

INSPECTION REPORT

Gladstone Lower Primary School

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121912

Headteacher: Ms A Partridge

Reporting inspector: Mr G Bassett

21500

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th May 2000

Inspection number: 197675

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Streatfield Road Spencer Estate NORTHAMPTON
Postcode:	NN5 7DE
Telephone number:	01604 751130
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Conroy
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G Bassett	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information technology Music Special educational needs	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school managed?
Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. Partnership with parents.
Mrs B Rimmer	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Under fives Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for the pupils?
Mrs J Underwood	Team inspector	Science Geography History Physical education Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gladstone Lower School is a small primary school situated in the north west of Northampton town. The area served by the school has high levels of unemployment. It has until recently received funding from the Single Regeneration budget which has helped to improve the community services. There are 92 children eligible for free school meals and this is well above the national average. There are 171 pupils on roll from the age of 4 to 9 years; they are placed in 7 classes. There is an equal balance of boys and girls in the school although there are more boys than there are girls in Year 4. Most of the children in the school are white and there is a large proportion of pupils (31), for whom English is an additional language. Most of these children speak Bengali and one or two speak Urdu. There are 70 pupils in the school who are on the special education needs register and two have statements.

The children enter the school in the year of their fifth birthday and the school's assessments show that their attainment on entry is well below the standards expected for their age. When the children started school in the present reception class, no child reached the expected levels and their skills and knowledge in literacy and numeracy were poor. Most of the pupils with English as an additional language neither speak nor understand English when they begin school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has still a long way to go in raising the pupils' standards to match the national average, but there are good signs that they are now making good and often very good progress. The school is effective in improving the rate of progress of all pupils from the time they enter the school at the age of four plus years to the time they leave at the end of Year 4. The quality of the leadership and management is good and the headteacher gives a clear direction to the work of the school. The planning of the curriculum is good. The half term and weekly plans identify very clearly what the teachers intend to teach. The quality of teaching is good overall and the teachers are effective in managing the pupils and helping them to sustain their concentration. The value for money provided by the school is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- The quality of the leadership is good and gives a clear direction to the educational development of the school.
- The quality of teaching and the planning of lessons are good overall.
- By the time they leave the school, the pupils make good and often very good progress considering their very low standards when they enter at the age of four years.
- The quality of the support given to those pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good.
- The pupils' behaviour in and around the school and their social, moral and cultural development are good.

What could be improved

- Even though the pupils make good progress, their standards in reading, writing, mathematics and information technology need to be improved to move the school's standards closer to the national average.
- The pupils' rate of attendance is below the national average.
- The parents' links with the school need to be improved.
- The school needs to pursue the uses of homework with more rigour and determination to involve the parents more with their children's education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection the school has made many improvements that were featured as key issues for action in the last report. The teachers' planning and assessment procedures are now in a common format and identify clearly what is to be taught. The quality of teaching has improved. It is now good and has raised the rate of progress made by the pupils. The budgetary problems that the school was facing at the time of the last inspection have been resolved and this money is now used effectively to provide a better quality of education. All statutory requirements are now in place and are regularly monitored and amended by the governing body. These factors are all having a substantial impact upon raising the rate of progress that the pupils make by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4. Their progress throughout the school is now good and often very good. The school has had less success in securing the involvement and support of the parents in their children's education, although it has endeavoured to improve these links in many ways.

The standards in English, mathematics and science still remain below average even though most pupils are making better progress than before. However, more pupils are on the register for special educational needs and their attainment on entry to the school has diminished. This is particularly so with the boys who are attaining standards that are very low and that have decreased significantly over the past three years. The school is better placed now than at the time of the previous inspection to sustain the pupils' progress and to raise standards further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	E	E	E	E
Writing	E	E	E	C
Mathematics	E*	E*	E*	E*

Key

well above average above A

average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The results of the 1999 national tests for reading, writing and mathematics show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 is well below the national average. However, the pupils enter school with very low levels of achievement and they make good and often very good progress by the time they leave the school. Over the past three years the proportion reaching the expected Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 has remained well below the national average. Nevertheless, it is clear that the girls' rate of progress significantly outstrips the rate of progress made nationally by girls, whereas the boys who start school at a much lower level have not kept pace with the rate of progress made by boys nationally. In writing, the boys' standards have remained constant over the past three years whereas the girls' have improved significantly over the same period. This has raised the overall standards in writing and even though the standards in 1999 are well below the average when compared with the national picture they are average when compared to similar schools. In the 1999 reading and mathematics tests, the overall standards were well below average both nationally and in comparison to schools of a similar type.

