

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ARNO VALE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Woodthorpe

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122509

Headteacher: C Blount

Reporting inspector: Dr Mike Williams  
(OFSTED No: 19388)

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 December 2000

Inspection number: 800545

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Saville Road Woodthorpe Nottingham
Postcode:	NG5 4JF
Telephone number:	0115 953 6400
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Austin Brady
Date of previous inspection:	16 – 18 September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mike Williams (OFSTED No: 19388)	Registered inspector	Geography	What sort of school is it?
		History	How high are standards? a) The schools results and achievements
		Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
Barry Wood (OFSTED No: 1311)	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?
Roger Linstead (OFSTED No: 19041)	Team Inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
		Art	
		Special educational needs	
John Stevens (OFSTED No: 14806)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Design and technology	
		Information technology	
		Equal opportunities	
Paul Stevens (OFSTED No: 28200)	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Music	
		Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Arno Vale is a mixed junior school on the outskirts of Nottingham. There are 270 pupils on roll; 138 girls and 132 boys. It draws about two-thirds of its pupils from the local area and the other one-third from further afield, mainly from the city. The school shares the site with an infant school from which the vast majority of its pupils come. Most parents living locally own their own properties and work in professional occupations. Those further afield come from a wider range of social backgrounds and circumstances. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The number of pupils on the special educational needs register is similar to that found in most schools. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The number of ethnic minority children is low, as are the numbers who speak English as an additional language. The majority of pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment.

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

Arno Vale is an effective school in many ways. High standards are achieved in English, and good standards in mathematics and science. In reading, standards are particularly good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Most pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. Attendance rates are high. There is a lot of good teaching, supported by a sound curriculum. But, there is also some unsatisfactory teaching, resulting in lower standards of achievement in some classes. Leadership and management, including the part played by governors, are sound, but not sufficiently effective in establishing strategies for dealing with the pressures facing the school. The school gives sound value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well in English, particularly in reading, and in mathematics, science, geography and history.
- There is a lot of good teaching.
- Attendance rates are high and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff work well together as a team.
- The teaching and provision for pupils with special educational needs are good, and these pupils make good progress.
- The school is good at promoting positive attitudes and behaviour in its pupils.
- The school provides a safe and caring environment for pupils.

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

- The small, but persistent, core of unsatisfactory teaching and learning in the school.
- The school's leadership and management in terms of longer-term development planning.
- The effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation arrangements, including the roles of the subject coordinators and the senior management team.
- The accommodation.

*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 sound progress since the last inspection in September 1997. Academic standards in reading, writing and speaking have improved. Above average standards in mathematics and science have been maintained, as have the good standards achieved in history. High standards are now found in geography, too. The performance of the more able pupils has improved overall but not in some of the middle years' classes. The amount of very good teaching in the school has increased considerably; however, the amount of unsatisfactory teaching is still at the same level as in 1997. The curriculum has improved, notably in the creative arts, information technology and in pupils' personal and social development. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented. Only in its provision for the more able pupils in some classes has the school failed to make adequate progress. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is much better now, but not in the other subjects. Leadership and management within the school continue to provide staff with good everyday support and personal direction. But, in terms of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of its own performance, the school has made insufficient progress since the last inspection. This limits the school's capacity to achieve consistently high standards.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	B	B	C
Science	C	C	C	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table above shows that the school has maintained high levels of attainment in English and mathematics over the last three years. It might seem to indicate that pupils do less well in science. This is slightly misleading. In fact, in the 2000 national tests, more pupils achieved the national standard in science than in either English or mathematics. On the other hand, the school had fewer pupils who did better than the national standard in science, which explains why the school's science performance drops significantly when compared to schools with similar intakes.

The majority of pupils arrive in the school with high levels of attainment. By age 11, many of these pupils are still achieving above average standards. This is particularly true in reading where a significant number of pupils do extremely well by the time they leave the school. They do not do quite as well in writing, mathematics and science compared to pupils in similar schools. A possible reason for this is the slower progress made by many of the more able pupils in the middle years' classes. By the time these pupils reach Year 6 they are no longer performing at above average levels for their age. Though they regain much of the lost ground in their final year, this is not enough to match the standards achieved by pupils in similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school make good progress, particularly in reading, writing and number. By age 11, most achieve the national standard in the end of key stage tests.

Standards of achievement in the other subjects are sound, or, in some cases, good. They are higher than found in most schools in geography, history, swimming and some aspects of music and art.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Virtually all pupils have positive attitudes to school and to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils are generally polite, courteous and considerate of others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' relationships, with each other and with adults, are good. Pupils accept responsibilities willingly and carry them out diligently.
Attendance	The school has high levels of attendance.

Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy school. This is reflected in the school's high rates of attendance and good levels of punctuality. Pupils behave well as a matter of principle not of sanction. Most are keen to succeed and try very hard. On the other hand, some find sustained concentration more difficult when the teaching fails to engage and challenge them.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Sound

*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.*

Though sound overall, the quality of teaching varies a lot from class to class – much more so than in most schools. Its best feature is the increasing amount of very good or better teaching; now nearly one-in-three lessons. This compares favourably with other schools. Another third of lessons are good, and slightly less than a third are sound. The least encouraging feature is the continuing existence of a fairly high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching; 10 per cent of lessons. This is higher than in most schools. Examples of very good teaching are evident in all year groups, but especially in Years 3 and 6. Conversely, most of the unsatisfactory teaching is concentrated in Years 4 and 5. The quality of pupils' learning follows a similar pattern; pupils make best progress in their first and last years in the school. In order to ensure that all pupils can achieve to their full potential, the standards of teaching from class to class need to be more consistent than they are at the moment..

The large proportion of good teaching enables most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, to have a sure grasp of appropriate skills in reading, writing and number. Inspiration and challenge mark the best lessons. Even where the teaching does not quite reach these heights, thorough preparation and high expectations of pupils ensure effective learning. On the other hand, there is still a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching in a few classes which lacks rigour and challenge. Teachers' planning is not precise enough about what pupils need to learn in relation to what they already know and can do.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound overall but good in English. Both the literacy and numeracy hours have been well implemented. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The individual education plans, allied to good support provided for these pupils, enable them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound. These are a very small proportion of pupils and are appropriately supported with individual help in language work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision made for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Though sound, the provision for pupils' spiritual development suffers from too few planned opportunities to promote its coverage.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school has a strong caring ethos in which staff know pupils well. There are good procedures for promoting positive behaviour. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal and academic development are not as well established.

The school's partnership with parents, though effective overall, is not effective for all parents. The school benefits, both educationally and financially, from the strong contribution that parents make. Their help, and that of the community generally, considerably enriches the opportunities provided for pupils to learn and to develop as individuals. The school does particularly well in this respect for its pupils with special educational needs, but not as well for some pupils in the middle years' classes.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff work well together as a team. All successfully share in the running of the school on an everyday basis. Longer-term management strategies and arrangements are less effective. The school's planning is largely short-term and unsupported by a clear set of future goals.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Soundly. Governors meet all their statutory responsibilities. They have good relations with the school and are effectively involved in its life and work. But they, too, are not fully clear about the school's educational priorities and how these will be achieved in order to raise standards further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Variable. There are some good models of effective evaluation in practice; for example, the raising of standards in information technology. However, there are still too many examples of shortcomings in the school's performance that have not been clearly evaluated and acted upon; for example, the considerable variations in the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. Principles of best value are effectively practised. Overall, the quality of learning resources is good. Staffing levels are appropriate over the school as a whole. The accommodation, both in terms of its quality and in relation to the numbers of pupils in the school, is unsatisfactory. The library and computing areas are unsuitable and inadequate. Most classrooms are cramped, with some poorly equipped for teaching the full range of the National Curriculum.

Lack of space, and inadequate accommodation, place severe restrictions on the school's capacity to provide pupils with a high quality education. The struggle to overcome short-term crises is becoming a way of life in the school, at the expense of longer-term strategies to guide the way forward. Delays in developing effective systems for managing its own performance have held the school back in recent years.

## 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>• Their children enjoy school and are well cared for.</li> <li>• The generally high standards that the school achieves in the national tests.</li> <li>• The good quality of much of the teaching.</li> <li>• The good provision for children in need of extra help.</li> <li>• The school's high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes.</li> <li>• The commitment and hard work of the teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class sizes.</li> <li>• The lack of progress pupils make in some classes.</li> <li>• The poor quality of much of the accommodation and the excessive number of pupils in the school.</li> <li>• Greater clarity and direction in meeting the challenges that face the school.</li> <li>• Better information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The arrangements for homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support the positive views of the school held by the majority of parents. However, there is a minority of parents who feel less positive about the school's performance. Given the underachievement of children in certain classes, the personal anxieties of these parents are understandable, as are parental concerns about the size of some classes, the pressures on teachers and the poor quality of much of the accommodation. If the school is to gain the confidence of all parents, it is essential that they are made to feel that their children have an equal chance to succeed whichever class they are in. At the moment, some parents do not perceive this to be the case. Inspection findings tend to bear out their perception.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

## HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

### The school's results and achievements

1. The previous inspection report (1997) judged that standards of attainment in the school were generally above average in relation to other schools nationally. There were higher standards in mathematics, science and history.
2. Standards of attainment were judged to be sound in all other subjects, including English. However, in English, pupils were found to be making unsatisfactory progress in developing their speaking abilities. Pupils with special educational needs were said to be making good progress.
3. The overall judgement from the current inspection is that standards of attainment remain above average when compared to schools nationally. Even so, inspectors find that standards have improved since the last inspection, especially in English. The picture now is:
  - attainment is well above average in English, including speaking;
  - attainment is above average in mathematics, science, geography and history;
  - attainment is average in all other subjects.
4. These findings broadly reflect the school's end of Key Stage 2 national test results for English, mathematics and science over the period since 1997. The area of most improvement is English. Results in science have improved but not consistently so, while results in mathematics have stayed at much the same level over the three year period. In the most recent national tests (2000), the school's results were:
  - in English; well above average compared to all schools nationally and above average compared to similar schools;
  - in mathematics; above average compared to all schools nationally and average compared to similar schools;
  - in science; average compared to all schools nationally but well below average compared to similar schools.
5. The divergence between the inspectors' judgement about standards in science and the one derived from comparative analysis of national data is not as significant as it might seem. In actuality, in the 2000 national tests, a greater proportion of pupils in the school achieved or exceeded the national standard in science than in either English or mathematics (89 per cent compared to 86 and 82 per cent respectively). The cause of the dip in the science performance is the slightly lower proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard (even so this was only one less pupil than in mathematics). While there is certainly room for improvement in science, standards are not vastly out of line with those achieved in English and mathematics.
6. The last inspection report noted that a majority of pupils arrived at the school with higher than average levels of attainment. It also reported that many of these higher attaining pupils failed to make the progress expected of them in most subject areas, including English. It is still the case that most pupils enter the school with higher than average attainment and abilities. However, underachievement by these pupils is not the issue now that it was in 1997. Overall, most higher attaining pupils achieve appropriately by age 11, but not consistently so. As we have seen, the school's results in science indicate that higher attainment is not at the levels than it ought to be. The same is true for writing, especially the boys. In contrast, the proportion of higher attaining readers has risen very sharply since 1997. In other subjects, the pattern is also of improved progress by the higher attaining pupils; for example, in swimming where the school has an exceptional record in relation to other local schools. Prime reasons for this improved performance amongst the higher attaining pupils by age 11 are:
  - the generally high quality of teaching and provision for pupils in Year 6;
  - the effective targeting of additional government funds for accelerating pupils' progress in Year 6.
7. The picture across the school as a whole is not quite as encouraging. In Year 3, pupils build successfully on the high attainment that they bring to the school from their previous schools. They make at least sound progress in all areas of the curriculum. Again, good teaching and

effective provision are critical factors in their success. High expectations of pupils are translated into good results in the end of year assessments. Similar progress is not as evident in Years 4 and 5 where there is a noticeable falling away in the achievement of many pupils, principally the higher attainers. Some of these pupils begin Year 4 with attainment levels above average for their age and leave Year 5 with attainment barely in line with the expected levels for their age. The school's own analyses of pupils' performance in its annual assessments in the core subjects confirms this judgement. Lack of challenge in the teaching is a key cause of this weakness, as it was at the time of the last inspection. That this shortcoming has not been dealt with since then indicates that the school's monitoring and evaluation systems are not as effective as they should be.

