-Teacher Association is promoting some cohesion between parents and the school.

They are very hardworking and beneficial to the school, both financially and in terms of the integration of parents.

65. Information presented to parents is of mixed quality. Policies and procedures are well written but parents would benefit from their display in the school. Other written communications are very formal in tone and respectful to the role of parents and give them sufficient time to react. The two-weekly newsletter has filled a void in written communications and tries to engage parents in the school. Although parents feel that the school is approachable there are insufficient strategies for informal communications to flourish and teachers are not proactive in engaging parents at either end of the day. Helping with the bus arrangements for taking children home diverts teachers from this key activity. Hence, the school has insufficient informal access to parents and has been taken by surprise by the sentiments expressed at the parents' pre-inspection meeting. The annual reports to parents are satisfactory. However, there is no opportunity for either pupil or parent feedback and there are no indications of any targets for the following year.
66. Communication difficulties also exist between a minority of parents and the governing body, with parents feeling isolated from the decision-making processes and failing to understand the reasons for some of the decisions made. Governors' failure to provide the school, and parents, with a clear management plan for the school's development is a major cause of the misunderstandings that arise.
67. Although the majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement, the educational partnership has not developed sufficiently to make a significant impact on the education of pupils. For many parents the school does not appear to listen to their problems and they feel that the education partnership is too one-sided. The school has run good information evenings on educational initiatives and curriculum areas and these have been well attended. Parents feel that regular open evenings are insufficient and are made more complex by the lack of access to the specialist teachers in Key Stage 2. Consequently, some feel denied the essential information regarding their child's progress. The home-school diaries that are intended to assist this process are not working properly in all classes and this merely aggravates the situation. There is close collaboration with the parents of special educational needs pupils and together they produce meaningful Individual Educational Plans, with targets which produce good progress.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

68. The leadership and management of the school were judged to have significant weaknesses at the last inspection. There were weaknesses in strategic planning, the monitoring of teaching and learning, the specification of responsibilities for the headteacher and key staff and the role of the governing body. Good progress has been made in tackling most of these weaknesses. But there is still no long-term plan for the school which sets out its strategy for the next few years, nor are the senior management arrangements for the school satisfactory. These apart, the school is effectively managed and well led, though this is not always the view of a small number of parents. The source of their concern is not the quality of leadership within the school. It is the protracted length of time the school has been without a permanent headteacher, the unstable staffing situation and the communication difficulties that sometimes exist between parents, the school and the governing body.
69. Even so, the school's management is vastly improved since the last inspection. Gilmorton is now an effective school. First and foremost, this is the product of the drive and determination of the leadership within the school, over the last year. Other significant factors leading to this improvement include:
  - the dedication and commitment of the school's key staff to improving the internal management of the school;
  - the good quality of the school's post-Ofsted Action Plan from the 1997 inspection;
  - the effectiveness of the school's annual development plans and the improved role of the governing body in their construction.
70. The acting headteacher has been the key figure in securing the improvements made. She has provided staff with a clear sense of direction and purpose and a renewed self-belief and confidence. Virtually all of the key issues from the 1997 report have been successfully

addressed, the substantial progress having been made during her year in post. She has received valuable support from a dedicated team of staff determined to raise standards and to provide pupils with a high quality education.

71. Much of this success has been achieved in spite of the lack of an appropriately functioning senior management team within the school. The school has operated with an acting headteacher for the entire year, no deputy headteacher and a series of temporary teachers. The increased pressure on the headteacher and senior staff has been shouldered with unfailing goodwill and energy. On top of her normal duties, the acting headteacher has assumed many of the responsibilities of the deputy head as well as co-ordinating four subjects, information technology, design and technology, geography and art. These are unsatisfactory and inefficient arrangements for managing the school.
72. A key feature of the good leadership in the school has been a willingness to act decisively when needed, for example, in introducing specialist teaching in Key Stage 2 in design and technology, music, art and physical education. In the case of design and technology and music, the decision was taken in direct response to the unsatisfactory standards and arrangements existing in these subjects. Standards in all four subjects are now good.
73. Longer-term developments are equally firmly rooted in the school's aim to realise the academic potential of each child. The initial focus has been on the higher-attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, who have underachieved consistently since 1997. An able pupils' register and improved guidance regarding lesson planning are first steps in this process but are not yet achieving the school's goal. A measure of the work still to be done lies in the continuing underachievement of the abler pupils in Years 5 and 6 in a number of subject areas, including English and mathematics. The very fact that many of these Year 6 pupils achieved very good results in the 2000 national tests was a result of the school's highly successful short-term response to this weakness, not the result of its longer-term policies.
74. Alternatively, the procedures and guidance put in place to support teachers generally, both in their management and classroom roles, are proving effective in raising standards of achievement for the majority of pupils. Subject co-ordinators play more active and effective roles than they did previously. All subjects are well-managed. Co-ordinators effectively monitor teachers' planning and check standards of learning through work sampling and the construction of subject portfolios. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good leadership for this area. Effective use of the ancillary staff enhances the good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The lower and average attaining pupils benefit directly from the well-planned provision made available for them. Many make good progress and achieve well.
75. An effective monitoring and evaluation system has successfully guided the school's progress since the last inspection. In addition to the monitoring undertaken by subject co-ordinators, the school's results are carefully analysed to see how better standards can be achieved. Pupils' progress is checked on an increasingly systematic basis from the moment they enter the school. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out by the headteacher, sometimes in partnership with the local education authority's advisor. Their joint termly reports provide a very clear picture of what has been achieved and what still needs to be done. Academic standards that were hitherto unsatisfactory, for example, in design and technology and information technology, are now better than those found in most schools. Teaching is much improved, the curriculum is soundly managed and good assessment procedures are in place. Each of these aspects now has a core of successful practice upon which to base continued improvement. Better use of assessment to improve curriculum planning and more efficient systems to track pupils' progress are the next targets for action.
76. The school's annual development plan has proved an effective tool for bringing about such improvements. The post-inspection plan from 1997 has been successfully fitted into the broader School Development Plan. The latter, like the post-inspection plan, is clear and precise in the shorter-term targets it sets and the means for achieving these. Educational developments such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are appropriately supported through careful financial planning. Annual action plans to support current priorities are all suitably costed and built into the school's budget. Financial planning is now good, having been judged at the last inspection not to be sufficiently based on a rigorous analysis of the school's needs. This lack of rigour is similarly reflected in the school's educational target setting during the same period. The targets set were unrealistically low and not in line with the school's

existing achievements or priorities. As a management tool for securing improved performance they had little value. Higher targets are now being introduced.