From the scrutiny of the pupils' work and the results of the intermediate tests, the standards attained at the end of Year 4 show a significant improvement upon the standards reached on entry to the school and at the end of

Key Stage 1. By the time they leave the school, nearly three fifths of the pupils reach the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. There are growing strengths in the quality of their work in mathematics, but the quality of reading and writing still restricts many pupils reaching the expected standards in their written work in all subjects. Considering the high number of pupils in the school with special educational needs and of those with English as an additional language, these achievements are good and show good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils show a satisfactory attitude to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good.
Personal development relationships	The pupils' personal development is very good and throughout the school there are good relationships between all pupils and between the pupils and their teachers.
Attendance	Attendance is still below the national average although it has improved since the last inspection.

The pupils show a satisfactory attitude to their work and school and their behaviour is good. However, their rate of attendance is below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching in 54 per cent of all the lessons seen during the inspection was good and in 6 per cent it was very good. Only one lesson (2 per cent) was unsatisfactory and the remaining 38 per cent were satisfactory. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection. This good teaching is reflected in the good and often very good rate of progress being made by all pupils. This is despite the fact that the boys' abilities on entry to the school are becoming lower and a growing number of them have special educational needs. The quality of the teaching of literacy is at least satisfactory with over two thirds of the lessons being good or better. In numeracy, this proportion is even higher with over three-quarters being good. When the teaching is particularly strong the teachers employ good questioning techniques that draw out clear explanations from the pupils and the pupils effectively share their thoughts and ideas with others. The planning of the lessons is good and the pupils are aware of the aims. The management of the pupils is good and the range of teaching styles is varied skilfully. This stimulates the pupils to ask questions and sustains their concentration. The teachers use the resources well and they work with learning support assistants effectively. Where there are weaknesses, the teachers do not pursue sufficiently well the continual practising of the basic skills of reading and writing through other subjects. Consequently the pupils' work does not reflect the strength of their knowledge and understanding in science, history and geography. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory with exception of the provision made for information technology. The curriculum for literacy and numeracy has been introduced effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very good. All pupils receive very good support from the teachers and the learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for the pupils with English as an additional language are very good and this ensures that nearly all pupils succeed in learning to speak, read and write English by the time they leave the school and in most cases well before.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision of the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good and a strength of the school. The pupils' spiritual and personal development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is another good feature of the school. The school has a strong commitment to the care and welfare of all pupils and all staff respond effectively to the needs of each one.

The school makes every effort to involve the parents in the education of their children. Appointment times are given to every parent or guardian so that they can meet their child's teacher once a term to discuss progress. This is only partly successful and many of the parents do not give the school sufficient support. Homework is not fully supported and many reading books are not returned if the pupils take them home. The school struggles to deliver the full curriculum for information technology because of a severe lack of appropriate equipment, CD Rom and programs that are suitable for the age range in the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear direction to the work of the school. The teachers' planning and the quality of their teaching is monitored very well and this has raised the rate of the pupils' progress.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Many of the governors have a clear understanding of their role in the management of the school and fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. The new governors are keen to support the school.
The school's evaluation of performance	The headteacher and chair of governors have a clear appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because they evaluate most of its aspects carefully. The school development plan provides precise targets that are implemented effectively and monitored regularly. As a result, the school continues to improve and this is having a good impact upon the progress made by the pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The range and use of the learning resources are adequate with the exception of the many unreliable computers.

The leadership is good and continually strives to improve the quality of education throughout the school. The internal space is maintained and used effectively, but the exterior of the building is very shabby and the windows urgently need painting. The outdoor facilities are good. The ponds and environmental areas provide an exciting place for the pupils. Since the school has succeeded in solving the problems of energy costs and building maintenance, there is a more rigorous management of the budget and care is taken to ensure that the school uses 'value for money' criteria when purchasing equipment. The carry forward is put aside to make alterations to the school to provide information technology equipment, a dining area within the main building and so eliminate the use of the adjacent school hall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children are progressing well and are happy to come to school. • Children are provided with a lot of activities. • Parents feel able to talk about children's problems to teachers. • School is very good at keeping parents informed. • Teachers encourage children to do their best. • The school offers excellent support to children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel the need for more outdoor sports.