8. The progress and achievements of pupils with special educational needs present a much more consistent picture. Their progress is good overall, and never less than sound, including in Years 4 and 5. Indicative of their achievement is the performance of the Year 6 pupils on the special needs register in the 2000 national tests. Two-thirds of them achieved the national standard in English and two of them exceeded this. Four-fifths of them reached the national standard in science with one pupil reaching the higher attainment level. This good progress is mirrored throughout the curriculum and is the result of good support from teachers and other staff.
9. Pupils make sound progress in the non-core subjects. Most pupils make good progress in swimming, as do quite a number of pupils in games, dance, music and art. Pupils' achievements in the creative arts are markedly better than they were in 1997. Much improved provision explains this. Strengthened provision and resources are also helping to improve standards in information technology. Given the national concentration on literacy and numeracy, the school has been successful in maintaining, and in many cases improving upon, the sound standards pupils achieve right across the curriculum.
10. The school sets achievement targets in English and mathematics for the end of Key Stage 2, in conjunction with the local authority. The targets set for 1999 and 2000 were all comfortably met. Because these targets are largely based on predicting what individual pupils will achieve, they do not require the school to set longer-term "improvement" targets based on the quality of its intake. The school development plan does not indicate precisely what it intends when it refers to "improving academic standards" as a priority. For example, unlike many schools, Arno Vale does not set targets for increasing the proportion of higher attainment in its national test results. Given the wealth of assessment data now available to the school, its target setting procedures, and its means for monitoring its progress, are relatively under-developed. Too much responsibility is left to individual teachers to ensure that the school consistently meets its commitment to high achievement..

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

11. The previous report stated that pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good. Relationships were found to be sound and pupils willingly took on responsibilities and showed initiative when given the chance. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour remain good. Their personal development is much improved as a result of the greater opportunities provided to enhance their social and moral growth. Parents increasingly see this aspect of the school's performance in a very positive light.
12. Pupils are enthusiastic to come to school. They arrive in a calm but purposeful mood. They look smart and represent their parents well. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In general, they are very positive in lessons and the majority are extremely well motivated. But there is evidence of variability between the different classes. Attitudes in Years 3 and 6 tend to be better than in Years 4 and 5, but there is also some variation in pupils' attitudes between the two classes in Year 5. In Years 3 and 6, pupils' attitudes are often very good. By age 11, most pupils realise that hard work will produce good results. They listen and concentrate well, often very well, and show a high level of interest and commitment to their studies. Lack of sustained concentration is the defining feature of the less positive attitudes occasionally seen in some classes.
13. Overall, pupils behave well in lessons. Only rarely is there evidence of pupils' behaviour falling below the standards expected, when pupils feel under challenged by the work set. Generally speaking, pupils have a good understanding of the school's expectations for self-discipline and respond accordingly. Given the cramped conditions in many of the classrooms, pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour are key factors in overcoming the difficulties that these conditions

present. Behaviour around the school is also good. Neither bullying or bad language were noted during the inspection. Incident books indicate that there have been few occasions requiring teachers to report on unacceptable behaviour. The school has had to use exclusions infrequently. There have been none in the last year.

14. The quality of pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are good. Mutual respect and harmonious relationships significantly assist in promoting a positive climate for learning in the school. Pupils are quick to help each other, especially those less fortunate than themselves. This is true in lessons and around the playground. In the classroom, pupils increasingly value each other's opinions and qualities. They successfully work together in groups and share resources without fuss. Boys and girls mix readily; for example, in physical education lessons where they partner each other without inhibition or embarrassment. Similar levels of harmony and goodwill are evident in pupils' relations on the playground and when dining together at lunch-time.
15. Pupils' personal development is good. Improvements in this aspect of their education have been considerably aided by the good quality of the school's personal, health and social education provision. Parents recognise and appreciate this development. By age 11, most pupils have well-developed senses of social and moral responsibility, highlighted, for example, in the way they have helped to support and implement the playground peacemaker and "quarrel busters" initiatives. Pupils quickly settle into class routines and systems. They have a keen awareness of health and safety issues. They accept and discharge the duties given to them around the school willingly and responsibly.
16. The previous report indicated that attendance at the school was good. Over the last four years the school has improved its attendance levels consistently. They are now very good. All classes have attendance rates well above the national average, with many pupils achieving exemplary attendance records throughout their time in school. Both unauthorised absence rates, and the taking of family holidays during term-time, are at low levels. Punctuality is not an issue in the school.

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

17. The last inspection found the quality of teaching satisfactory. It was very good in four per cent of lessons, at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in 7 per cent. Teachers were judged to work hard. Most controlled lessons well, creating good working atmospheres in the classrooms. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs was always good. There was good quality science teaching throughout the school.
18. However, inspectors also identified a number of weaknesses that reduced the quality of learning. There were gaps in teachers' knowledge of information technology, art and music. Teachers spent too much time supervising rather than instructing. They relied overmuch on worksheets and textbooks, some of which were very old. The least effective teaching lacked challenge and appropriate expectation. Teachers made limited use of homework, and marking was not taking learning forward. Pupils were not getting enough imaginative encouragement to find out, or to think , for themselves.
19. Progress has been made in tackling most of these weaknesses. Knowledge of subjects has improved. Learning resources are improved. There are more opportunities for pupils to work independently, though a minority of teachers still rely too heavily on worksheets with a focus on recalling factual information. There is still a lack of challenge and expectation in a small amount of the teaching. Though teachers make better use of both homework and marking to improve learning, there is still too much inconsistency in the setting of homework.
20. During the present inspection, teaching was again satisfactory overall but the standard was unsatisfactory in 10 per cent of lessons. Teaching was excellent in six percent of lessons, very good in 22 per cent, good in 34 per cent and satisfactory in 30 per cent. Since the last inspection the amount of high quality teaching has increased from four to 28 per cent. The amount of unsatisfactory, or poor, teaching has stayed more or less the same.
21. The most striking feature in the quality of teaching is its inconsistency from one year group and another. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching is in Year 4. There is none in Year 6. There are

also big differences of teaching standards within key subjects. For example, the standard of teaching in science varies between excellent and poor. In English, the range is between excellent and unsatisfactory. Parents are justifiably concerned about these big variations in opportunities for children to learn and progress.

22. There was not enough evidence to judge the quality of teaching in geography. The quality in mathematics and physical education was good. The quality in the other National Curriculum subjects and in religious education was satisfactory.
23. The main reasons for the increased amounts of high quality teaching since the last inspection are:
  - better teaching of both English and mathematics through good use of the national literacy and numeracy initiatives;
  - teachers' stronger knowledge of subjects, and teaching methods, through extra training, particularly in how pupils learn basic skills;
  - the improved quality of resources, increasing pupils' interest and effort;
  - clearer aims in most lessons as to what, and how, pupils are to learn.
24. Good knowledge of subjects now informs nearly all lessons. Teachers introduce new topics confidently, thoroughly and clearly. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics, art, geography, history and physical education. Teachers' knowledge has also improved in information technology and music since the last inspection, as has the provision for these subjects. Teachers question shrewdly when leading whole class discussions, or giving individual help to pupils. Pupils' new learning is therefore both accurate and detailed. For example, good demonstrations showed Year 6 pupils exactly how to shade chalk lines in order to achieve three-dimensional effects. The new national guidance for all subjects has also widened teachers' knowledge and understanding.
25. Basic skills are well taught in most lessons. Nearly all pupils start Year 3 with a strong foundation in speech, reading, writing and number. Good use of both the national literacy and numeracy strategies builds effectively on these. Lesson plans and activities effectively matched the needs of pupils of different abilities in the vast majority of lessons observed. This match of activities to individual needs remains an area of weakness in the least effective teaching.
26. With good parental support, most teachers develop reading interpretation skills very effectively through regular guided and independent reading both at school and home. As a result, almost all pupils commonly reach the standard expected for eleven-year-olds by the end of Year 6. Teachers also widen pupils' writing experiences well each year. However, average and slower learners do not readily use new spelling skills in everyday work. This is partly because teachers have further to go in developing writing opportunities in other subjects. In high quality sessions, all pupils, including the brighter ones, rise to the challenge of work that stretches them. After a Year 6 speech and drama session, a boy commented to his friend: "That was hard!". However, such stimulating development of literacy skills is still not a sufficiently persistent feature of teaching across the school.
27. Pupils grasp new mathematical skills well, because teachers plan and start lessons with clear aims. They follow the numeracy strategy programmes of study closely. The best lessons move at a brisk pace keeping all pupils busy. Challenging tasks, both oral and written, keep pupils interested in new learning. Teachers give effective help to groups and individuals using stimulating questioning and explanations. Again, inspectors found exceptions to this good practice. In a few lessons, there is insufficient challenge in the work set and the standards expected.
28. Sound planning informs the progress of learning in most subjects. In effective lessons, teachers link work carefully to previous learning. Planning includes effective instruction, discussion, practice, assessment and review stages. However, when teachers do not link and balance these stages of the lesson appropriately, learning and teaching are unsatisfactory. For example, Year 4 pupils' completed work in history and geography shows little depth of thought or care for presentation. Similarly, in a session on spelling work, a Year 4 class lost interest because the lesson plan called for too much repetition. By the end of the lesson concentration faded and a third of the class then made little progress in reading.