77. In contrast to its short-term planning, the school's longer-term planning remains weak. The School Development Plan, though constructed as a three year rolling programme, is not linked into, and supported by, a clear vision of the school's future. Critical issues such as the impact of projected pupil numbers and large class sizes are not built into an anticipated educational and financial forecast for the next few years. Governors continue to make major educational and financial decisions that lack a shared understanding of policy by all the partners concerned, including parents. Financial pressures frequently, and understandably, provide the motivation for many of the decisions made. As a result, management actions sometimes appear arbitrary and their purpose is not properly understood by staff and parents. The absence of clear goals and strategies to guide development planning limits, and puts at risk, the school's capacity to make continued progress. It also provides a cause of the strained relationships that now exist between a small number of parents and the governing body.
78. In other respects, the governing body gives the school effective support. It meets regularly and has an appropriate structure for covering its range of responsibilities. Recent appointments and changes to the governing body have produced a greater awareness of what is required to help manage the school. Governors' monitoring role is taken very seriously and a number of effective links have been established with the school, including visits to observe practice in classes and termly reports from subject co-ordinators. Governors have a growing knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to improving the school's performance. The governing body satisfactorily fulfils its statutory duties by ensuring that all legally required documents and policies are in place.
79. The school has an income and expenditure per pupil that is just below the average. Currently, the budget shows a fairly large surplus of funds being carried forward from last year to this, reflecting the school's uncertainties about its future income levels. Funds are effectively used and principles of best value for money are appropriately adopted. Specific grants for special educational needs and for upgrading the school's computing capacity are well targeted to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these areas. Administration within the school is highly efficient. The school office is very well run by the school bursar, with good use being made of new technologies to keep records and accounts. Financial administration is equally good. Regulations and controls are fully in place. The most recent local authority auditor's report indicates that the school's financial systems are well organised and maintained. The high quality of the school's administration enables the headteacher and staff to give appropriate emphasis to their educational responsibilities.
80. The school has a sufficient number of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum and pupils, but barely so. Pupil numbers are high in some classes. Effective deployment of well trained support staff alleviates some of the pressures that this imposes on teachers but where the quality of teaching is not of a satisfactory standard, this effectiveness is limited. Teachers are appropriately qualified and where gaps exist in their expertise, training and support are provided. The decision to deploy specialist teachers to cover a number of the non-core subjects in Key Stage 2 has been highly effective in raising standards as has been the use of booster and extension classes. There are good induction arrangements into the school for new teachers, including a mentoring system that has produced some very good results with recent recruits to the school. Allocation of funds to training are on the low side, though provision of training for the literacy and numeracy initiatives has been sufficient and beneficial. However, a relatively high turn-over of teachers limits the benefits to be derived from investment in training. The extensive use of temporary teachers adds to this inefficiency as well as producing discontinuity and instability within the school. The impact on one of the classes in Key Stage 2 has been particularly severe. Formal teacher appraisal has not been undertaken this year. However, professional development interviews conducted by the acting headteacher have taken place and have been effective in supporting teachers' needs.
81. The quality of the school's accommodation remains sound. Good features such as the school hall, playing fields and grounds are offset by unsatisfactory siting of the school library, lack of space in some of the classrooms where there are large pupil numbers, the absence of a dedicated external play area for the reception children and poor accommodation in the Year 3/4 mobile classroom. The accommodation is well used and kept very clean and tidy by the caretaker, who takes a great pride in the school's appearance. The school's appearance is

considerably enhanced by the stimulating quality of display in the classrooms and around the school.

82. The sufficiency and quality of the school's learning resources have been significantly strengthened since the last inspection. The school has a good stock of books. Parents' contributions, as well as additional national funding, have enabled the school to enhance its computing capacity. Resources and facilities in physical education and design and technology are good and have helped to raise standards in these subjects. In all other subjects, resources are at least satisfactory for the teaching of the National Curriculum. The school's action plans indicate that continued strengthening of its teaching and learning resources remains a focus in most subjects. Significant progress has been made to this end in most subjects since 1997.
83. In view of the overall sound quality of education provided, the increasingly good academic standards achieved by the majority of pupils and the lower than average cost per pupil, the school gives sound value for money. At the time of the last inspection, the school was judged to provide unsatisfactory value for money. This provides a measure of the school's progress since 1997. Subject to the formulation of an effective longer-term plan to guide future development, the school has the capacity and commitment to make further progress.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

84. In order to improve further the quality of education provided by the school and the standards achieved by pupils, governors, headteacher and staff should:
- continue to develop the school's curriculum and its use of assessment to improve planning and teaching, in order to:
    - secure a more appropriate balance between the teaching of skills and factual knowledge and lay more emphasis on independent study;
    - provide more challenging activities for the higher attaining pupils, especially the older pupils in Key Stage 2;
    - identify clearly the purpose of the various assessment mechanisms used in the school and develop these into a manageable system to support teachers' planning and to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

(paras. 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 31, 34, 40, 53, 54, 73, 96, 98, 101, 103, 104, 110, 111, 112, 113, 116, 117, 124, 126, 127, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147 and 148).

- establish effective strategies to reduce the financial pressures on the school, to create a more stable staffing base, to ensure that the school functions with an appropriate number of senior managers and to improve staff and parents' understanding of future plans and developments, by:
  - producing and implementing a longer-term development plan for the school which makes clear the school's direction and goals for the next few years, the strategies for achieving these and the financial means to support them.

(paras. 28, 66, 68, 71, 77 and 80).

- improve communications with parents, by:
  - establishing strategies for involving parents more effectively in the life and work of the school;
  - ensuring that parents are provided with adequate opportunities for receiving feedback about their children's progress;
  - ensuring the school's homework policy is consistently applied by teachers.

(paras. 37, 61, 62, 63, 64, 67, 77, 103 and 117).

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. They are indicated by the following paragraphs.

Area for development	Paragraph
Provision for multi-cultural education	49
The school library	81 and 105
The external play area for reception children	81 and 92

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS



### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

48

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

67

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2%	18%	20%	55%	4%	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)

204

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

4

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

3

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

51

#### 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

13

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

19

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	11	16	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	9
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	25	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (80)	89 (80)	93 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	25	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (89 )	93 (89 )	93 (92 )
	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**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	20	10	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	15	16
	Girls	9	7	5
	Total	26	22	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (93)	73 (84)	70 (94)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	15	18
	Girls	9	9	7
	Total	27	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (94 )	90 (97 )	83 (94 )
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	204
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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	29.1

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	330065
Total expenditure	316083
Expenditure per pupil	1565
Balance brought forward from previous year	12993
Balance carried forward to next year	26975

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	95

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	49	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	49	8	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	51	4	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	32	28	13	2
The teaching is good.	29	52	9	2	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	45	25	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	47	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	54	7	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	20	49	23	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	20	53	16	3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	64	5	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	47	13	8	9