The inspection team agree with all the positive points made by the parents, and during the time of the inspection there were no outside games sessions but there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about the adequacy of outdoor lessons throughout the year.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. On entry to the school at the age of four years, the children reach standards that are very low when compared to the national performance of children of this age. Most cannot handle a pencil correctly and do not have an understanding that writing and pictures are different and carry meaning. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is very poor and most do not know the names of colours and numbers. There are serious weaknesses in both their literacy and numeracy skills in the early days in the reception class.
2. By the time they reach the end of the reception class, their progress varies but most children make satisfactory and some make good progress across all the desirable learning outcomes. This is due to the good quality of teaching in this class. The pupils with English as an additional language enter the school with little and often no spoken English, but they also make good progress because of the extra help they receive from the learning support assistants and visiting teachers.
3. Nearly half the children in the reception age group each year are placed on the register for special educational needs. Consequently, throughout the school, all year groups include a substantial proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Most classes have almost half of the pupils on the special educational needs register and a significant proportion also have English as an additional language. The boys enter school with much lower attainment in literacy skills than the girls. In the assessments carried out on entry to the school over the last two years the boys have reached much lower standards than the girls in all areas. The overall standards when the children join the school are very low when compared with the national picture. This has a strong impact upon the results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and consequently the below average proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels for their age.
4. The results of the national tests for Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics reflect this low level on entry to the school. The standards in reading and writing have improved since the 1998 results, but the 1999 tests were still below the national average. The boys and girls make substantial progress and over two thirds of the children reached the expected Level 2 in reading and writing in the tests for 1999. This is a considerable achievement, bearing in mind their consistently low levels of attainment on entry to the school. There are, however, significant differences in the performance of the boys and the girls. Over the past three years the boys' progress has not kept pace with the national performance of boys, but the girls rate of progress has been much faster than that of girls across the country. The results for boys show that they have made some improvement in writing standards over the past three years, though they continue to find reading difficult.
5. The results of the 1999 national tests in mathematics show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was very low compared with the national average. However, the unconfirmed results of the most recent tests in 2000 show that there has been a marked improvement. This year nearly two thirds of the pupils reached the expected Level 2. Even though this proportion is still below the national average, the progress that these pupils make to reach this level is good.
6. In the 1999 teachers' assessment for science and from the scrutiny of work, the results show that the proportion of pupils that reach Level 2 is below the national average. This is mainly because the pupils are restricted in their written work by the slow development of their reading and writing skills. This reduces the number of them that can reach the expected standards. Nevertheless, from the discussions held with the pupils it is clear that they understand much more than their written work

show. The progress they make in their knowledge and understanding of science topics is good and they have a firm understanding of how to carry out an investigation and how to prepare an experiment. In religious education, the quality of the pupils' work is in line with expected levels. In information technology, overall the standards in word processing, the use of graphics with mouse control and control of the programmable toy is in line with the expected levels for their age. The quality of work in religious education, art, physical education and design technology is broadly in line with the expected levels in the agreed syllabus. The quality of work in history and geography is below the expected levels because of the poor quality of the pupils' written work, although when discussing aspects with the pupils they again know more than their writing would suggest.

7. The good progress made in reading, writing and mathematics throughout Key Stage 1 continues up to the age of nine when the pupils leave the school. Consequently, standards continue to improve in English, mathematics and science. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels for the Year 4 pupils is still below average for their age, it is slowly moving towards the national average in all three of these subjects. In English, many pupils still have difficulty with reading and writing and do not have a secure knowledge of spellings. The poor level of skills also restricts the standards that are being achieved by a large proportion of the pupils in other subjects.
8. In mathematics, progress is good and the proportion of the pupils reaching the expected levels for their age is now closer to the national expectations. The use of mental calculation is a strong feature of the work and sound standards are achieved. Most pupils can explain how they work out their answers and have the confidence to demonstrate their calculations on the board. However, there are weaknesses in the development of their skills and knowledge of shape, space, and data. The school is aware that they need to teach these elements sooner each year and to revise them regularly.
9. The pupils' knowledge in science is below average although there are good signs that approximately three fifths of these pupils are on course to attain the expected level by the age of nine with just a few who may attain a higher level. These pupils continue to experience difficulties in reading and writing and again this has a detrimental effect upon their abilities to record their ideas and thoughts in all other subjects. However, many more pupils have developed appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding in all other subjects than is evident in their writing. When they are given opportunities to discuss the topics and themes that they have followed in mathematics, science, history and geography, it becomes obvious that they acquire and retain knowledge, skills and understanding that are almost in line with the expected levels by the time they leave the school. The quality of the pupils' work in art, design technology, and physical education is broadly in line with the expected levels for their ages but in information technology, history, geography and music it is below the expected standards.
10. The progress made by the substantial number of pupils with special educational needs is good and often very good. By the time they become nine years old, many have made sufficient progress in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills that the amount of support they need has been significantly reduced or they have either been taken off the special educational needs register altogether. This significant improvement in the quality of work by these pupils is a strength of the school and has a positive impact upon their attitudes to their work and to the standards they attain in English, mathematics and science.