29. In the most successful lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils. They expect them to follow several lines of questioning to gain insight into new learning; for example, in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher's penetrating questions challenged pupils to use all the evidence on character in an autobiography. In an excellent Year 5 English lesson, pupils of all abilities made rapid strides in learning how to write in note form. This was mainly because the teacher expected very high levels of industry and concentration throughout the lesson. In contrast, in a few lessons, teachers give pupils too little to do, or tasks which are too easy. Progress in learning is unsatisfactory as a result.
30. Good management of pupils continues to be a strong feature in most lessons. Pupils sensibly follow established classroom routines; for example, in moving to groups and tidying away. They waste no time and there are no dips in concentration. In most lessons, enthusiastic teaching reflects in pupils' keenness to get on. For example, after a high quality demonstration of painting technique, Year 3 pupils changed without a word into their art smocks and got equipment ready at great speed so as to start work immediately. Such urgency is not always evident in other classrooms.
31. Teachers use an appropriate range of methods to make it easy for pupils to concentrate. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. For example, a Year 4 teacher started a guided writing lesson in the role of a police inspector at the scene of a crime. The pupil constables showered her with theories about the suspect's character and background on evidence from the contents of a dropped bag. They then had plenty of ideas to use in their writing. Teachers adopt to good effect teaching methods developed in numeracy and literacy work in other subject areas.
32. In nearly all lessons teachers time work well and make good use of resources and support staff. This is a strong feature of the school's good quality provision for pupils with special educational needs. All staff link these pupils' work closely to clearly written individual targets. Support staff give effective guidance to both individuals and groups, according to the needs of each lesson. New resources such as class readers, or whiteboards for draft answers, increase all pupils' interest and involvement in learning.
33. Teachers have clear views of how pupils are getting on in lessons in English, mathematics and science. They keep detailed records of reading standards and home reading, for example. Marking of most written work in English gives pupils practical targets. However, beyond the core subjects, assessment is largely informal and does not provide teachers with much help in planning future lessons. Nor does the fact that pupils' assessment files highlight progress by the end of the year rather than current achievement.
34. The use of homework is not consistent. At its best it gives a vital starting point for learning at school. For example, Year 5 pupils' work on report writing using connectives depended on their discussing with their families a photograph of a childhood event they remembered. They were very interested in this work, and all came back to the lesson with well-chosen photographs and detailed descriptions. As a result they were able to work in pairs for most of the lesson summarising each other's experiences in careful and orderly notes. Pupils also learn spellings and tables for tests at school. Nearly all read regularly for enjoyment at home. Teachers' use of homework in other areas varies from time to time and subject to subject. There is some justification for parents' desire for a more consistent whole-school policy on homework.
35. The school has identified reduced rates of learning and significant underachievement in the middle years of the key stage. These are the direct results of continuing weaknesses in teaching. Because of good teaching quality in Years 3 and 6 and in some Year 5 lessons, pupils' achievement by the end of the key stage is appropriate. This tends to mask the fact that achievement in Years 4 and 5 is often not good enough. This is particularly so in the case of the higher attaining pupils. This is a weakness that was identified at the previous inspection and persists. Pupils' progress depends far too much on the classes they are in. Teachers lack opportunities to learn from, and thereby extend, the increasing proportions of very good practice in the school.

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

36. At the last inspection, the curriculum was reported as meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. It still does. The report identified several strengths, notably the provision for pupils with special educational needs and the provision for pupils' moral and social development. These remain good. In contrast, inspectors on that occasion pointed to a number of areas requiring improvement, namely:
- the provision for the creative arts;
  - the quality of weekly and daily planning, including the identification of assessment opportunities;
  - the lack of opportunities for pupils to develop cultural and spiritual awareness;
  - the lack of parental involvement in the review meetings of pupils with special educational needs.
37. All but the quality of planning have been successfully addressed. Subject planning, other than in the core subjects, continues to give too little attention to assessment. Likewise, lesson planning, though much improved generally, is still not good enough to ensure appropriate achievement by all pupils in some classes.
38. The quality of the school's provision is:
- sound overall;
  - good in English and mathematics;
  - sound in all other subjects;
  - good for pupils with special educational needs, and sound for pupils who speak English as an additional language;
  - good for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and sound for their spiritual development.
39. The school's curriculum remains broad and balanced. For most pupils it is relevant, though not sufficiently relevant for pupils in Years 4 and 5 when it fails to take appropriate account of the full range of their abilities and prior attainment. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects, and in sex and health education. The provision for pupils' personal development is particularly effective; for example, the school's drugs awareness programme, provided by the local police, is very well received by pupils. The sex education programme, supported by the school nurse, is equally effective. Personal and health education is an area of marked improvement since the last inspection.
40. The school provides a sound range of interesting opportunities for pupils to extend their interests, knowledge and skills, including visits and a residential trip to Norfolk. Extra-curricular activities are plentiful and well supported. All such opportunities are in principle made available to pupils without regard to gender, ability, culture or ethnic diversity. In practice, there are occasional instances when activities are not accessible to all pupils; for example, attendance at the Christmas concert. Generally, the curriculum provides equality of opportunity and access so that all pupils can make appropriate progress. In cases of extreme physical disability, the school's efforts to ensure equality of opportunity are exceptional, and successful. However, for the higher ability pupils in some classes, there is still evidence that their opportunities to learn are hampered by the quality of provision made for them.
41. There is good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. Procedures for the identification and assessment of these pupils are effective. Individual education plans have been drawn up for all pupils on the register at stage 2 or above. They contain manageable targets and are well used by teachers and support staff to plan the learning for these pupils. Parents are now fully integrated into the procedures for reviewing pupils' progress and setting them new targets. Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is sound. The school's support and planning for these pupils is appropriate.
42. Overall, time allocations for the various subjects are satisfactory. The recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy has not prevented the school from making sound progress in its provision for the other areas of the curriculum. Revision of the school's plans to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum are well advanced. Provision for the creative arts is much improved, as evidenced in the revised schemes of work for art, music and dance, and in the introduction of a



successful programme of drama productions, art exhibitions and concerts. Creative thinking and appreciation are sometimes well linked into other curriculum areas; for example, in history where role-play is effectively used to stimulate and enrich pupils' thinking and learning.

43. The school has sound strategies for teaching the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. The national strategies are effectively developed within the school's curriculum and are helping to raise standards of learning and teaching. Provision for the teaching of reading is highly effective. The provision for writing is not quite so effective outside the literacy hour. There is occasional evidence of good practice; for example, in some of the imaginative writing about the Second World War by Year 5 pupils. But the wider picture is more patchy, indicating a lack of whole-school planning to ensure greater assimilation of pupils' literacy skills into the curriculum as a whole. It is a broadly similar picture with the teaching of numeracy. Much good practice is evident in the use made of pupils' numeracy skills in the teaching of geography and science, but this is not consistently spread across the different classes. Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills are much improved, as are the standards pupils achieve. Speaking in particular is well planned across the curriculum. Conversely, opportunities for pupils to use a range of different technologies to support their learning are at an earlier stage of implementation. Inspectors found lots of good examples of computer-assisted learning but this aspect of the school's provision is not helped by the unsatisfactory arrangements for the location of the school's computers.
44. The school has recognised the need to enhance the quality of its subject and whole-school planning by the appointment of the deputy headteacher as curriculum manager and the introduction of a curriculum committee. Both reflect an accurate assessment of the school's current needs. The school has a full complement of policies and schemes of work to cover all areas of its provision. Most are clear and offer teachers good guidance; for example, the special educational needs policy and procedures. A few are less helpful; for example, the policy for the more able pupils which is imprecise and contains little more than justifications for supporting these pupils. Inconsistencies in practice emerge when individual teachers translate these longer-term schemes of work into individual lesson plans. At this stage, the school's systems for ensuring that its provision is good quality at the point of delivery in the classrooms are not adequate. The result is unsatisfactory levels of variation in the quality of provision from one class to another.
45. While inspectors noted many good examples of effective planning by individual teachers, good practice was much less evident in the school's overall planning arrangements. For example:
- inconsistencies exist in the development of action plans for subjects. Coordinators do not focus on a common agenda of whole-school priorities;
  - coordinators are unable to know whether the teachers' plans they approve are appropriately taught in lessons;
  - not all year-teams plan together, creating inconsistencies in what is covered and in expectations of pupils in the year group;
  - there are no effective whole-school procedures for managing the development of cross-curricular skills, for example, in information technology;
  - teachers' plans vary in how much attention they pay to challenging higher attaining pupils, a weakness which appears not to be picked up in the monitoring of these plans;
  - there are significant differences in teachers' expectations regarding depth of work and quality of presentation.
46. Although some of these inconsistencies are also evident in the planning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the provision for these aspects of pupils' personal development is good overall. As in 1997, pupils' moral and social education are the stronger elements in this provision. The very caring approach that the school adopts to its pupils provides them with a code of conduct that focuses very strongly on the moral principle of caring for others. It also teaches them to consider the personal consequences of over-use of alcohol, and misuse of drugs and smoking. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour reflect the good quality of the school's provision and teaching. Their responsibilities to their community are well promoted through their involvement with national and local charities and through good links with local organisations, including the church.

47. Provision for cultural development is also good. Pupils have access to a wide variety of cultures in music, literature and art, both in lessons and through after-school activities and events. This stimulates much high quality work as well as an appreciation of the arts. However, too little focus in religious education on different faiths means that pupils do not consider sufficiently issues such as tolerance.
48. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' spiritual development is the weaker area in their personal development. Nevertheless, it is sound. Assemblies include a brief time of quiet reflection or prayer but are not provided with an atmosphere that distinguishes the occasion from most lessons. In lessons, pupils sometimes produce pieces of writing showing that they have paused to think deeply. In history, for example, they have strongly empathised with the desperation of the Jews in the Second World War. In religious education, they have appreciated the plight of Joseph and Mary as well as the deep significance to Christians of Jesus' birth. However, not enough thought is given in the school's planning as to how this aspect of the curriculum is best strengthened.