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

85. Under fives in the reception class attain standards above those expected for children in this age group and make good progress in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal and social education. The standards they attain and the progress they make are satisfactory in creative and physical areas of learning.
86. Children enter the reception class at the start of the term in which they become five and therefore their period in this stage is very short. At the time of the inspection only two pupils were under five. Most enter the school with levels of attainment that are above average for their age.
87. Most pupils have good language skills and well developed counting and other mathematical skills when they start school. The majority have already attained the personal and social skills expected of five-year-olds and are curious and eager to learn. In view of this, soon after starting school they begin to follow the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1. The school provides a safe and secure environment for under fives and the teacher is sensitive to the emotional needs of children of this level of maturity. At present the provision is good: children's well developed language and mathematical skills are effectively built up in a nurturing environment appropriate for under fives. New arrangements for school entry are to be introduced in the next academic year and the school will need to be alert to ensure that the younger children entering the school are appropriately provided for. The school has the capacity to respond to these new circumstances and to further improve the provision for under fives.
88. Personal and social skills are good. Children have a good level of independence and help themselves to the equipment they need. They are well behaved and able to use their verbal skills to express their needs and solve disputes. Most are able to take turns, share equipment and work amicably beside one another. Provision for developing personal and social skills is good and high expectations are set by the teacher. In their "Show and Tell" sessions the children listen carefully to one another and some have sufficient confidence to join in the questioning that is an important part of these sessions.
89. In language and literacy, by the time they are five, children have attained the Desirable Outcomes for under fives and are working towards level 1 of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for English. They have good book handling skills, can read a very simple text and recognise many sounds and letters of the alphabet. Most have above average speaking and listening skills and can write a simple sentence. The provision is good: children have access to a good range of books and their literacy skills are developed through games and activities well matched to their needs. For instance, during the week of the inspection children joined in a game in which they had to identify the initial and final sounds of the names of toys they had selected. In language activities, five year olds in the class often provide good models for the younger children.
90. Mathematical skills are well developed by the time children are five and most are able to join in counting in tens and ordering numerals but do not yet have a full appreciation of the value of these numbers. Nevertheless, they have a good grasp of the value of numbers to ten and can match sets to numerals. They know how to add on one more and can solve simple problems involving addition. Provision for early mathematics is good and children have opportunities to work with a range of equipment and materials including sand and water to develop their early measuring skills. Children have good opportunities to join in singing number rhymes and songs. Daily routines, including marking the register and checking how many are present, provide worthwhile opportunities to reinforce their awareness that mathematics is a useful tool for everyday life.
91. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children have good general knowledge and share their interesting and varied out-of-school activities. For instance, one child explained to the class the criteria for winning a prize at a horse show she had taken part in. Provision for developing design and technology skills is good and children have employed a range of techniques to make a variety of mini beasts, including salt dough ladybirds, fridge

magnets and wire and papier-mâché worms. The availability of a good range of software, coupled with skilled adult support, is an important element in the opportunities children have to develop information technology skills.

92. In creative areas of learning, children attain satisfactory standards: they enjoy singing a range of songs and, in art, are able to express their ideas and feelings using a range of materials and techniques with appropriate levels of control. Provision for creative learning, including role-play, is satisfactory. In their physical development children attain satisfactory standards and have good levels of fine motor control, use scissors skilfully and are gaining good mouse control skills with the computer. Provision for physical development is satisfactory overall but is weakened by the lack of a dedicated outside play area in which under fives can develop a full range of large motor skills.
93. The quality of teaching for the under fives is good. It is well planned to meet the needs of these children and takes into account the nationally laid down curriculum for under fives and the requirements of Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. The curriculum offered by the school provides a well balanced programme which meets the needs of the current pupils. High expectations are set and children respond accordingly. Relationships are very good and a caring and secure environment is created in which these youngest pupils can grow in confidence. Support staff are well deployed and children's information technology skills and reading skills are enhanced because of this. A baseline assessment is conscientiously carried out but does not provide a fully accurate picture of children's prior attainment. However, the class teacher's observations of the children lead her to introduce a high level of challenge in some of the work that children are given. Children respond very well and make good progress. The progress children make in school is well charted during their short period as under fives. Good relationships with parents are established and maintained through a home-school book. Home and school work effectively together to promote early reading skills.

## ENGLISH

94. Standards of attainment at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above national averages. Compared to the previous inspection, standards at Key Stage 1 are largely unchanged but have improved at Key Stage 2. The school's results in this year's (2000) national tests broadly confirm the inspection findings but not entirely so at Key Stage 2.
95. In 1999, the most recent year for which national comparative data are available, the school's results at Key Stage 1 were:
- well above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in reading;
  - well above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard in reading;
  - average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in writing;
  - average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard in writing;
  - average for reading when compared with similar schools;
  - below average for writing when compared to similar schools.
96. These results reflect a consistent trend since 1997. There is a slight drop in the number of pupils reaching the higher attainment level in reading this year and a slight rise in the number exceeding it in writing. This is shown in both the inspection findings and the school's 2000 test results.
97. The school's 1999 test results at Key Stage 2 were:
- well above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - below average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
  - below average when compared to similar schools.
98. The significant feature of these results is the low proportion of pupils reaching the higher attainment level and the impact this has on the school's performance when benchmarked against similar schools. In 1997, the proportion of higher-attaining pupils was well above the national average but drops each year thereafter. The school's 2000 national test results represent a sharp turn in the other direction, with an equally significant rise in the number of pupils reaching the higher standard. Inspectors confirm this improvement but not quite to the

extent indicated by the test results. In neither reading nor writing are pupils doing as well as they might were they to be presented with slightly more challenging demands.

99. Standards of speaking are above average by the end of each key stage. Many pupils at five are already able to express their thoughts and feelings articulately and these skills are developed satisfactorily as pupils move through the key stage. Some gain in self-confidence to the point where they are able to express themselves at length, offering coherent explanations or points of view. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 are able to reason cogently, expressing their views on environmental issues, or beginning to develop arguments from different standpoints. Across the school, the most rapid progress occurs where pupils are actively encouraged to express themselves at length. Sometimes in literacy lessons, however, pupils are expected to offer answers to closed questions that do not allow them to demonstrate what they know and understand and this limits the level of discussion. Pupils at both key stages generally listen attentively when others are speaking and are courteous when others are expressing a view. They heed instructions well; only in a small minority of lessons do teachers need to work hard to ensure pupils' attention. Sufficient opportunities are offered to pupils to listen, both in the literacy lessons and in other subjects, such as music and science. When working with partners or in groups, pupils generally co-operate well, sharing materials and ideas sensibly.
100. By the end of each key stage, attainment in reading is above average. At Key Stage 1, pupils build systematically on previously acquired skills, both in literacy lessons and in their individual reading, and they make satisfactory progress in their learning. By the time they enter the key stage, most pupils recognise common words and understand that letters represents sounds, either singly or in combination. Many of the youngest pupils read simple stories fluently. By the end of the key stage, some are able to discuss the plot of their reading book or anticipate the next part of a story. Pupils' learning is closely monitored and a constructive dialogue between home and school on progress in reading often develops through the pupils' reading record book. Satisfactory progress in reading continues at Key Stage 2. By the end of the key stage, many pupils express a preference for an author and can justify their choice. They describe characters and the part they play in the book they are reading. Pupils with special needs are monitored closely in their progress and in their choice of reading material. These pupils make good progress. However, those of average and above average attainment are not sufficiently guided in their choice of literature; their experience of literature is often too narrow and teachers cannot be sure that these pupils are sufficiently challenged either by the reading level of their book or by the genre of literature they are tackling.
101. The school has worked hard to improve standards in writing and they are now above those expected nationally by the end of each key stage. This constitutes an improvement since the last inspection, when they were described as satisfactory. The principal reason for this improvement is that pupils are now offered a wider range of writing opportunities. Many pupils in Year 1 recount their own experiences in writing, sometimes demarcating sentences with full stops. By the end of Key Stage 1, some pupils write coherently at length, inventing their own stories or describing the details of a class visit. Many use simple punctuation accurately and understand its value in communicating with the reader. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, they continue to make satisfactory progress, gradually extending the variety of forms in which they write and becoming increasingly aware of the needs of different reading audiences. For example, younger pupils in the key stage practise persuasive writing or devise letters to grandparents. Older pupils write criticisms of books or plead a cause, seeking to construct and justify their arguments. Pupils develop a good understanding of different literary styles in their literacy lessons, which also offer good opportunities for pupils to practise their use of punctuation and increase their vocabulary. However, literacy lessons are not yet used frequently to support writing for other areas of the curriculum, such as history or religious education. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their writing. They are well supported in their work by ancillary staff, who work closely with teachers to ensure that the needs of these pupils are effectively met.
102. Pupils make good progress in their spelling. Teachers have worked hard to ensure that this is taught systematically and coherently across the school and their efforts have made a positive impact on raising standards. Progress in handwriting is good among pupils at Key Stage 1; before the end of Year 2 many pupils join their writing confidently and others develop a partially joined style. However, progress at Key Stage 2 is only satisfactory because an insistence on high standards of handwriting is not maintained. As a result, standards in Years 5 and 6 are more variable, some pupils reverting to a partially printed style that inhibits their writing performance.

103. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers generally display satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject but sometimes their planning focuses too sharply on the content of the tasks they wish pupils to complete rather than on the skills they wish pupils to acquire. One effect of this is that higher attaining pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to rehearse the skills which will enable them to deepen their knowledge and understanding, nor to express in sufficient depth what they know and understand. This is not always the case. In a Year 3/4 lesson observed, the teacher had high expectations for pupils of different attainment and defined precise learning objectives for the lesson. These she shared with pupils so that they had a clear understanding of the work required of them. As a result, pupils made very good progress and achieved well. Teachers manage their pupils very successfully. In doing so, they make them feel valued and respected, thereby raising their confidence and motivating them to learn. At Key Stage 1, teachers use homework effectively to develop pupils' English skills, especially in reading. Homework is used less systematically at Key Stage 2, however, and does not always sufficiently challenge pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. Teachers make good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Their strengths and weaknesses are closely monitored and teachers work well with support staff to ensure that the English curriculum is appropriately adapted for these pupils.
104. All aspects of the English curriculum are appropriately covered through the range of work that teachers provide. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has worked closely with the headteacher to ensure that improvements in standards have taken place. Teachers are growing in confidence in their use of their national literacy guidance and its use is beginning to make an impact on standards of reading and writing, especially among average and lower-attaining pupils. Extensive arrangements for the assessment of pupils' attainment are in place. These have been used effectively to raise pupils' attainment through limited group teaching but are not yet well enough used to inform day-to-day lesson planning.
105. There are ample books to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Fiction books are well used but the information section of the library is not well defined and pupils have no clear idea of how to locate non-fiction books. The English curriculum is sometimes enhanced by visits of drama groups, or by theatre visits. Computer programs are sometimes used to support the curriculum but these are not used to equal effect in every classroom.

## **MATHEMATICS**

106. Standards of attainment at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above national averages. At the time of the last inspection they were judged to be in line with national averages at both key stages. The school's results in this year's (2000) national tests confirm this improvement.
107. In the 1999 national tests, the school's results at Key Stage 1 were:
- above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
  - above average compared to similar schools.
108. The school has consistently achieved above average results since 1997. Inspection evidence confirms the continuation of this trend.
109. The school's results at Key Stage 2 were:
- average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - well below average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
  - very low compared to similar schools.
110. The proportion of pupils reaching the national standard does not vary much between 1996 and 1999 except in 1998 when it is higher. The significant variant is the sharp decline in the number of higher attaining pupils over the last three years. In 1999 only 10 per cent of pupils



achieved the higher standard compared to 39 per cent in 1998 and 31 per cent in 1997. This weakness is highlighted in the school's poor performance compared to similar schools.

111. However, the school's 2000 test results show a dramatic reversal in this trend. This year, virtually all pupils reached the national standard and 43 per cent achieved at higher-attainment level, a small number of whom exceeded this threshold by a considerable margin. Inspection findings confirm the rise in standards but less consistently so in the case of the higher-attainers. Inspectors note the significant impact on the school's test performance of additional support provided at the end of the key stage for pupils through booster classes, extension classes and other remedial action. They also acknowledge the longer-term effects of improved teaching and provision, good analysis of weaknesses, a determination to raise standards and good use of the school's own resources to target higher-attainers.
112. Pupils enter the school with well developed number skills and their learning from the outset is based on the Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority attain standards which are above average and make satisfactory progress. In mental mathematics sessions, when challenged to make a specified two digit number, the range of answers that pupils provide indicates a secure understanding of addition and subtraction processes, a good knowledge of multiplication facts and an above average ability to perform mental calculations involving three digit numbers. Throughout the key stage most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, the progress of high-attainers is not always rapid enough because the work they are given to do does not give them sufficient scope to build on what they already know and can do.
113. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have well developed numeracy skills. Most have a secure understanding of negative numbers and convert imperial to metric measures. They have good data handling skills, can use a tally chart and understand terms such as 'mode', 'mean', 'median' and 'range'. Higher-attainers work out problems involving exchange rates for foreign currency. Earlier in the year, booster classes were organised as part of a government initiative to raise attainment in primary schools. Scrutiny of the work done by pupils indicates that the booster classes have had a significant impact on learning and on the standards attained by pupils of average ability. Their understanding of place value has been consolidated, their proficiency in using the four rules of number has increased and their awareness of the relationship between decimal and fractional values has been made more secure. In addition, higher attaining pupils have benefited from regular small group teaching led by the headteacher. Different groups of children make uneven progress as they move through the key stage. Pupils are grouped by ability across two year groups, Years 3 and 4 together and Years 5 and 6 together. The older higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage and in some classes progress is rapid.
114. Numeracy is effectively used across the curriculum. In Key Stage 1, pupils collect, present and interpret data on favourite restaurants for a science project and on the colour of their front doors in geography lessons. Also in geography, they gather information about temperatures in different parts of the world and create a graph to show average rainfall. This work is further developed in geography lessons in Key Stage 2 when pupils make good use of their knowledge of co-ordinates to map information. In science, they create line graphs and use their increased data handling skills to record scientific information. Throughout the school, the everyday application of mathematics is seen during registration sessions when the numbers of children present and absent are balanced and also in the dining hall where a numerical system is in operation to reserve hot puddings.
115. Positive attitudes to mathematics are in evidence throughout the school. Pupils are well motivated and are keen to answer questions: in some classes, mental mathematics sessions prove to be stimulating and enjoyable. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to one another. They are articulate and express their ideas and opinions with clarity. When given the opportunity, they are able to discuss their own learning and identify what they have learned in a lesson or series of lessons. When teachers' expectations are high, pupils present their work well but many instances of slipshod work were seen. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved and courteous. They respect themselves and one another. Their positive attitudes, good behaviour and ability to concentrate well have a very positive impact on their learning, enabling them to work productively and attain high standards.