11. The progress made by the pupils who enter the school with English as an additional language is very good. By the time they leave at the end of Year 4, nearly all have mastered their additional language.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Most pupils show a satisfactory attitude towards their learning. They are enthusiastic about their school, and most are co-operative in the way in which they join in with activities and respond to their teachers. In all classes, most pupils are interested and are able to concentrate sufficiently well on the tasks set. The pupils were observed working well together in small groups and also independently without direct adult supervision. The school is an orderly environment where the pupils know the rules and what is expected of them; this is largely due to the assertive discipline policy that is well promoted and consistently followed by staff. Overall, most pupils listen well to their teachers, and they contribute willingly, confidently and constructively to discussions and when answering questions. For example, pupils in a Year 1 and 2 history lesson were seen confidently posing prepared questions to a visitor about her trip to the seaside when she was a child in the 1930s. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 shared their feelings well during 'circle time' when they discussed how they and others might feel in certain situations. The pupils are friendly, polite and keen to talk to visitors. Most pupils show an appropriate respect for people and property and this results in a learning environment where equipment, displays of work and artefacts remain in good order. During the last academic year there have been no exclusions.
13. Throughout the school there are good relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers. Behaviour is good in classrooms, in the dining room at lunchtime and in the playground. When the whole school joins together for assembly the pupils exercise a good level of self-control, and they enter and leave the hall in a very orderly and well-behaved manner. The parents speak positively about the children's good behaviour and they are happy with the values that the school instils. From the time when pupils join the reception class and as they move on up the school, they know quite clearly the difference between right and wrong. The pupils of different cultures work and play well together, and during the time of the inspection there was no sign of either bullying or harassment.
14. The personal development of the pupils, including opportunities for them to show initiative, is very good. For example, the oldest pupils were observed playing games and caring for the younger children during a wet lunchtime, and they very confidently took responsibility for clearing away resources in preparation for the afternoon lessons. In all classes, the pupils take turns to assist as monitors, and some were seen proudly wearing blue and brown bands to indicate their role as lunchtime helpers. Older pupils willingly help to prepare for assemblies by setting out chairs for their teachers, and operating the overhead projector. The pupils support local and national charities and they help to deliver harvest produce to the Elim Centre. This helps them to grow well in confidence and personal development. The pupils speak enthusiastically about the wide range of educational visits which they join such as those to the Zoo and Sealife Centre, and older pupils are currently preparing to visit the London Dome. Through the school's partnership with other local schools, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 recently performed in a concert at the Royal Theatre in Northampton, and there are regular opportunities for them to be involved in football tournaments and musical celebrations.
15. The pupils' attendance remains unsatisfactory although the level has improved since the time of the last inspection. The school works hard to promote attendance and is currently exceeding a set target of 92 per cent. Nevertheless, this is still well below the national average. **(This is a key issue for action)**. Although most pupils are punctual, a small number are regularly late, and this has a negative effect on their progress and achievement. The lessons generally start on time and there is an