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

49. The previous inspection report judged the school to be caring and supportive. A few areas for improvement were noted. Relationships between teachers and pupils were insufficiently effective to promote the levels of personal interaction that would help to enhance pupils' self-esteem. This is no longer the case. Attendance procedures were said to be appropriately in place but the retention of registers in the classrooms hindered regular monitoring. This has been successfully addressed. Marking and monitoring were reported as not always being best used to support pupils' progress. Monitoring remains an issue; marking does not. Overall, the school's guidance and welfare provision continue to function at appropriate, and sometimes better, levels. There is still room for improvement though, not least in providing sharper definition to some of the school's guidance and welfare policies and procedures.
50. The headteacher concentrates a considerable amount of his personal time in interacting with pupils as they move around the school and with being available to parents at either end of the school day. As a result, he, and the staff generally, have a particularly good knowledge of all the pupils, enabling the latter to feel personally valued and to see the school as a secure and positive environment. Parents are increasingly appreciative of the headteacher's and staff's achievement in this respect.
51. Systematic monitoring of pupils' academic progress and personal development is not as effective. A start has been made with implementing a system for tracking pupils' academic progress from Year 3 to Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Beyond this, record-keeping of pupils' academic progress is largely a matter for individual teachers. Some keep useful records. On the whole, however, practice across the school in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is patchy and inconsistent. Given that assessment was an area identified in need of development in 1997, progress has been slow. The school now has an effective array of assessments in the core subjects upon which to base better targeting of pupils' progress and to inform its own curriculum planning, but still makes too little use of this information. This development remains a priority for the school.
52. An exception to this judgement is the provision made for pupils with special educational needs. Effective assessment procedures, and good progress reviewing, are key elements in the school's successful practice in this area. Thorough records for the latter have enabled the school to establish and maintain good links with outside professional agencies. These pupils are well supported both through their individual education plans and through the care and guidance of teachers and support staff. The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also appropriately recorded.
53. Apart from the pupils with specific needs, the monitoring of pupils' progress in non-academic areas of their development is largely informal and un-recorded. Records of pupils' personal development are kept by very few teachers. Teachers tend to rely, on personal knowledge of their pupils and information provided by other teachers (through between teachers). Effective liaison and good personal relationships are also the cornerstones of the school's successful links with

its feeder infant and secondary schools. Parents and their children receive helpful and well planned support at points of entry to, and exit from, the school.

54. The school has sufficient policies for its support, guidance and welfare agenda, but some of these need updating and refocusing. As a result, the school's policies sometimes lack sufficient precision to serve as the basis for clear strategies for action; for example, the school's child protection procedures. Although keenly vigilant in this area, staff training has been insufficient over a long period of time so that the senior management team cannot guarantee that staff observe the full sensitivities when dealing with problems. Presently, there are no pupils on the child protection register. In contrast, the school's attendance procedures, carefully reviewed, have been instrumental in achieving the school's very good performance in this area. As a result, parents are alert to their statutory obligations, and to the requirement that their children arrive at school punctually at the start of the school day.
55. The school is very welcoming to those outside agencies that it engages to support pupils on a routine basis or if there are specific problems. The school nurse has had invaluable links with the school over many years and assists with the school's personal, health and social education programme. This provides high quality support in meeting the welfare needs of pupils.
56. The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour and for eliminating bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour are effective. Staff regard this as an important issue, as the introduction of the peacemaker initiative indicates. The school has five school rules, which were developed several years ago. Pupils are involved in developing or endorsing these rules at the start of the year, with the emphasis on self-discipline and mutual respect. These rules could be more prominently displayed around the school. On the other hand, the school prides itself on the fact that pupils behave appropriately as a matter of principle not in response to rules. This is an aspect of the school's functioning that benefits significantly from the direct influence and determination of the staff to set, and expect, high personal standards of behaviour from all members of the school community, whether child or adult.
57. Despite the cramped nature of much of the accommodation, the school provides a physically safe environment for pupils. Records show a low rate of minor accidents around the school. The school has enough first-aiders but first aid facilities are inadequate due to the lack of an on-site medical room, and the use of reception and the school office for this purpose. Health and safety procedures are good under the guidance of a knowledgeable governor and a highly conscientious and committed caretaker. The school also receives good support from the local education authority in relation to risk assessment. There are a number of mostly minor health and safety points that have been fed back to the school. One major health and safety matter, the non-statutory toilet provision for boys, is identified for comment elsewhere in the report.

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

58. The last inspection report indicated that the school's partnership with parents was satisfactory. Two aspects of the partnership were identified as needing attention. Parents wished to be better informed about homework and to be provided with clearer information about their children's progress in the annual reports. Both are still issues for parents today.
59. As with a number of other aspects of the school's performance and provision, the situation is mainly positive, but not wholly so. The great majority of parents feel that the school does a good

job and express approval of its performance. But, there are a minority of parents who are dissatisfied and register their worries quite vehemently. Their concerns are:

- the very large numbers of pupils in some classes;
- the lack of progress made by pupils in some classes;
- the inadequate accommodation;
- inconsistencies in the provision of homework;
- the lack of information about how their children are getting on;

- an insufficient range of activities outside lessons.
60. As already noted, two of these issues date back to the previous inspection report, giving rise to a feeling amongst this minority of parents that the school is not making the progress it should. There is some evidence to support their view. Not enough headway has been made with homework, nor with improving the quality of information parents receive about their children's progress. In contrast, the foundation for parents' concerns about the school's lack of provision of visits and other enriching activities to support the curriculum is less clear. Evidence from teachers' plans indicates otherwise, as does the progress made by the school in extending its provision in the creative arts since the last inspection.
  61. Concerns about class sizes and the unsatisfactory progress made by some pupils stem from the direct experiences of individual parents. However, these issues are not connected. The very large class sizes are found in Year 6, yet, as noted earlier in this report, it is not in Year 6 that pupils make indifferent progress. Nonetheless, there is inevitable speculation on the part of some parents that the pressure on Year 6 teachers is such that it restricts the opportunities for their children to make the progress of which they are capable. There is justification for their anxieties, particularly when seen in conjunction with the suitability of some of the accommodation and facilities to support teaching and learning for such large classes; for example, the library accommodation and the facilities for computing. Both are inadequate.
  62. Only one aspect of the school's partnership with parents has declined in its approval rating since the last inspection; the quality of communication between the school and parents. While most parents are satisfied with the school's "open door" policy and feel that the school is accessible to them when the need arises, a few feel that the school does not take enough initiative in communicating with them. In their view, too much reliance is placed on pupils as the means of communication, or in some cases, the school gives parents too little notice about impending events such as school matches. Parents have some grounds for this reaction. Nevertheless, this should not detract from the many good aspects of communication that make a very positive impact on the school's partnership with its parents.
  63. The school's "open door" policy is rooted in a genuine desire to encourage parents to become fully involved in the life and work of the school. The headteacher, in particular is proactive in this regard. As a result, parent helpers provide valuable support to teachers both inside and outside the classroom on a regular basis, particularly with reading. The parent-teacher association is a thriving body and plays a key role in the school. It is well supported and raises considerable funds to help strengthen the school's facilities and resources. Formal open evenings for parents are well attended including the annual governors' meeting for parents. The school has given some instruction in aspects of the National Curriculum including literacy and numeracy. Parents are given a written overview of topic work at the start of the school year. The half-termly newsletter is very informative and much appreciated by parents.
  64. Both the school prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents meet statutory requirements in terms of the information included. However, neither document adequately conveys the ethos and personality of the school or signals that the school values its parents. Similar signals are absent from the school's approach to its policies and aims. These are not displayed in the school and parents have little knowledge of their existence. Annual reports to parents are unsatisfactory. They lack opportunities for parents and pupils to contribute to the process, especially in identifying future achievement targets. Computer generated phrases in the reports have caused some minor parental dissatisfaction. All contribute to the feeling held by some parents that the lines of communication between the school and themselves are not as productive as they could be.
  65. Though there are many strengths in the school's partnership with parents, there is still work to be done to ensure that the parent body as a whole have confidence in the school. At the moment, such lack of confidence is confined to a relatively small group of parents. Nevertheless, their concerns are very serious ones for the school. Critically, they raise questions, and doubts, about the school's strategies and capacity for dealing with the challenges it faces; for example, in relation to over capacity of pupils and to its inadequate accommodation. At the present time, the school is not doing enough to convince parents that it has adequate policies for dealing with current difficulties.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. In the previous inspection report, the school was judged to be soundly led by the headteacher who provided the school with a strong sense of direction. The school is still soundly led. However, the strong sense of direction reported in 1997 is less evident currently in terms of the longer-term strategies for taking the school forward.
67. Teamwork is a key aspiration of the school's aims and values. This is successfully realised on a day-to-day basis, an achievement in large part due to the efforts and example of the headteacher. He involves himself utterly in the life of the school. In this, he is well supported by the deputy headteacher and a team of professional and committed staff. Between them they have produced a strong sense of partnership with governors, with the vast majority of parents, and with external professional agencies and the local community. All, in one way or another, are the products of effective leadership and management.
68. Steady overall improvement since the last inspection in the performance of the higher attaining pupils and in the quality of the school's educational provision are also attributable to effective management. Both were the subject of concern in 1997, as was the lack of opportunities provided for pupils to take initiative for their own learning. Progress has been made in each area, but not consistently. Indeed, inconsistency remains a significant feature in the school's development and performance since 1997. For instance, while substantial progress has been made in increasing the amount of very good teaching, the weaknesses in teaching noted at the time of the last inspection persist at much the same level as before. Likewise, the progress made with the school's monitoring and evaluation arrangements is very variable. Judged unsatisfactory then, they are still ineffective in the vital area of evaluating and raising standards. These are all management issues.
69. The progress made with strengthening the subject coordinator's role highlights this deficiency. Coordinators now have fuller job descriptions. They have budgets and manage resources effectively. They support individual teachers and contribute to the formulation of the school development plan. They monitor teachers' plans and help review pupils' performance at the end of the year. Even so, they still have too little knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses within their subjects to play an effective part in development planning. Crucially, coordinators do not visit classrooms to see teaching and learning in action. As a result, they have few means of knowing what is going on in their subjects beyond their own classrooms, especially in the non-core subjects where whole-school assessment arrangements are inadequate for this purpose.
70. These shortcomings place a critical responsibility on the leadership and senior management team to evaluate the school's performance and take action when it is needed. It is often not clear, however, whose responsibility it is to assess standards and to feed this back into the school's forward planning arrangements. As a result, teachers and subject coordinators frequently establish their own policy and arrangements, taking decisions that best suit their own circumstances – albeit successfully. The recent introduction of a series of curriculum committees to act as coordinating agencies for creating policy, monitoring performance and raising standards is designed to help address this problem. As a forum for discussion and consultation, the role of these committees is clear. On the other hand, what part they play in decision-making is not clear.
71. Similar strengths and weaknesses are evident in the school's development plan. The current plan is detailed, carefully constructed and identifies a series of priorities for action. Some priorities are identified very precisely and provide the school and governors with effective guidance for action; for example, the priority to improve the provision for information technology. Good progress has resulted. In contrast, priorities for raising academic standards are much less precisely articulated. Targets to be achieved are not specific. Yet, elsewhere in the school's analyses of its own performance, specific areas for development are highlighted; for example, the need to improve standards in writing, especially of the boys, and to raise standards in science to bring them into line with similar schools. Neither priority is included in this year's school development plan. Nor is the need to strengthen the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures to be found in the plan, despite repeated recommendations to this effect provided in the local authority's annual improvement plans for the school.