116. Mathematics teaching throughout the school is satisfactory and mental mathematics sessions are often conducted with a briskness and energy that promote good learning. As a result, pupils are well motivated and listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Teachers ensure that pupils have appropriate opportunities for learning across most of the attainment targets. However, throughout the school and particularly in Key Stage 2, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in practical or investigatory contexts. Learning objectives are often clearly identified and when this is the case teaching is well focused and pupils are able to discuss their own learning and identify what they have learned in a lesson or series of lessons. It is a relative weakness that learning objectives sometimes lack clarity and precision and the focus of the lesson centres on completing an activity rather than developing and extending mathematical understanding and skills. Most teachers have an appropriate mathematical knowledge and understanding of the subject and some use questions well to help extend and deepen pupils' understanding. However, on occasions when answers reveal a misunderstanding, teachers do not always take the opportunity to help pupils clarify their thinking.
117. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they respond accordingly. Expectations are not as consistently high in terms of educational standards. When expectations are high, pupils present their work well and achieve appropriately. But expectations are not always high enough and this has an impact on attainment, particularly of the higher-attaining pupils. Assessment procedures are effective in clarifying what pupils have learned but outcomes are not evaluated sufficiently well to ensure that the next stages of learning are rigorous enough for all pupils. Homework procedures are not consistent throughout the school; however, where these are applied in accord with the school's homework policy, the work done at home is beneficial in consolidating and extending learning in class.
118. The school has made satisfactory progress in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy but has accurately assessed that there is still work to be done to achieve the maximum benefit from this initiative. The subject is well managed by the curriculum leader, who receives strong backing from the headteacher. An action plan is in place and teaching and learning are effectively monitored by the co-ordinator. Governors are kept well informed by the co-ordinator's termly reports and by reports made by those governors who visit to observe learning and teaching in numeracy. The school has the capacity to bring about further improvements in this subject.

## **SCIENCE**

119. Standards of attainment are above the national average at Key Stage 1 and in line with the national average at Key Stage 2. This is an improvement on the school's performance at the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national averages at both key stages. The school's results in this year's national tests (2000) endorse the improvement at Key Stage 1 but show much higher, and more consistent, standards of achievement amongst the Year 6 pupils than were found by inspectors.
120. The school's results in the 1999 national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were:
- above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - well above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard.
121. These results show little variation since 1997, a trend confirmed by the school's 2000 performance and inspection findings.
122. The school's results in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were:
- well below average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - below average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
  - very low compared to similar schools.
123. These poor results reflect a gradually deteriorating situation since 1997 when the school's results were above national averages in the proportions both of pupils achieving the national standard and of those exceeding it. The school's 2000 national test results stand in sharp contrast to this trend. While inspection evidence endorses the overall rise in standards, it also shows a more complex situation than the test results might imply.

124. Evidence from the Year 6 pupils' completed work and lesson observations in one of the two end of key stage classes show standards to be significantly lower than those in the other class as well as being lower than those they achieved in the national tests. Also, while pupils' factual knowledge and understanding are good, and sometimes very good, in both classes, pupils' investigative skills are less well developed. The higher-attaining pupils, in particular, do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. A major reason for the very high standards achieved in the national tests lies in the provision of significant levels of targeted instruction and revision work, including additional homework, for the Year 6 pupils. In the case of the weaker class, this successfully compensated for the unsatisfactory teaching and interruptions to their learning experienced during the year.
125. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of all the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. They successfully learn about materials and their texture. In describing certain materials they understand the term "transparent". They know how to investigate whether materials are waterproof, with the higher-attaining pupils able to explain accurately the principles of a fair test. For example, in their experiment on growing beans, Year 2 pupils understand the conditions needed for living things to grow and are able to explain why some of the beans died and why the cress seeds they planted grew at different rates according to the amount of light and water they received. With the teacher's assistance, they classify and record their findings using simple charts and tables. They appropriately use terms such as "test", "observe" and "predict".
126. By the end Key Stage 2, there is considerable variation in the knowledge and skills pupils acquire between the two Year 5/6 classes. Both sets of pupils show a good range of factual knowledge about aspects of human and physical science. They explain the food chain, refer to the food needed by plants as nutrients and display a good knowledge of micro-organisms and the links with health and personal hygiene. They conduct a wide range of experiments; for example, on electricity, forces, light, friction and the separation of solids. In one of the classes, they use bar charts and line graphs to record their findings, for example, for measuring the amount of water needed to dissolve salt. In the other they do not. This represents the most significant difference in the standards achieved between the two classes. In one class, experiments are conducted with a precision and rigour appropriate to the learning of science. In the other, experiments are treated as unstructured voyages of discovery with inadequate reference to scientific principles and processes. As a result, a significant number of pupils are under-prepared for the next stage of their scientific education.
127. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Then, both of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory. Now, there is evidence of good teaching in each key stage. Indeed, three of the lessons seen were very good. But a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching remains, the impact of which has been significant, even though the school has taken action to minimise its effects. Teaching has improved as a result of better planning. Adoption of the national scheme of work has given teachers a structure to work to and objectives to assess against that previous guidance lacked. The result is a growing confidence amongst teachers and a much greater precision about what pupils are to learn. In the best lessons, this clarity is evident in the careful way in which lesson objectives are shared with the pupils and returned to at the end of the session, enabling pupils to evaluate the extent of their own learning. A good focus on scientific concepts and language is maintained. For example, in two of the lessons observed (in Years 3/4 and 5/6), pupils were required to formulate their own questions as the basis for experimentation. The investigative framework provided by the teacher offers good learning models for the majority of pupils and they achieve well. However, continued adherence to this framework for the older and more able pupils limits their progress and learning. Teachers do not give these pupils enough room to make their own decisions about the methodologies for analysing, recording and assessing the validity of the questions or hypotheses posed.
128. While there is still progress to be made in eliminating inconsistencies in teaching, a great deal of progress has been made since 1997 in the management and development of the subject. The co-ordinator has extensive monitoring responsibilities, which are well supported by, and linked into, the school procedures, enabling her to keep a good check on standards of teaching and learning. Last term's monitoring exercise indicated a need for the school to be clearer about how progress is maintained in the split age classes in Key Stage 2 when pupils move into the second year of the cycle. The school's judgement that the focus for this progression lies in the development of pupils' investigative skills represents an accurate assessment of the

situation. Effective management provides the school with a good capacity for further improvement.