efficient and well-ordered start to the day with pupils involved well in the daily routines. This has a very positive effect on their progress and personal development.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Sixty per cent of all the lessons seen during the inspection were of a good or better quality and six per cent of these were very good. All but one of the remaining lessons were satisfactory. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall but with very few examples of a good quality and a significant proportion of an unsatisfactory teaching.
17. The good quality of the teaching is already raising the rate of the pupils' progress and the quality of learning is improving. The pupils nearly all make good and often very good progress because of these high standards of teaching. The styles of teaching are varied effectively to include whole class instruction, group work and support for individual pupils. For example, the direct teaching at the beginning of each lesson sets the atmosphere for group work with tasks that are specifically designed for particular groups of pupils. The teachers' skills in class management are good and have a calming influence upon the pupils. They instil a sense of purpose into the tasks presented in each class. With the care that the teachers and learning support assistants give, each pupil is developing an enthusiasm for their school. Most are co-operative in the way in which they join in with activities and respond well to their teachers. The teachers' expectations for good behaviour and productive work sessions is known and understood by all pupils. This brings about an attitude whereby most pupils sustain their concentration.
18. There has been a determined effort by all the teachers to improve their standards of teaching and their improved planning strategies have had significant impact upon raising the standards. The quality of the planning to identify what needs to be taught in each half term has improved substantially since the last inspection. Clear objectives relate well to the National Curriculum and take into consideration the needs of the pupils and what they have previously learned. The weekly planning for all subjects is precise and detailed. The tasks that are set for pupils of differing abilities are well matched to their needs.
19. The teachers and the learning support assistants work closely together to plan the activities for the pupils in the reception class. The various tasks are effectively organised. The teachers consider the low levels of skills that most children have when they enter the school. For example, most children in the first few weeks of September still cannot hold a pencil and have either little or no understanding of colours. Moreover, they do not have a clear knowledge that books and written words carry meanings. These weaknesses are targeted in the planning and improved through direct teaching from which the pupils benefit greatly. When the teaching in this age group is best, the teachers plan the learning of skills, understanding and knowledge effectively. It has clear aims that bring about the best results. The activities focus correctly upon raising skills and consequently most pupils make good progress when this approach is used. However, there are times when some activities lack precise aims to improve knowledge of words and writing skills when they could be included. **(This is a key issue for action).**
20. Furthermore, when given a choice of activities, the children are not tracked sufficiently well to ensure that they have a balanced programme of work. Consequently, some children are not given sufficient guidance to increase their basic skills and many avoid activities they do not like. For example, there were no obvious aims for the development of the children's language and writing skills in the role-play corner or their use of clay following a mathematics session about shape. The role play area of the classroom gives the children much pleasure but it would have a greater impact upon their learning if the teaching and questioning focused upon an agreed list of words or mathematical terms

that are related to the theme of the play. For instance, in the 'House of the Giant' terms such as 'taller than, shorter than and enormous' could be explained and developed. **(This is a key issue for action).**

21. The teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is thoroughly planned. The teachers set out clearly what they want the pupils to learn and the pupils are told what is expected of them. Often the objectives for the lesson are written on the board as a reminder. Interesting tasks are devised and the pupils respond well by trying hard to complete their work by the end of the lesson. The work is adjusted to match the prior learning of the pupils in different groups. The quality of teaching of the pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is good. The tasks are well thought out and carefully structured tasks match effectively the pupils' previous learning. The learning support assistants work closely with the class teachers to keep them well informed of the progress and difficulties that pupils might face.
22. Most lessons throughout the school are carried out with a steady pace and this helps the many pupils with poor writing skills to grow in confidence. However, there are times when the pace of lessons could be accelerated with certain more able groups being set targets to be completed within a time limit. This would raise the rate of progress even further for those who have mastered the writing and reading skills.
23. At the end of most lessons, the teachers draw together the views of the pupils and this has a good impact upon developing each pupils' skills of evaluating what they have learned. The teachers use good questioning to deepen and strengthen each pupil's skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, throughout the science investigations in Key Stages 1 and 2, the teachers asked questions that helped each pupil to understand that small creatures might live in different habitats. They led the pupils to understand that some snails live in water but others live on land and that centipedes live under logs in the dark.
24. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in Key Stages 1 and 2 is planned thoroughly and follows the national strategies. The quality of teaching in these two subjects is at least satisfactory and often good. It reflects the teachers' good knowledge and the strength of the considerable training that they have undertaken over the past two years. During the inspection, most lessons observed were of a good quality and the tasks set supported the individual needs of the pupils. This has a good impact upon improving the rate of progress made by all pupils as they move up through the school. In most other subjects the teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of what they have to teach. At present, however, they do not make sufficient use of information technology. **(This is a key issue for action).** Some teachers have a low level of skills and a lack of understanding of the uses of information technology. However, they are restricted by the old and unreliable computers they have in their classroom and by an insufficient range of software. All of these inadequacies consequently hamper the pupils' work, which is below the expected standards for their ages. **(This is a key issue for action).**
25. Although, there is a home school agreement it does not yet get the support from the parents that would involve them more successfully in their child's learning. Conversely, the homework set is not well organised by some teachers. **(This is a key issue for action).** For example, the parents were not sure when homework is set and expressed concerns about the same book being brought home each night for a long time even when their child can read it correctly. The school needs to make a greater concerted effort to involve more parents with their child's homework.