72. Traces of ambivalence are also evident in the part played by governors in the management of the school. Governors were judged to be fully involved in the life of the school in the previous report. This is still the case. They work hard, and successfully, as a body and as individuals, to support the school. They meet regularly and have an appropriate range of committees to ensure that they meet all of their statutory duties. Governors play an increasing role in monitoring standards and in helping to formulate the school's development plan and associated budget. However, they are not as effective in two critical aspects of their responsibilities. First, they do not provide a clear vision for the schools' future. When talking to governors, inspectors found that policies and challenges were largely articulated as reactions to external factors and circumstances, not as stepping stones towards future goals – except in unhelpfully broad terms. Second, governors are not sufficiently aware of the school's academic priorities to play their full part as "critical friends" in development planning and in budgeting. Within these constraints, governors carry out their duties responsibly and efficiently.
73. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out by the headteacher, sometimes in partnership with the local education authority's advisor. Where weaknesses have been identified, there is evidence of decisive action having been taken. However, given that the amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the school has not been reduced since the last inspection, there is still more to be achieved in this area of the school's management. Effective introduction of the arrangements for performance management should help this process. On the other hand, the implementation of these arrangements is currently constrained by the limitations of the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.
74. The school has an income and expenditure per pupil that is in line with that found in most schools. Principles of best value for money are appropriately adopted. Specific grants are well targeted; for example, the funds for supporting the school's special educational needs provision and the grants received for enhancing the school's information technology provision. Government "booster" funds, to raise standards in Year 6 in preparation for the national tests, have been successfully targeted and used to improve standards in mathematics. Administration within the school is thorough. The school office is well run and provides a welcoming and positive interface for visitors. Increasing use is made of new technologies to keep records and accounts. Financial administration is sound, though a recent local authority audit of the school's procedures indicates the need for greater rigour in some areas.
75. Overall, the school has a sufficient number of teachers to match the number of pupils on roll. However, the numbers of pupils per year group within the school are not evenly distributed. There are higher numbers in Years 3 and 6. The effects of this situation have been solved in Year 3 by the introduction of an additional class and teacher, but only partially solved in Year 6 by the introduction of a third class for literacy and numeracy lessons. For all other lessons, the effect of having 37 pupils in one Year 6 class and 38 in the other is limiting the range and quality of the provision offered to pupils. Thanks to the commitment and quality of the teachers in these classes, the worst effects of this pressure have been largely overcome.
76. Effective deployment of well qualified support staff adds to the quality of teaching and learning in the school, especially for pupils experiencing difficulties. Teachers are appropriately qualified and provided with opportunities to identify their own professional needs. Coordination of staff development is well managed by the deputy headteacher. However, the lack of precision in the school's educational targets, within the school development plan, restricts the school's capacity to ensure that its educational priorities are appropriately linked to its staff development decisions. There are sound induction arrangements into the school for new teachers, including a mentoring system. Provision of training for the literacy and numeracy initiatives has been sufficient and beneficial. Formal teacher appraisal has not been undertaken this year. However, professional development interviews conducted by the headteacher have taken place and have been effective in supporting teachers' needs.
77. The quality of the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. There are a few good features such as the outdoor areas and the hall. Some of the classrooms are just about large enough to take the number of pupils allocated to them. Others are not. For a school of 270 pupils, the overall teaching accommodation is inadequate. The dining hall and a curtained-off area alongside the main corridor are unsuitable venues for teaching classes on a regular basis. That one of these areas is the specialist space for design and technology means that the school no longer has adequate accommodation for teaching the practical aspects of this subject. The facilities for the

teaching of computing are also unsatisfactory. The majority of computers are located in corridors, with teaching and learning frequently interrupted by the movement of pupils from other classes; for example, by Year 6 pupils when they change for physical education and go to the hall. The library accommodation, sited in the reception area near the front entrance, is unsuitable as a facility for pupils to use in lesson times for personal research. There is no accommodation for withdrawing pupils from lessons for specialist help. The corridors are again used for this purpose. The toilet provision for boys is inadequate and does not meet statutory requirements. Storage space is minimal.

78. Although the school does its best with the accommodation it has, it is seriously handicapped by this deficiency in its efforts to provide the quality of education to which it is committed. The caretaker works tirelessly, and successfully, to keep the school clean, tidy and welcoming. The school is equally diligent in its efforts to enhance the quality of its own environment. The poor state of much of the structural fabric of the school makes this a difficult task.
79. The sufficiency and quality of the school's learning resources overall are good. They are good for English, science, design and technology, information technology and music, and sound for all other subjects. This is the result of well directed targeting of the school's budget to meet the needs of the curriculum. In contrast to the school's accommodation, its learning resources impact very positively on the quality of teaching and learning.
80. The school gives sound value for money. It receives an average income per pupil and most pupils enter the school with above average attainment. Pupils exit the school with at least sound levels of achievement, with high standards of personal development and positive attitudes towards learning. Most, but not all, experience good teaching and sound curriculum provision, particularly of basic skills.

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

In order to improve standards further in the school, governors, headteacher and staff should:

- a) Improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils in all classes are provided with appropriate opportunities to achieve to their full potential, by:
  - Raising the expectations of all teachers to match the high standards already displayed by many teachers in the school;
  - Establishing arrangements to make better use of existing models of good teaching practice in the school to raise standards of teaching generally;
  - Ensuring that effective whole-school assessment arrangements are developed in all subjects and classes which enable, and require, teachers to make stronger links between their planning and what they know about pupil's attainment and progress as a result of regular assessment and record-keeping;

(see paras. 7,10, 21 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 35, 37, 44, 45, 69, 88, 95, 102, 104, 105, 111, 114, 119, 124, 129, 133, 140, 143)

b) Improve the quality and effectiveness of the school's management, by:

- Clarifying the school's longer-term strategic vision as a basis for annual development planning and review;
- Identifying more precisely within the school's annual development plan the priorities for raising academic standards, the strategies for achieving this and the performance indicators by which this achievement will be measured;
- Strengthening further the school's monitoring and evaluation arrangements to ensure that effective links exist between evaluations of its own performance and action planning;
- Clarifying and, where necessary, further developing the roles and functions of the governors, headteacher, senior management team and subject coordinators within the school's management processes, in order to ensure that each partner is clear about the extent of their responsibilities and has the authority and means to discharge them.

(see paras. 7, 45, 49, 51, 53, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 89, 96, 106, 115, 120, 125, 129, 140, 144)

c) Improve the quality of the school's accommodation, by:

- Providing appropriate space for the school library and the teaching of computing;
- Eliminating the practice of using non-classroom space for class teaching on a regular basis, and seeking ways to develop and up-grade the school's current classroom provision;
- Bringing the provision for boys' toilets into line with the statutory requirements relating to the number of boys on roll in the school.

(see paras. 43, 57, 61, 77, 115, 128, 129)

In addition to the key issues identified above, the following subsidiary issue should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- Strengthening further the partnership with parents by improving the quality of information provided for parents; notably with respect to pupils' annual progress reports, homework, the governors' annual report, and the school's published policies.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	22	34	30	8	2	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	270
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	11

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	39	27	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	35	33	37
	Girls	22	21	22
	Total	57	54	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (91)	82 (75)	89 (87)
	National	75 (68)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	32	36
	Girls	21	20	22
	Total	55	52	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (88)	79 (83)	88 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	8
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	249
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: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.7
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	443086
Total expenditure	453274
Expenditure per pupil	1757
Balance brought forward from previous year	16043
Balance carried forward to next year	5855

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	270
Number of questionnaires returned	122

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	4	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	2	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	50	16	2	3
The teaching is good.	38	54	3	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	60	17	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	36	1	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	37	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	30	54	7	2	7
The school is well led and managed.	39	52	5	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	49	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	50	16	5	2

### Other issues raised by parents

Two other issues were raised by parents at the parents' pre-inspection meeting and through the questionnaire returns. These were:

- The large class sizes in Year 6, and the more general issue of over capacity in the school leading to pressure on space and teachers;
- The quality and extent of the accommodation generally.

These issues were raised by a minority of parents, critically those most directly affected by their impact. However, these parents were very firm in their views and tended to feel that the school was not doing enough to tackle the problems it faces for benefit of all children.

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

### **ENGLISH**

81. The school's 2000 national test results for eleven-year-olds were well above average. They were also above the average for schools of similar intake to Arno Vale. This has been the pattern over the last three years. The school has maintained consistently high standards of performance in the national tests since the last inspection. Standards in reading have been higher than those in writing, reflecting a national pattern. However, boys have achieved slightly higher standards than girls which runs counter to the national pattern. The reverse is true in writing where boys' results have been significantly lower than girls' and only in line with the national average over this period. There was an improvement in the 2000 results. Analysis of the 2000 results also shows that pupils with special educational needs made good progress. More than half of them reached the standard expected for eleven-year-olds last year.
82. Inspectors find the standards of the present Year 6 pupils to be in line with this trend. Overall, standards remain well above average, particularly in reading. Standards in speaking, reported as unsatisfactory at the last inspection, are much improved. Standards in writing continue to lag behind somewhat. Nevertheless, they are above average and improving.
83. Speaking and listening standards are well above average. As a result, pupils explore new learning very effectively through discussion. For example, Year 5 pupils talked in pairs through important events in their lives in great detail in an effective preparation for report writing. Year 3 pupils presented a clearly spoken dramatisation of the parable of the wedding guests and their lamps in an assembly. Above average, and average, pupils express personal views confidently; for example in discussing their current reading. For example, a Year 6 pupil explained in detail why he liked a novel because of its excitement and suspense. Pupils of all abilities improvised realistically in drama work during the inspection. In Year 4 they played the roles of police constables and in Year 6 citizens of 17<sup>th</sup> century London. The good quality of listening, also noted at the last inspection, enables pupils to follow and understand readily teachers' explanations of new learning.
84. Reading standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. So much so, that nearly half the pupils reached the standard expected for thirteen year-olds in last year's national tests, for example. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve similar standards. Pupils read regularly for enjoyment at home. Reading rates and skills in finding and sifting information and evidence are above average. Higher attaining and average pupils have well-developed technical reading skills. They skim and scan text on a page and screen efficiently in comprehension and computer work. They compare books, characters and authors; referring to examples to illustrate their views. Pupils of all abilities explain clearly what makes a book a good read for them. Slower learners, including those with special educational needs, read accurately but often without enough expression. Nevertheless, they are in line to reach the standard expected for eleven-year-olds by the end of the year.
85. Writing standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Girls achieve higher standards than boys. This is mainly because they take greater care over accuracy and presentation. Good standards in reading give pupils above average ranges of words to use in their writing. They know how to match language to their audience in an appropriate range of forms such as letters, poems, instructions, stories, notes and reports. This is an improvement since the last inspection which found the range of writing "too narrow". Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, organise their writing well, using paragraphs and appropriate punctuation. However, standards of spelling lag behind and are only average. This is because average and less able pupils continue to spell too many words just as they sound. They do not apply in everyday work spelling rules they have learned and practised. Most pupils control sentences well, often linking phrases effectively. Pupils of all abilities use writing effectively to record, organise and so remember new learning, particularly in religious education, science and history.
86. The quality of teaching is sound overall with the standard varying from excellent to unsatisfactory. During the inspection, teaching quality was excellent in one of the twelve lessons seen. It was very good in four, good in two and unsatisfactory in the remaining two. The best teaching is in

Years 3 and 6 and the weakest in Year 4, where there were two unsatisfactory lessons. There were some high quality lessons in each of the other year groups. These differences result in pupils making insufficient progress through the middle of the key stage after a good start. Good teaching quality in Year 6 lifts standards prior to the national tests. The creation of an extra class for literacy enables teachers to give all Year 6 pupils more individual help.