## **ART**

129. By the end of each key stage, pupils' attainment in the subject is above the average for their age. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Across the school, pupils are taught specific skills and techniques such as the use of colour, texture and perspective and these make a significant impact on the quality of learning.
130. When they enter Key Stage 1, pupils are encouraged to look carefully at objects and to make large and detailed drawings. They are taught to mix colours accurately so that they obtain the shades they require. Pupils in Year 1 use pastels, paint and wax crayons boldly and effectively; those in Year 2 are introduced progressively to the fundamental principles of perspective. They are taught to observe how sky and earth meet at the horizon and that the whole picture should be filled with colour. Very good use is made of the environment as a source of artistic ideas and the subject is used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 make detailed pencil drawings of household objects from different eras as part of their history work, while those at Year 2 record observations related to their science curriculum.
131. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to build well on the good start they have received, experimenting with an increasingly wider range of techniques and ideas and becoming more familiar with styles and the forms of presentation used by well-known artists. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 rehearse different techniques to simulate the texture of animal scales, while older pupils practise those which help to inject movement and dynamism into a picture or attempt to re-create the style of famous artists by extending fragments of their works. By the time pupils leave the school, many have a good grasp of the basic skills necessary for good art work and have acquired a confident approach to the subject. The progress of pupils of different attainment is equally good because all are well monitored and supported in their efforts to improve the quality of their work.
132. Evidence from pupils' work displayed around the school and pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject indicate that the quality of teaching overall is good. This was not fully reflected in the teaching seen in lessons, which was satisfactory. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject; this enables them to match well the appropriate skills and techniques to attainment so that pupils' learning is both coherent and progressive. It also contributes to the growing confidence that pupils display in the execution of their work. In the main, teachers have high expectations of pupils but occasionally they do not make enough use of their own expertise to incite pupils to higher endeavour. In the lessons seen, teachers monitored pupils' progress well, offering advice and suggestions that made a positive impact on learning. Teachers value work, displaying and storing it carefully; this contributes to the positive attitudes of pupils towards the subject.
133. The subject is well managed. Resources are sufficient and well used and deployed. Teachers benefit from the guidance of a very good scheme of work and an excellent subject portfolio. The latter contains good examples of pupils' work, which are carefully matched at each level to National Curriculum targets and which are annotated with helpful comments explaining the techniques applied in each case. As the subject co-ordinator, the acting headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and of the direction of future development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

134. At the end of each key stage, attainment is above that found in the majority of schools. This is a marked improvement on the previous inspection when attainment in design and technology was found to be below national expectations in both key stages. Improvements are largely the result of good leadership and management of the subject.
135. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good making skills. They successfully make papier-mâché hot air balloons, with little hanging cardboard baskets, and origami cows from carefully folded paper. Farm buildings constructed from junk modelling materials and farm equipment

made from technical construction kits are arranged together to create a farm environment. Design skills are well built up throughout the key stage. In Year 1, during inspection week, pupils used their previously drawn garden designs to good effect to create miniature gardens enhanced by toy animals and people, twigs, pebble paths and aluminium foil pools. In the reception class, pupils have access to a wide range of materials and their making skills are well developed. As part of a mini-beasts project pupils used papier-mâché covered wire, salt dough and paper to make a range of products. During the week of the inspection, they designed patterns to decorate a plant pot and evaluated and justified decisions they had made about the lay out of swings and seats on the plan of a park.

136. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of the mechanics of a cycle gear system and the ratios involved in high and low gearing. Their good making skills and ability to follow written instructions are evident when they construct a simple model of a gear system. Throughout the key stage learning is good and pupils gain skills in designing, making and evaluating. During the week of the inspection, Year 3/4 classes designed healthy sandwiches, which they made, tasted and evaluated thoughtfully and purposefully. "I wouldn't use as much lettuce next time" was one comment. In the plenary session, they recalled that protein, fat and carbohydrate are essential elements of a healthy diet and can be the ingredients of healthy sandwiches.... "And they taste nice," added one boy. Their good making skills are in evidence in their individually designed wheeled vehicles built on a Jinks type chassis. The finished articles are well constructed and free moving. They design and make slippers, board games and fairground rides which incorporate motors. Design sheets are of high quality; they identify concept, materials, tools, process and modification and include evaluations which are thoughtful and frank.
137. Teaching in design and technology is good in both key stages. This is reflected in pupils' attitudes towards the subject, exemplified by the Year 1 pupils' eagerness to bring from home a wide range of toys and objects for the miniature garden. Teachers' planning is of high quality and lessons are well organised. This helps pupils to focus effectively on what they are to learn, to use their listening skills to good effect and to achieve well. Skills, knowledge and understanding are successfully built up and if the school notes a gap in understanding it rectifies this. For instance, the lesson on gears during inspection week had been included because of an identified weakness in understanding. Planning takes into account all elements of the subject and the school's portfolio of work and pupils' designs and evaluations demonstrate that the school incorporates a wide range of materials and processes into its teaching programme. The curriculum is well designed and gives strong support to staff in their planning. Assessment is good and is often well used to inform planning. The organisation of specialist teaching for design and technology at Key Stage 2 has had a significant impact on raising standards. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their expectations are high. As a result learning is good and pupils' attainment is high.
138. The subject is very effectively led. The curriculum is well designed and provides teachers with good guidance for improving the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning. Monitoring of progress is employed as an increasingly useful tool for promoting further development, on the basis of careful analysis of what still needs to be done.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

139. Standards are above nationally expected levels at Key Stage 1 and in line with them at Key Stage 2. Compared with the last inspection, standards have improved in Key Stage 1 and have been maintained at Key Stage 2. There has been a steady improvement overall in pupils' achievement in the subject, especially in Key Stage 1.
140. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a wide and effective range of knowledge and skills. The higher-attaining pupils know the difference between a continent and a country. Most pupils confidently locate many of the major countries on a map of the world, describe the climate associated with them and the foods they produce. Pupils are familiar with Ordnance Survey maps and use two-figure grid references to locate places. They successfully draw their own maps of the route to Lutterworth and know the difference between a picture and plan, using the computer to demonstrate the difference. Pupils have good practical skills. They accurately complete a monthly weather chart, measuring and comparing differences in temperature, wind and rainfall. In doing so, they make good use of their mathematics skills. The majority of pupils achieve well for their age.

141. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is more varied. Pupils have a sound factual knowledge of the places they study. In their work on Europe, for example, they accurately locate and describe the main features of several of the major countries. Further afield, they are familiar with the lifestyle and economies of people in Chembakolli, in India, and contrast these, at a fairly general level, with those found in the markets of Leicester. Pupils compare the climates of different localities and a few use six-figure grid references to find places on a large scale map. On the whole, however, pupils do not make sufficient use of the skills they have learned. The Year 6 pupils are good at searching for information to respond to questions on worksheets but less familiar with handling more open-ended, in-depth tasks in order to create and explore their own questions and ideas. This was a weakness at time of the last inspection. The higher-attaining pupils are still not achieving in line with their abilities.
142. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is good in Key Stage 1. Although improved since 1997, there is still some evidence of the extreme variability that existed then. Of the three lessons observed, two were good and one lesson, in Key Stage 2, was unsatisfactory. The most successful teaching employs clear objectives with tasks well matched to the pupils' abilities and to the standards expected of children of that age. Pupils respond well to the variety and demands of such teaching. The Year 2 pupils, for example, encouraged by the challenge to identify as many different food products from around the world as they could, arrived each day with labels brought from home. The result was high levels of motivation and good achievement. Similar features are evident in the Year 3/4 study of Gilmorton where teachers' planning ensures that pupils are actively involved in their own learning. This is less evident in Year 5/6 lessons even where the teaching is otherwise good. While the majority of pupils benefit from the teachers' careful planning and clarity of presentation, many of the older and more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work set and do not achieve as well as they should. The skills and knowledge these pupils have acquired in earlier years is not adequately built upon. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen, the planning is too unstructured, and the expectations of pupils too low, to ensure adequate progress and achievement.
143. Since the last inspection, great strides have been made in developing policies, schemes of work and monitoring processes to raise standards of attainment and improve the quality and consistency of teaching. The co-ordinator, from the evidence of her own monitoring of teaching and learning, has identified the need for clearer guidance in the development of pupils' geographical skills as they move through the school. Regular assessments have been introduced to provide the information needed to monitor pupils' progress and to make judgements about the quality of the school's provision. The benefits of this are beginning to show through. The school certainly has the capacity to make further progress.

## **HISTORY**

144. Little history teaching was seen during the inspection. However, evidence from scrutiny of pupils' completed work and teachers' planning, as well as the few lessons observed, indicates that standards in both key stages are sound. This matches the judgement reached at the time of the last inspection. On that occasion it was also noted that the progress of the higher-attaining pupils was unsatisfactory. Though improvement is evident, the higher-attainers in Years 5 and 6 still do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
145. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show a sound grasp of the past in terms of "long ago" and the differences between then and now. Pupils successfully learn through looking at evidence of their own school how to compare items from the past with things from the present and from this to draw simple conclusions about what it was like then. They also understand that historians have to ask questions and collect evidence, as highlighted in the parent survey to find out what happened in their school days. Pupils successfully recall the stories they have been told about Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale and understand that history is about real people and events in the past.
146. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils continue to display a sound knowledge of the information they have been taught. They also know how to research from books and from information technology sources to produce interesting studies of famous people in the Victorian period. But there is a tendency for their work to lack sufficient historical context. For example, pupils show a good knowledge of what it was like in Victorian times, or in the times of the ancient Romans, but are less certain about the major historical figures and events of these periods. As a result, pupils show good historical imagination, as, for example, in the role play of a Victorian day, but display underdeveloped skills in reconstructing the past from first-hand evidence.

147. Teaching in the two lessons observed was satisfactory. Pupils' completed work and their attitudes towards the subject also indicate that teaching overall is sound. But they also indicate that variation in the quality of teaching between year groups and classes limits the achievement of a few pupils, usually the more able. Where teachers' planning is based on clear aims that are appropriately matched to pupils' abilities, prior attainment and the expected standards of attainment for their age, pupils' learning and achievement are good, including pupils with special educational needs. This is highlighted in the progress Year 3/4 pupils make in the "Study the Evidence" project where teachers pose questions that require pupils to think for themselves. Similar strengths are found in much of the teaching in Key Stage 1 where pupils are expected to develop enquiry skills based on a growing awareness that history is about interpreting the past, not just collecting information.
148. The less effective teaching tends to overlook this fact and focus on providing pupils with the information to be learned and then require pupils to recycle this information onto a worksheet. A Year 5/6 lesson on the life of Ghandi provided an extreme example of this approach. Similar limitations are evident in the assessments used to test the older pupils' progress. At the end of the Victorian project, the main item of assessment focuses on the recall of factual information. This mirrors the lack of emphasis in teachers' planning, and in their teaching methodologies, on the investigative aspect of pupils' learning. As a result, the tasks set are often too narrow in scope and the higher-attaining pupils, in particular, lack opportunities to develop independent study skills and to achieve at appropriate levels. Opportunities to extend pupils' literacy skills - for example, through different forms of writing - are missed.
149. Despite the persistence of weaknesses identified in 1997, the school is working hard to address these and has made progress. The school now has in place systems for checking on teachers' planning, for monitoring pupils' progress and for evaluating the overall quality and consistency of teaching and learning in the subject. Strengthened guidance for teachers is intended to ensure that the school's provision achieves a more appropriate balance between the learning of knowledge and skills and caters for the full range of pupils' needs and capabilities, especially at the top end of Key Stage 2.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

150. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above those expected for seven-year-olds and at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with expectations for eleven-year-olds. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress. At the time of the 1997 inspection standards in information technology were found to be below expectations in both key stages. Decisive action was taken to raise standards, the significant features of which were:
- the development of a scheme of work setting out what pupils are to learn as they move through the school;
  - identification of opportunities to assess what pupils had learned;
  - training to increase staff skills;
  - an increase in resources for information technology;
  - good leadership by the curriculum co-ordinator;
  - commitment to improvement by the staff .
151. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' good cut and paste skills are evident in their weather maps and townscape pictures. Their mastery of split screen techniques enables them to create effective symmetrical patterns. Their good word processing skills are such that they can centre text, use capital letters appropriately and successfully combine text and pictures. They make sound progress throughout the key stage and the minority of pupils with little prior experience of information technology make good progress. Early in the key stage their good levels of fine motor skills and co-ordination enable them to develop good control in using the mouse and keyboard. Some make simple Christmas cards and create simple mathematical pictures which, with a little adult guidance, they print. In Year 1 they begin to use a range of tools to process text. They create headlines which incorporate borders, shading and colour and devise publicity for estate agent sales. In Year 2, they make good use of various software packages to research topics related to their work in science and geography.
152. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain the standards expected overall. Evidence from the optional Key Stage 3 tests which pupils take indicate good standards of work in some areas, for example, in word processing where pupils have good skills and co-operate well in using simple desk top publishing packages. They move confidently between programs, using icons effectively to enlarge, delete and zoom. They make good use of cut and paste techniques and incorporate items from a range of clip art and word art software. Good skills are evident in the creation and use made of a data base for a survey of breakfast cereals and in the use of a spreadsheet program to produce information about class birthdays. Graphic modelling techniques are successfully used to re-create pictures of snails in the style of Matisse. The school has four computers which are linked to the internet but this is a relatively new venture for the school and pupils have not yet had sufficient opportunity to develop skills fully in electronic communication through e-mail and the internet. A weaker area is in the use made of technology for control purposes and the school is aware that pupils' skills are relatively underdeveloped. Throughout the key stage, pupils make satisfactory progress. In Years 3/4, they use word processing techniques confidently and independently to write captions using a range of fonts, colours, borders and shadows. They make good use of the mouse and numerical key pad in a mathematical program and use a database confidently to support their learning in science. Word processing skills are effectively used to support learning across the curriculum and in particular to support pupils who have specific learning difficulties.
153. Teaching in information technology is satisfactory overall. It is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. At present teaching is usually organised in such a way that tuition is given to pairs or small groups of pupils. The school plans to improve provision by introducing dedicated information technology lessons in the next academic year. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, which is a marked improvement on the previous report, which noted a lack of secure knowledge. In Key Stage 2, there is still some lack of familiarity with control technology. Another previous weakness which has now been very successfully addressed relates to teachers' knowledge of what their pupils know and can do. Current assessment procedures are good and now give teachers a secure understanding of their pupils' capabilities in information technology and this enables them effectively to build up pupils' knowledge and skills. Non-teaching staff are effectively deployed to support learning in the subject.
154. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and motivate them well. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. At the top of the school they are eager to demonstrate their



skills and the capability of their information technology software. They talk confidently about the newspaper they are producing and demonstrate how articles contributed by individuals are incorporated into a joint enterprise. From their earliest days in school, pupils are keen to learn and display positive attitudes to their work.

155. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has worked very successfully to improve provision and raise standards. The school currently bases its teaching on the national guidance for the subject and effectively links its programme to the skills pupils will need in other curriculum areas. The school has acquired new equipment, some secured through government initiatives and some jointly funded by the school and the Parent Teacher Association. The level of hardware is now satisfactory and the school has a good range of software. Staff training has taken place and more is planned under the New Opportunities Fund. The school monitors its performance and successfully targets areas where weaknesses have been identified. There is a good capacity for further improvement.

## **MUSIC**

156. Standards in music are in line with expected standards at Key Stage 1 and above this level at Key Stage 2. Music now plays a significant role in the life of the school. This finding contrasts sharply with that of the previous inspection when insufficient evidence of the subject's place in the school was found to make judgements about attainment and progress in music.
157. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. On entry to the key stage, pupils sing nursery rhymes or songs with repeated words or rhythms. They are taught to sing from memory and are encouraged to listen carefully so that they sing in tune. They tap and clap simple rhythms accurately, learning to select unpitched instruments which best capture the mood or texture of the sound they wish to reproduce. Building on these early experiences, pupils in Year 2 successfully reinforce their feeling for beat by dancing or moving to pronounced rhythms, such as that of a Scottish reel. They learn to focus their listening and to interpret appropriately different passages of dance music.
158. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2 as a result of very good teaching by the subject co-ordinator. The younger pupils in the key stage make very good progress. They sing accurately in tune, successfully establish two-part rhythms for simple tunes using unpitched percussion instruments and are encouraged to explore and organise musical ideas. Older pupils make good progress in their learning. They develop critical listening skills, for example, by responding to the musical story of 'Peter and the Wolf'. They pay close attention to diction and breathing when they are singing. Singing is generally good across the school and pupils sing confidently and clearly in assemblies.
159. The teaching of music is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Here, the better teaching results from specialist knowledge of music, confidence in teaching and an insistence on high standards of performance. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils so that they have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn and achieve in performance during the course of the lesson. The tasks set are well matched to pupils of different abilities. Across the school, pupils are generally well managed. This contributes to an interest and enthusiasm for the subject and makes a positive impact on the quality of their learning. Pupils clearly enjoy music making and the school choir and orchestra are well supported. Pupils who learn an instrument at home are encouraged by teachers to use their knowledge and skills in the classroom or at assembly time. This enhances the musical experience of all pupils.
160. The subject is effectively managed. The co-ordinator has developed a useful portfolio of work to which non-specialist teachers refer in order to gain ideas and draw examples of the application of different elements of the curriculum. A helpful scheme of work is in place and this is reviewed constantly in the light of newly published information about the curriculum. Resources for the subject are generally sufficient but there are currently not enough pitched instruments. Computer programs are sometimes used at Key Stage 2 to enrich pupils' understanding of music but computers are not yet used to enhance pupils' skills in performance. The school has the capacity to make further progress in raising standards in the subject.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

161. Standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected nationally. In Key Stage 2 they are above this level. By the time they leave the school, most pupils achieve well in the subject and a significant number achieve very well. Girls are particularly well represented in the latter group. Standards in swimming are also good. In dance and gymnastics, standards are sound. No athletics was seen, though, from the evidence of the school's achievements in local athletics events, standards overall are sound and good in the case of a small number of individuals who do very well in these events. Compared with the last inspection, standards in Key Stage 1 have been maintained. In Key Stage 2 they have improved. A prime reason for this lies in the quality of teaching. All lessons in Key Stage 2 are now taught by the subject co-ordinator, who is a specialist in physical education.
162. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils display increasing control and accuracy in their movements. They enjoy exploring ways to express themselves to music. A small number are highly creative in their responses and produce good quality actions and movement. However, in the two lessons seen, the work of the majority of pupils, though sound, was of mediocre quality. Based on taped recordings, the lessons were not supplemented with clear guidance from teachers regarding the presentational standards expected, or what the pupils needed to do to improve the quality of their performance. Where such guidance and instruction is given, as in swimming lessons, standards are much higher. Some two thirds of the pupils in Year 2 have already achieved the National Curriculum target for 11-year-olds.
163. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils display good levels of technical skill in throwing, catching and hitting. Many of the older pupils, including the girls, throw and hit a ball with considerable power, co-ordination and accuracy. They know how to hold a bat correctly and how to generate timing and accuracy through a good knowledge of weight transference during the hitting action. As a result, they have the knowledge, as individuals, to practise and improve their own skills. This they do successfully and, in some cases, very successfully. Pupils understand the principles of team games. They apply these successfully in a wide range of team sports, both in lessons and in after-school clubs. Pupils continue to make good progress in swimming. By age 11, there are very few pupils who do not achieve the national target to swim 25 metres unassisted. A significant proportion are highly competent swimmers with water survival awards.
164. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, it is very good with pupils having the benefit of continuous high quality technical instruction over four years. The skills to be learnt are made absolutely clear for all pupils, as are expectations generally. The result is very high levels of pupils' motivation and behaviour. No time is wasted with needless organisational issues. Levels of activity are exceptionally high, allowing maximum time for pupils to learn and achieve. The esteem in which pupils hold the teacher matches the value he displays for them. It is an impressive partnership, which secures high achievement and considerable enjoyment for the pupils. Teachers in Key Stage 1 are no less committed to their pupils and are well organised. On the other hand, without the personal expertise to supplement this commitment, teachers cannot supply the kind of guidance for pupils that enables them to improve their performance and feel the encouragement of their own success.
165. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator. Since the last inspection, sound progress has been made with procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Records are effectively kept and help to monitor pupils' progress as well as evaluate the quality of provision. Good support is given to individual teachers in the planning of lessons. The school continues to benefit from a scheme of work that offers practical guidance to teachers about the activities to be taught. The next step is to underpin this with guidance about the quality of performance expected within each activity and the skills needed to achieve this. The subject has a high profile within the school and deservedly so. The sporting opportunities provided for pupils outside lesson time is exceptional for a school of this size. The effect on pupils' motivation and achievement in lessons is substantial.