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

26. The curriculum for the under fives covers all the areas of the National Desirable Learning Outcomes and gives the pupils a good range and balance of learning experiences overall. However, the coverage of the curriculum for basic skills of language development needs to be more rigorously planned and pursued. **(This is a key issue for action).**
27. At Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) the overall curriculum is relevant and well balanced. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum although information and communications technology is not well covered because of lack of reliable and up to date computers. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The richness of activities helps pupils of different levels of attainment to take part in the lessons as well as giving them confidence and raising their self-esteem. The curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle and the teachers in each key stage plan together effectively. They use the national strategies to teach literacy and numeracy and are introducing the guidelines produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance to help them plan the other subjects. These schemes help the teachers to ensure that the pupils learn skills in the right order.
28. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements except for the provision of information technology in Key Stage 2. The time allocation for teaching is as it should be, and so is the time for teaching the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The religious education scheme of work enriches the pupils' spiritual awareness and their knowledge of other faiths. Discussions in circle time and assembly themes such as Eid, Diwali and the Chinese New Year support this teaching. There is a daily act of collective worship. The pupils usually have time to think about their lives or problems in the world. For example, during the vicar's assembly about sharing he asked them to think about people who had no food and what it would be like to be so hungry. These daily meetings are very positive and give the pupils a feeling that they all belong to the school.
29. The pupils are made aware of the dangers of medicines and drugs. The governors have a policy that sex education should not be taught specifically although questions are answered if they arise. The pupils also learn about healthy eating and exercise.
30. The school plans effectively for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the national strategies have been implemented well for some time. This development is slowly beginning to raise the standards of the pupils' work.
31. The curriculum for the pupils with special educational needs is well planned. The tasks are adjusted effectively to match prior learning and because of this the pupils make secure steps in learning the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The parents are informed about the targets that are set for their children in order that they can give their support.
32. Extracurricular activities are offered to Year 3 and 4 pupils. There is football training, recorders, maypole dancing, art, computer and sports clubs. Some of the activities, such as football and maypole dancing help to encourage pupils to work together as a team. However, there is a lack of activities such as netball for the girls after school but there are fewer girls than boys in the older age groups in the school. The pupils go on a range of visits including a residential visit to Everdon Field centre. This helps them to learn how to live together in harmony. These visits give the pupils first hand experiences and bring aspects of the curriculum such as physical education, geography and history to life. However, the parents are concerned about the lack of outdoor games lessons and, during the inspection there were no physical education lessons outside. There does appear to be a reluctance to organise outdoor games sessions and the teachers report that many pupils do not bring

the correct clothes for outdoor activities especially when it is cooler. The pupils are taken swimming for a short period each Autumn and Spring term.

33. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual development. Spirituality forms part of many religious education lessons. For example, in one classroom a candle is lit when the teacher reads a bible story to show she is reading from a special book. The pupils are taught to value other people and to respect other cultures and religions. In some science lessons the pupils were amazed by the frogs they found and by the creatures living under a rotting log. However, opportunities to enhance the pupils' spiritual development through the use of art and music are missed.
34. The provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good and a strength of the school. A variety of situations are used effectively to teach the pupils the difference between right and wrong. An assertive behaviour policy with rewards and sanctions helps the pupils to understand what is good behaviour and what is bad. Good behaviour is rewarded with stars and certificates. A class can earn a reward by walking into the hall and sitting quietly before assembly. This helps pupils to see how they should behave. The whole school ethos is one of friendship and caring. The pupils have a good sense of fairness and show tolerance and understanding of others. Older pupils are given the responsibility of caring for the younger pupils during wet playtimes and lunch times and for clearing away promptly afterwards. Other pupils help around the school, in the dining hall and in the classrooms. In many lessons, the pupils are asked to work together and to share ideas. For example, in a physical education lesson the pupils in Year 2 happily devised a sequence of movements with a partner. The pupils are aware of their own culture and the culture of other groups within the school. The Bengali families celebrate their festival of Eid with the school through food, dress, art, dance and music. The pupils have visited both a local church and a mosque. Books written in dual languages can be found in the library. The school works hard to ensure that everyone values each other's culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school provides a safe and caring environment for its pupils. There is a health and safety policy in place and effective child protection arrangements of which the staff is fully aware. The school takes suitable measures to ensure the pupils' well being on a daily basis. For example, the parents are encouraged to provide sun hats for their children during spells of hot weather. The teachers and other members of staff know individual pupils and their families very well and are sensitive to and fully aware of their physical and emotional needs.
36. The pupils' progress is carefully monitored through regular meetings with teachers, support assistants and relevant external agencies. As a result, there are many examples of pupils gaining confidence and this has a good effect on both their attainment and behaviour.
37. The procedures the school has in place for recording and monitoring attendance are good and as a result of the school's efforts, attendance figures have improved significantly since the last inspection.
38. Good systems have been devised to maintain records of the pupils' achievements and to monitor their academic progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the lack of procedures was a key issue. The pupils have individual targets, accurately based on realistic assessments of their attainment, written in the covers of their books and revised every half term. These are implemented, in most cases, to good effect, although they are not always written in a style of language that is easily understood by either pupils or parents. There are good examples of teachers making notes on their daily planning about individual progress. These are taken into account in future planning, with evident changes of