87. In the good lessons, teachers' close relationships with their classes encourage thoughtful speech and listening. They ensure that pupils understand the aims of each lesson and what they are to do. Teachers' good knowledge of books and literacy hour methods leads to challenging questioning and tasks. These improve pupils' understanding of language and their writing skills. Pupils copy teachers' expressive speech, reading and writing and so improve their own. The quick pace of these lessons ensures that pupils of all abilities keep concentrating throughout. Teachers' interest and enthusiasm reflect in pupils' enjoyment of learning. Good timing ensures that pupils finish their work. Good quality resources, for example new books and individual whiteboards, involve pupils in new learning. Support staff give flexible and effective extra help, for example in spelling, both in and out of the classroom.
88. Lessons are less effective, and sometimes unsatisfactory, when teachers talk too much and pupils too little. Pupils also start to lose interest when work is too easy, or consists just of skills exercises unrelated to class reading or personal experience. For example, Year 4 pupils spent most of a lesson composing sentences in which words had the same sounds. Occasionally explanations are too brief to ensure that pupils of all abilities understand. Unclear aims sometimes confuse learning; for example when Year 4 pupils worked at the same time on words with the same first and the same middle sounds. At times, teachers do not expect enough of pupils, for example in deciding how much or how quickly they are to write.
89. Very good results each year show that the school makes effective use of literacy hours. Year 6 pupils exceeded realistic and challenging targets in the national tests last year. Teachers have therefore decided to devote one of the five weekly lessons to extending pupils' writing skills. This arrangement is meeting an identified need well. The school holds a good range of assessment data on pupils' achievements, particularly in reading. Teachers have begun to use this information to improve learning by targeting extra teaching and support for pupils who need it most. However, there is further to go. For example, teachers have only just begun to investigate the dip in language achievement in the middle years of the key stage. Similarly, the school has found neither reasons nor remedies for the big differences in the quality of English teaching throughout the school. At present, pupils' progress depends too much on which class they are in.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is above the national average. This matches the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. It also matches the trend in the school's national test results in recent years.
91. In the most recent end of Key Stage 2 national tests (2000), the school's results were:
- above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standards for eleven year olds;
  - average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard for eleven year olds;
  - in line with similar schools.
92. Over the period 1997 to 2000, the improvement in the school's performance in the national tests is slight. The school's test results failed to improve in 1998 and 1999. In the latter year, they were only in line with the national average and below average for similar schools. In 2000 they picked up again to bring the school into line with its 1997 results. Nevertheless, the school has not kept pace with national improvements, the national average having risen each year since 1997. The numeracy hour has been well implemented. Government "booster" funds have been directed towards mathematics in order to accelerate improvement in the subject. Inspection findings indicate that these developments are beginning to have a positive impact on standards.
93. By Year 6, most pupils display good numeracy skills. They know the value of each digit in numbers up to 100,000. They do both short multiplication and division, and long multiplication and division, up to 100. They reduce fractions, write improper fractions as mixed numbers and

calculate percentages of whole numbers. They solve simple problems involving conversion graphs and make use of this skill in geography lessons to compare the climates of Delhi and London. Most pupils are adept at finding the rotational symmetry of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and solids. The more able pupils begin to investigate probability. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve appropriately for their age and abilities, including pupils with special educational needs.

94. The progress pupils make from Year 3 to Year 6 is sound. A great many of the pupils enter the school with above average national test results from their previous schools. In Year 3, these pupils successfully build on their high standards. They know their 2, 3, 5 and 10 times tables and use this knowledge to solve mental calculations, at speed and with increasing confidence. Pupils know how to work out fractions of a whole. They enjoy mathematics, particularly mental arithmetic, and are well equipped to make use of their knowledge and skills in simple problem solving tasks. They continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 4 and 5, though in some classes without the zest and sense of challenge experienced more widely in Years 3 and 6. Though pupils of all abilities continue to improve their number skills and their confidence in applying them, the more able pupils could achieve higher standards if challenged more. Accelerated progress in Year 6 enables the vast majority of pupils to achieve the national standard for eleven year olds in the national tests, including pupils on the special educational needs register.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Of the lessons observed, two were very good, four were good and three were satisfactory. Where the teaching is good and very good, the teachers plan their lessons well, ensuring that all pupils are suitably challenged by the work set. Most teachers have a good subject knowledge and their lesson planning has benefited from the guidance of the national numeracy strategy. The best lessons proceed at a brisk pace, particularly the mental arithmetic sessions. This was highlighted in the Year 3 lessons where pupils were utterly caught up in the challenge and purpose of the sessions. They knew exactly what was expected of them and were determined to succeed – and invariably did so. Similar clarity of purpose is evident in other aspects of the more successful lessons. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons and provide the basis for assessing the effectiveness of pupils' learning at the end of the lesson. In these lessons, pupils respond very well to the demands made of them. They concentrate well and have good attitudes to work. Pupils' concentration is not as good in the lessons where the pace and challenge drop, especially the higher attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5. Teachers are not clear enough about the standards they want pupils to achieve.
96. The subject is soundly managed. The numeracy hour, and associated training, have been successfully implemented. The school is beginning to come to grips with establishing adequate mechanisms for assessing the school's performance in the subject, other than through analysis of the end of key stage national test results. Annual assessments are now conducted with all year groups. Records are starting to be put together to show how much progress pupils make as they proceed through the school. However, there is still some way to go with this before it is an effective tool for development planning and target setting. Monitoring and evaluation shortcomings are currently the weak area in the subjects' management. In other areas, there is a lot of effective management; for example, in the management of resources, the individual support provided for staff and the organisation of staff training. Less effective, are those areas which require cross-school initiative; for example, the development of links between mathematics and information technology. These lack planning and are under-developed.

## **SCIENCE**

97. Pupils' standards of attainment are above average by age 11. This matches the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. It is also in line with the overall trend in the school's results in recent years, which have improved steadily.

98. In the most recent end of Key Stage 2 national tests, the school's results were:
- average in relation to the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard for eleven year-olds;
  - average in relation to the proportion of higher attaining pupils;
  - below average compared with schools of similar intake.
99. In this instance, the use of comparative data as a measure for judging standards is misleading. All but seven pupils in the cohort of 67 reached the national standard for eleven year olds, including several pupils on the school's special educational needs register. One in three pupils exceeded the national standard. While standards could certainly be improved further, with greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, the school's results are keeping pace with national improvements. Inspection findings confirm this trend.
100. By age 11, pupils have a good scientific knowledge and understanding. They carry out investigations very well; for example, when systematically organising a fair test to discover the best conditions in which seeds germinate. Pupils make sensible predictions and record their findings thoroughly, including the use of tables and charts. They draw their own conclusions with very little need for support. Discussion with a large number of higher attaining pupils showed them to be very capable of working independently. When faced with the problem of comparing the flow of different liquids, they reasoned creatively, selected a way to solve the problem, chose their own resources and recognised for themselves which variables must be kept constant. They know the most appropriate methods of recording their findings. They also understand that they have to repeat experiments in order to be confident about the conclusions they draw.
101. In the biological sciences, pupils know the functions and position of many of the major organs and systems of the body and of plants. Higher attaining pupils explain photosynthesis and seed dispersal. All pupils are well aware of how animals have adapted to their environment and how they are classified. The health education programme has established a thorough knowledge of the harmful effects of alcohol, drugs and smoking and the beneficial effects of some microbes. In material science, pupils understand the difference between sieving and filtering and that evaporation is the only method of restoring dissolved salt. Higher attaining pupils understand condensation as the reverse of evaporation in the water cycle. In the physical sciences, pupils' knowledge and understanding is not as well-developed. They have little knowledge of electrical conduction, circuitry, magnetism or friction; nor are they used to measuring forces. Nevertheless, pupils can explain the apparent motion of the sun and how shadows are formed.
102. In individual lessons and over time, pupils' progress and attainment are very closely linked to the quality of teaching. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, the range in teaching standards is unsatisfactory. This varies from excellent to poor. Only two-thirds of the lessons observed were at satisfactory or better levels. This is in sharp contrast to the findings at the last inspection when science teaching was judged to be consistently good.
103. Strong teaching is characterised by sound knowledge of the subject, interesting and effective teaching methods, good management of pupils and effective use of the time and resources. In the excellent lesson seen, a high point was the exceptional quality of the interaction between teacher and pupils. A steady revision of previous learning preceded a fast-paced, stimulating introduction to the activity ahead, all carried out with humour and enjoyment. Time limits were set for the achievement of each task, and the teacher consolidated pupils' learning with a final purposeful discussion about the success of their experiment. Good planning features strongly in the better lessons. For instance, a well-structured lesson in Year 3, with clear instructions, helped pupils to understand how to carry out a fair test in order to discover which kind of paper is the most absorbent. Effective planning was equally instrumental in enabling a Year 6 class to understand how filtering will not separate dissolved substances.
104. The unsatisfactory teaching noticeably slows the pace of pupils' progress. A major weakness is the difficulty some teachers have in managing pupils effectively. Unstimulating and unchallenging presentation leads pupils to become diverted from the lesson's main purpose. Teachers then lack adequate strategies to stop pupils chatting. Pupils' concentration and motivation fall away as the pace of the lesson drops. Restlessness ensues and, in the case of a few pupils, inappropriate behaviour. This is very different to pupils' attitudes in the better lessons. They find science interesting and are keen to learn. They respond enthusiastically to quick-paced question and



answer sessions. They listen well and settle quickly to group work where they co-operate very well. All teachers make good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

105. The overall quality of teaching and learning, including where it is sound or even good, could be improved by elimination of a number of inconsistencies noted by inspectors during the week. These included:
- year groups vary in the amount of experimental work they undertake. This affects steady progression in pupils' ability to set up and record investigations for themselves;
  - year groups vary in the expectations of pupils to write reports in their own words. Consequently, pupils do not progressively develop the habit and skills of scientific thinking;
  - teachers vary in their expectations of depth in thinking and thereby learning;
  - some teachers rely very heavily on worksheets which tend to inhibit thinking.
106. At the moment, further improvement in teaching and learning is hampered by shortcomings in the school's mechanisms for monitoring progress and evaluating performance, both of its pupils and its provision for the subject. Despite the existence of a core of good practice in the school, notably in Year 6, the benefits of this are not sufficiently exploited to raise standards right across the school. Monitoring of teaching in classrooms and of pupils' work is not systematic enough. Areas in need of development, for example, the use of computers in scientific enquiry, are not appropriately followed through into clear action plans shared and agreed by all teachers. The potential benefits of assessment for longer-term planning are not properly capitalised upon. As a result, the subject coordinator has little more than the annual standardised tests as a means of assessing the quality of learning in each of the classes in the school.

## **ART**

107. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected for pupils' ages. This matches the standards reported at the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. The school uses the latest national guidance to teach the new National Curriculum for the subject. As a result, the school's provision is much improved from the previous inspection. On that occasion it was judged to be unsatisfactory and identified as a key issue for the school to address. It has been successfully addressed.
108. Work on display, in lessons and in pupils' notebooks and portfolios, shows sound standards of achievement. In the course of a school year, pupils of all abilities gain appropriate experience of drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture and work with textiles. In addition, Year 3 pupils use simple computer programmes to explore line, colour and pattern. Year 6 pupils use pencil sketches to represent movements and positions of the body in sports activities such as running, jumping, striking and swimming. They use rulers, compasses and protractors in drawings imitating Cubist portrait styles. Year 5 pupils make clay coil and thumb pots. They improve the shape and proportion of their pots in second attempts, adding lids, decorations and handles to some of them. Year 3 pupils make good progress in colour mixing and awareness of tones. They develop application techniques well in skills work by painting colour rings of increasing and decreasing strength.
109. Pupils' finished work, and their present skills, knowledge and understanding reveal satisfactory standards of teaching and learning over time. During the inspection, there was very good teaching in one of the four lessons seen, good teaching in two, and sound standards in one.
110. In the good lessons, teachers show good knowledge of art and good expertise in teaching basic drawing, colour mixing and shading skills. They give very clear and detailed demonstrations of new techniques. As a result, pupils work carefully, accurately and attentively. Although there is a strong focus on learning new skills, teachers encourage pupils to work creatively at the same time. In one lesson observed, Year 6 pupils followed exactly instructions on smudging chalk lines so as to achieve three-dimensional effects. Their finished work showed accuracy, variety of interpretation and imagination in imitating Picasso's portrait styles. Most lessons have a similar balance of skills development and creativity. This is mainly because planning has improved since the last inspection and now shows clearly what pupils are to understand and achieve. Teachers also expect pupils to learn correct technical vocabulary for the subject. A Year 3 teacher

reminded pupils to describe brushes as “broad, not thick”. Teachers check pupils’ progress carefully in these good lessons. They know who needs help and why. As a result, they give pupils precise and thoughtful individual guidance.

111. Teaching is less effective when demonstrations are not detailed enough to improve the quality of learning. For example, a Year 5 teacher showed pupils how to shape clay to make coil pots, but not how to achieve evenness. Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunity to assess and discuss the qualities of finished pieces. They develop pupils’ use of sketch books appropriately, but do not ensure that pupils date and label work clearly. The present assessment arrangements, which are informal, do not enable these teachers to monitor pupils’ attainment and progress precisely enough to give pupils the guidance they need to improve.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Owing to timetable restrictions, few lessons were observed during the week of the inspection. Evidence based on these lessons, scrutiny of pupils’ work, interviews with pupils and discussions with teachers, indicates that standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. This matches the standards found at the time of the last inspection.
113. By Year 6, pupils design and make a number of different products, using various types of tools and materials; for example, they successfully designed and made a set of bags suitable for use by a pensioner with arthritis. One Year 6 class had learnt how to assemble their bag by constructing a mock-up with thick paper. Previously completed work indicates that pupils successfully design and make models using construction kits. These skills are effectively developed as pupils move from class to class. Year 3 pupils employ their mathematical skills to design a box, using accurate measurements. They then evaluate their designs in order to see how they could be improved, including consideration of their aesthetic qualities. The clarinet designs produced by Year 5 pupils are good quality, especially those of the higher attaining pupils. In contrast, the drawings of money purses produced by Year 4 pupils are of a poorer quality, lacking precision and accuracy. Overall, pupils make appropriate progress in relation to their ages and abilities. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
114. Teaching overall is sound. Of the three lessons seen, two were good and one was satisfactory. In the good lessons, teachers display a good subject knowledge and explain the activities clearly to pupils. They challenge pupils to think for themselves while giving them enough guidance to enable them to evaluate their own learning and progress. In the better lessons, teachers display very good management skills. As a result, pupils understand what is expected of them and comply readily. Stimulated by the challenges provided for them, they are attentive and well-motivated. Time and resources are used effectively, enabling pupils to achieve appropriately. Where the teaching is not so effective, pupils are not as rigorously challenged by the tasks set and the standards demanded of them are not high enough.
115. The subject is soundly managed. Teachers are given good support and guidance. Day-to-day leadership and management are effective. Longer-term developments are less well managed. Inadequate arrangements exist for assessing pupils’ progress in the subject. This also has the effect of severely limiting the school’s capacity to monitor standards, as does the failure to allocate time to the coordinator to evaluate teaching and learning in classrooms. The recent decision to use the subject’s dedicated space as an extra classroom is not supported by contingency arrangements to compensate for the loss of this facility when pupils undertake practical work with specialist tools and equipment.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. It was not possible to observe any geography teaching during the inspection. Nevertheless, evidence from pupils’ completed work, scrutiny of teachers’ plans and discussions with pupils, all indicate that standards of attainment, by Year 6, are above nationally expected levels. While this is an improvement since the last inspection, it is not the whole story. Standards between the different year groups and classes vary considerably. Not all are at satisfactory levels.

117. In the 1997 inspection report, pupils' knowledge of physical geography was judged to be insecure compared to their knowledge of human geography. That is not the case now. In their work on India and Egypt, Year 6 pupils accurately locate the major cities, rivers and regions on their maps. These are very neatly, and often meticulously, presented. Pupils understand the impact of the physical environments of the Indus and Nile valleys on the demographics and economies of these regions. They successfully use their skills in mathematics to produce graphs and bar charts, comparing and contrasting the different climates of London, Delhi and Cairo. In looking at the development of tourism in these countries, pupils show a good understanding of its impact on their landscapes, economies and cultures, especially the higher attaining pupils. Their work shows considerable depth of thought. All pupils acquire an effective bank of geographical skills, knowledge and understanding by age 11.
118. Pupils make a good start in the subject in Year 3. They understand the nature and differences between, hamlets, towns and cities. They demonstrate this understanding through their mapwork, confidently progressing from simple maps of small settlements to complex street plans. They accurately use symbols and keys; for example, in their plans of a village settlement. By the end of the year, they have a good grasp of the major countries of the world and the different climates and weather conditions that are found around the globe. They learn and use geographical terminology correctly. Similar rates of progress are not evident in Year 4 where the work on the local environment lacks rigour and depth. Too often pupils' presentation, both of their written work and of their plans and designs, is untidy and lacks care. Frequently, work is unfinished and of poor quality for pupils of this age. No Year 5 work was seen. The subject is not timetabled in the Autumn term for this year group.
119. Although no teaching were observed, it is evident from the consistently good quality of pupils' completed work in Years 3 and 6, that teachers' planning is effective and their expectations high. Pupils are well motivated, understand what is expected of them and respond accordingly. Teachers ensure that pupils use the factual information they acquire to extend their understanding of geographical concepts and issues, often making good use of the skills developed in other subjects, notably mathematics and information technology. In contrast, where teachers' expectations are not high enough, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. They are allowed to produce work that does not match their capabilities, nor what they have achieved in previous classes. This was a weakness identified at the last inspection.
120. The coordinator manages the subject well in terms of developing the school's curriculum and supporting teachers. The benefits of this are highlighted in the improved standards of teaching and learning in many classes. However, the subject is not as well managed in regard to monitoring and evaluating the standards of teaching and learning across all classes. Teachers are not required to assess pupils' progress other than at the end of the year. Nor is the coordinator provided with time to visit classrooms to monitor standards. As a result, the school has no secure means of knowing whether the standards it seeks are the standards it achieves – for all pupils. At the moment, they are not.

## **HISTORY**

121. In the 1997 inspection report, standards of attainment were judged to be above those found in the majority of schools. This is still the case. It was noted on that occasion that pupils had a good factual knowledge of the periods they studied and understood the nature of historical evidence. By Year 6 pupils continue to demonstrate good standards of achievement in both areas of the subject. However, this is less consistently evident in some of the Year 4 and 5 classes.
122. Pupils' completed work in Year 6 indicates good levels of knowledge about the Victorian period. Their understanding of chronology is secure. They identify the key figures and historical developments of the Victorian period, both nationally and locally. Pupils confidently work from old maps of Nottingham to piece together the historical development of the city. They are able to see this within the broader national context of the industrial revolution; for example, in explaining why coal production figures rose so dramatically during this period. In one of the lessons observed in Year 6, pupils showed an effective grasp of the distinction between fact and opinion when making deductions relating to different types of evidence. In another Year 6 lesson, the class were able to take Samuel Pepys' account of the Fire of London and present it in the form of a modern-day

television report. That they did so without losing the historical context of the event highlights the extent of pupils' historical appreciation and thinking.

123. These qualities are not consistently evident in all classes. They feature strongly in one Year 5 class but are not so prominent in the other. All pupils in Year 5 display a good knowledge of the factual details of the Second World War; indeed, some pupils have an exceptional knowledge of the leading figures and events that shaped the process and outcomes of the war. However, while some pupils use this information in a wide variety of challenging activities, others do not. For example, in one Year 5 lesson observed, the session relied almost exclusively on the teachers' factual input supported by worksheets rehearsing the same information. Similar limitations are found in the learning of Year 4 pupils. They successfully make deductions from extracts of evidence presented to them, but, all too frequently, this learning is not used to extend pupils' historical understanding and skills. As a result, the higher attaining pupils in particular under-achieve. Comments to this effect are also found in the last inspection report.
124. Teaching overall is sound. However, it is too variable in quality between the different classes to ensure consistency in the standards achieved by pupils across the school. In the few lessons seen, the teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, mirroring very closely the variations in pupils' achievements and progress. No teaching in Year 3 was seen. In the best lessons, the teaching is imaginative and stimulating, providing a good mix of factual information and activities designed to challenge pupils' thinking and extend their skills. Often these activities make good use of pupils' literacy and oracy skills; for example, in the extended writing about events in the Second World War produced by one of the Year 5 classes. Expectations are high. Pupils enjoy the subject; they are attentive and concentrate well. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed, these positive features were largely absent. Pupils were not expected to think for themselves or to develop clearly identified skills through the tasks they were set.
125. The subject has undergone positive development since the last inspection leading to gradually improving standards overall. However, the benefits of this development have not reached all classes. One reason for this is the lack of adequate whole-school mechanisms for evaluating achievement in the subject. The assessment arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress are too insubstantial to enable the coordinator to have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in the subject from Year 3 to Year 6. Until this is shortcoming is remedied, the school's capacity to improve standards further is limited.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