emphasis in the lesson planning as a result.

39. The effectiveness of assessment procedures is seen in the frequency with which pupils are moved from one stage to another of the special educational needs register, or from one ability group to another in mathematics and English as they make good progress.
40. The school gives particularly good support to pupils for whom English is an additional language. In a well-structured programme, the teachers and the learning support assistants work either in classes alongside pupils or groups of pupils are withdrawn from classes to provide language support in both English and their native language. This provision leads to significant improvement in the pupils' standards of work and personal development and particularly in the development of their language skills.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Despite the fact that the school makes a very committed effort to establish a good partnership with the parents, the links still remain unsatisfactory. The inspection confirms that most parents are satisfied with the quality of education their children receive, but parental involvement makes very little impact on the work of the school. **(This is a key issue for action)**. This has a very negative effect on the pupils' progress and achievements. Most parents feel able to contact staff in the event of any problems and during the inspection a few parents were seen speaking informally with teachers. The school welcomes parents and the teachers are readily available to speak to them on an informal basis before and after school on any day. The parent governors assisted in the development of the home/school agreement, but the school has received very little response from other parents.
42. At present, only three parents provide occasional help in classrooms, but others assist with children's parties and when the pupils are taken out on educational visits. The school benefits from the very loyal and valued contribution of senior members of the local community who regularly visit to help in the classrooms. The parents are invited to attend assemblies and concerts, and these are usually well supported. The Parents' Literacy Project, which was attended by a very small group of parents, was successful in assisting those who came, in order to be able to help their children at home. However, the proposed numeracy project was abandoned through lack of parental support. All pupils have a home/school reading record that they take home with their reading books, but they are not well used as a means of communication and reading books are often not returned to school. Although there is no Parent Teacher Association, the Residents Association makes contribution from its own fund raising, which is usually well supported by parents.
43. The headteacher ensures that parents receive regular newsletters containing information about activities, details of what pupils are learning and the termly topics to be covered, as well as letters reminding them of their responsibilities as regards their children's attendance. Although the school provides this regular information for parents, the style of the content is often unsatisfactory. The inspection finds that the formal style of some newsletters may be discouraging to some parents. Although the annual reports provide satisfactory information about progress in English, mathematics and science, some of the complex descriptive language used is unclear. Insufficient information is provided about the pupils' progress and attainment in the foundation subjects, and evidence of target setting for improvement is inadequate. **(This is a key issue for action)**. The parents are invited to comment on the reports but the school receives very little feedback from them. These are a vital links in the continuing efforts to improve the parents' involvement in the education of their child. The school makes a good attempt to provide the Bangladeshi parents with translations of the various written communications as often as possible.
44. The school provides satisfactory information for parents about the results of the assessments of