126. Few lessons were observed during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' work, from displays in the classrooms and from discussions with pupils, indicates that attainment matches nationally expected standards. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Nonetheless, there has been some improvement since 1997 due to the better resourcing of the subject and to the improved provision and teaching.
127. Pupils in Year 6 know how to investigate information on the Internet and use email. They have sound word processing skills, using text and graphics to produce brochures. Indeed, word-processing skills are strong throughout the school; for instance, Year 3, pupils successfully designed a poster for a Book Fair or a Christmas Fayre. Pupils know how to change fonts and font size, and to use different colours of the font. Most are confident with the keyboard. They know how to highlight words by dragging the mouse. In Year 4, pupils reorganise texts and in Year 5 use their skills to construct simple bar charts. In geography and history, the older pupils make increasing use of the computer to research information to support their topics, both at home and in school. However, in other subjects, such as mathematics and science, little use is made of pupils' information technology skills to support their learning. For example, pupils do not construct or use spreadsheets.
128. The quality of teaching overall is sound. Good teaching was seen which was well planned, with clear objectives. Given the limited access to computers for whole class teaching, the most effective teaching is marked by strong organisational and explanatory skills, including the use of pupils to help each other. It is also marked by confident teacher knowledge and expertise. This is not consistently the case amongst all teachers, though good opportunities for training are helping to overcome this shortcoming. Where teachers are confident, there is a noticeable increase in

the opportunities made available to pupils to use information technology to support learning across the curriculum. In some classes, experience of information technology is more limited, often restricted to pupils producing their own work in word-processed form. All pupils respond well to the teaching and opportunities provided on the computers, despite the difficulties presented by the location of most of the machines in the corridors. Pupils overcome these problems with considerable maturity and good sense. They work well together with minimum supervision.

129. Considerable progress has been made in improving the provision and teaching of the subject since the last inspection. Resources have been significantly strengthened; extensive training of teachers has taken place and the nationally published scheme of work adopted. Nonetheless, shortcomings remain. The accommodation of the computers in the corridors is unsatisfactory. Uninterrupted opportunities for whole-class teaching are virtually impossible, as are opportunities for pupils to use the computers as a resource base for independent learning. Assessment of pupils' progress is under-developed and few systematic records are kept of what pupils know and can do; records are more for the purpose of knowing whose turn it is next on the computer. Without adequate records of pupils' attainment, the coordinator has few means of knowing what standards are achieved in the different classes and what needs to be improved. At present, the monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the subject are unsatisfactory.

## **MUSIC**

130. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection week. However, evidence from singing in assemblies, a Year 6 group percussion session and a video of school productions, all indicate standards of attainment are in line with national expectations.
131. Pupils of all ages sing in tune but with variable volume. However, the choir, which includes a very large proportion of the pupils in the school, sings very well. By age eleven, pupils confidently sing in two parts. They perform rhythms accurately and can sustain a regular phrase against a song. They display creativity and imagination in musical composition. Pupils compose short rhythmic phrases which they successfully perform in combination. They rise to expectations in public performances and their enthusiasm improves their standards. When called to do so, pupils listen very carefully to all kinds of recorded music as well as to one another when performing. They enjoy music lessons and behave well.
132. Both of the two lessons observed were good and contained a number of strengths. The subject leader used her knowledge and expertise extremely well to establish very good progression in pupils' skills. The other teacher, although not a musician, nevertheless achieved her objectives through very careful planning, good use of resources, high expectations of pupils and taking time to refine their standards of performance. The result is good motivation on the part of pupils and an eagerness to participate and learn.
133. The school's provision for learning orchestral instruments and the opportunities it provides for pupils to take part in performances, both in school and in public, are good. The principle of "open" membership to the choir is developed through actively encouraging boys and girls of all ages to take part in performances. Teaching and learning are enhanced by a good bank of high quality instruments, though there is a slight lack of instruments for helping pupils to appreciate different cultures. Good subject coordination and management are enabling the school steadily to improve its provision. Effective support for individual teachers is a strong feature of this management. The need to give more emphasis to composition and performance is being given attention; also the need to develop assessment arrangements that provide regular feedback about pupils' attainment and progress as well as providing the coordinator with the means to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. Standards match those expected nationally for pupils at age 11. This judgement is in line with the conclusions reached at the time of the last inspection. On that occasion, inspectors found that a significant minority of pupils were attaining at higher levels in gymnastics, games and swimming. This remains the case, particularly in swimming where standards are now consistently high. Pockets of higher attainment are also now evident in dance. No athletics was seen. The school's provision for extra-curricular sport is good and impacts positively on the standards achieved. Evidence from observations of lunch-time football and netball clubs confirm this judgement.
135. By Year 6, virtually all pupils achieve the National Curriculum target of swimming 25 metres unassisted. This has been the pattern for several years. All pupils attend swimming lessons from Year 3 to Year 5, with a further opportunity to attend in Year 6 if they have not achieved the nationally expected standard. Good teaching and regular practice enable most pupils to achieve well and some to achieve very well for their age. Many are highly competent swimmers with awards for distance swimming and water-survival skills. The school's strength in swimming is highlighted in the success of both the girls' and boys' teams in the annual local swimming gala. They have been overall winners for the last four years.
136. In games, a sizeable number of pupils, both girls and boys, display good catching, throwing and striking skills. They know how to transfer their body weight in order to achieve the best results. This is not the case for all pupils, a good number of whom still need to learn, and apply, the appropriate techniques when throwing and catching in order to improve their accuracy and consistency. The increasing focus on the teaching on skills' development is beginning to have an impact in this respect. All pupils understand the principles of team games; for example, the concepts of marking opponents and of finding space when in attack. Most successfully transfer this understanding to the game itself. By Year 6, pupils are able to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses in order to improve their performance.
137. Only one gymnastics lesson was observed, with the younger pupils. Pupils' attainment was sound. They are highly enthusiastic and enjoy exploring different movements in order to build up sequences that combine fast and slow actions. Most have learned the need for precision and quality in the start and finish positions they adopt, showing good levels of control and posture. On the other hand, these qualities are less evident within the movement sequences themselves. The best performers display good balance, poise and accuracy of movement. Most, however, are still too much taken up in the joy of performing to give enough attention to the quality of their individual actions.
138. Three dance lessons were observed, all at the upper end of the school. Standards of performance are sound overall, though a significant minority of pupils produce work of higher quality. On the whole, pupils are better at exploring their responses to musical stimuli than presenting highly polished dance routines incorporating individual movements of high quality. They capture the mood of the music with great enthusiasm and often with considerable sensitivity, as for example, in the Year 5 routines reflecting wartime experiences – evacuation, the blitz and victory. Year 6 pupils display similar levels of creativity and motivation; for example, in representing to music the witches of Macbeth. In all the lessons observed, pupils understood what is required to improve their performance, both as individuals and with a partner. They also show an appropriate respect for the efforts of others and an ability to work as a team. Boys and girls dance together without fuss or inhibition.
139. Teaching in all the lessons observed was good which mirrors the good quality of pupils' learning and progress in these lessons. However, this does not match the standards of performance that pupils are actually achieving, which are sound rather than good, except in swimming. There are two possible explanations for this. First, only a small sample of teaching was seen, predominantly from the teachers whose overall performance during the inspection was consistently good or better. Second, the school has made considerable progress in the planning and teaching of the subject in recent times, the impact of which is beginning to show through, especially in dance where accelerated progress is particularly evident amongst the older pupils. Greater confidence and better guidance have enabled teachers to be much clearer about the skills pupils need to acquire in order to improve their performance. As a result, lessons are well focused and effectively structured. Pupils find the teaching stimulating and challenging. They

listen intently and respond immediately to instructions and other routines. In none of the lessons seen was discipline an issue. Teachers' organisation and management skills are of a high order. This allows them to focus on learning and, in most cases, make best use of the limited time available. Occasionally, productivity is not as high when teachers spend too much time explaining what is to be learned at the expense of providing pupils with enough time to practise and improve the skill being taught. Likewise, the best learning is achieved when teachers keep a clear focus on the techniques and skills to be learned.

140. The subject is well managed and led. The coordinator has ensured that the school's scheme of work is appropriate for the needs of the school as well as reflecting the changing expectations of the revised National Curriculum. Sport is given high status in the school which parents recognise and appreciate. A wide range of out-of-school clubs and activities are available for pupils. The take-up is good, though a small minority of parents feel that the systems for informing them about the arrangements for these activities are not always as good as they should be. Standards in swimming benefit from very close and detailed monitoring of pupils' progress. Assessment of pupils' progress in the other areas of the subject is more informal and though teachers are aware, in general terms, of pupils' levels of performance, the lack of recorded evidence limits the coordinator's capacity to monitor the school's progress towards meeting its aims for the subject. The fact that the coordinator is not given time to visit lessons to see for herself the standards achieved adds significantly to this impediment.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

141. Pupils' attainment meets the requirements laid down in the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This matches the judgement of the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress, including pupils with special educational needs. Better progress is made where teachers encourage pupils to explore religious issues in terms of their meaning and relevance to people's everyday lives.
142. By age 11, pupils recount a number of stories from the Bible, including some of Jesus' miracles. They are familiar with some Christian beliefs and outline features of the main festivals, including Advent. They confidently, and fully, explain the significance of Easter. In contrast, their knowledge and understanding of other faiths is limited, except for Judaism. Likewise, their knowledge of religious buildings and practices is largely limited to Christianity. This partly results from the schools' visits and visitors being associated with Christian denominations. Pupils identify most of the furniture and artefacts in a church and explain their function or symbolic significance. They have a good appreciation of the importance of religion to some people and how it affects their daily actions. They are also capable of asking deep questions about such matters as the origin of God and how He made the Earth. On the other hand, their familiarity with what is important to people of other faiths is negligible.
143. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Three lessons were observed; one excellent and two sound. In the excellent lesson, the teacher gave a very clear explanation of the historical setting in which Jesus was born, so that pupils could empathise with Joseph and Mary. She insisted on pupils using correct words such as 'census'. She added to their historical understanding by helping them compare and contrast different modes of transport and communication over the years. Pupils responded with rapt attention to the information and were very enthusiastic about writing a play to show what they had learnt. In all the lessons seen, teachers displayed good subject knowledge. In some classes, though, this is not associated with high enough expectations of pupils. Learning lacks challenge and variety, with too much emphasis on assimilating factual information via worksheets. There is little evidence of imaginative writing, drama and role-play, group discussion or activities that require pupils to think for themselves. As a result, the less effective teaching is marked by a lack of understanding and restlessness on the part of pupils, and poorer standards of presentation in their work.
144. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual development but this would be improved with better whole-school planning. The school's arrangements for evaluating standards are not as effective as they should be. Shortcomings in the range of teaching methodologies used was an issue at the time of the last inspection and has not been successfully addressed. The subject coordinator has few means of evaluating the quality and effectiveness of pupils'

learning and the school's provision other than through informal discussion with other teachers. This significantly constrains the successful development of the subject.