children on entry to the school and at the end of Key Stage 1 tests. The teachers endeavour to discuss individual education plans with parents of those pupils with special educational needs and provide appropriate information about progress. Three consultation evenings are held each year, and there is also an open day when parents are invited into school to see their children working in their classrooms. An open afternoon was held recently specifically for the Bengali parents when a translator is present.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The headteacher provides good leadership and a positive direction to the work of the school. She has a clear vision of the needs of the school and gives firm guidance to the staff and the governors to achieve these objectives. This has resulted in a school development plan that has precise and appropriate targets for the future.
46. The headteacher has brought about an improved system for planning with a common format that is easy to understand. The plans show clearly what the teachers intend to teach during each half term. This helps the headteacher and the co-ordinators to identify the learning objectives of the various activities that have been included. The headteacher is now able to monitor the plans more thoroughly to see whether or not the requirements for each class are being met. She has spent considerable time visiting each class to watch the quality of the teaching and has then given each teacher a verbal and written feedback to identify their strengths and the areas where improvements need to be made. This has had a good impact upon raising the standards of teaching throughout the school and forms a central focus for the school's appraisal procedures.
47. The monitoring of the teachers' plans is also undertaken by the subject co-ordinators and this builds upon a move to develop their role. This has resulted in a sharing of information about the development of all subjects but particularly for English and mathematics. For example, the planning of activities at the beginning of each mathematics lesson has recently been the focus for staff training. This has resulted in the development of effective strategies that help the pupils to calculate answers in the heads. All staff have shared this development and have been effectively supported by courses organised in the school by the local education authority. The teachers have raised their expectations and have been successful in improving pupils' standards and the rate of progress they have made by the end of Year 4.
48. The headteacher has thoroughly analysed the results of the most recent national tests for Key Stage 1 and for the pupils in Year 4. She has carefully compared these results with the progress made by all pupils and especially of those pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs. As a result of this analysis, the school has arranged to teach English and mathematics in year groups and groups of similar abilities and this has had a good effect on the quality of the pupils' work and the progress they make.
49. The school is aware of the shortcoming in information technology, especially in the poor quality of the equipment and in the weaknesses in some of the teachers' knowledge and expertise. The school is establishing a link with the neighbouring school in a joint training programme. Most of the teachers need to become more proficient in their own skills of using a computer to be able to use information technology to enhance the teaching and learning across the curriculum. **(This is a key issue for action).**
50. The headteacher works well with the governing body. She keeps them well informed through reports and through the weekly meetings arranged with the chair of governors, who gives the school very good support. The governing body has several well-established governors who for many years have given the school help and good support. Four new governors are enthusiastic and willing to take part

in training so that they can take on posts of responsibilities. Despite the fact that the governing body does not have a full complement it ensures that all the statutory requirements are met with the exception of the full coverage of the information technology requirements. Several committees meet before each full meeting of the governing body to discuss and make proposals for development of the premises, curriculum and financial expenditure.

51. The governing body, through the work of the finance committee, the chair of governors and the headteacher, has also achieved substantial improvements in the use of its financial resources. Since the last inspection, when the school was paying for the upkeep of two buildings, there has been success in separating the payment of energy and maintenance costs so the neighbouring school pays its fair share for the building that it uses. The high expenditure, that was previously spent on building maintenance and energy costs for the two buildings, has been substantially cut. The money thus released is now used to raise the amount that is spent upon extra resources, staff and building improvements. The school uses all financial resources carefully, including grants. The priorities of the school development plan are supported well financially. The headteacher and governors ensure that the resources and the improvements made to the building achieve the best value for the money spent. The large balance of funds from last year will be spent on establishing a dining area within the school. This will avoid the use of the neighbouring school at lunchtime and cut the expenditure on energy and maintenance costs still further. The purchase of additional computers and software is also planned and this expenditure will reduce to a reasonable amount the balance to be carried forward next year.
52. The accommodation is adequate although the exterior of the building is in poor repair with paint flaking from the windows; the murals that once enhanced the school now have a shabby appearance. The resources for most subjects are adequate. However, the equipment for information technology is old and very unreliable. Many computers have been donated to the school so that each class has access to word processing, but the poor quality of this equipment has a detrimental influence on the quality of the pupils' work in information technology. **(This is a key issue for action).**

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The headteacher, governors and staff should continue with the very positive and successful methods already used to ensure that the pupils make good progress by the time they leave the school.

They should now:-

- improve the pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science and increase the proportion of the pupils that reaches the expected levels for their age at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school by:
 - a. providing a more structured approach to the teaching of the basic reading, writing and spelling skills throughout the school, but particularly in the classes with the four and five year old children (paragraphs 19, 20, 26, 55, 69)
 - b. providing a more structured approach to the teaching of literacy especially speaking by
 - i) the introduction and use of appropriate key words in subjects such as mathematics, science, geography, history and information technology, (paragraph 68)
 - ii) developing more structured targets for language development in creative, and role play activities in the reception age range, (paragraphs 24, 87)
 - c. developing and practising a good style of handwriting so that pupils are skilled and confident to write down their thoughts and ideas in all subjects. (paragraphs 60, 71, 75)

- raise the standards of the pupils' work in information technology by:
 - a. improving the quality of the equipment and software,
 - b. extending the teachers' skills and knowledge in the uses of the computers across the curriculum, (paragraphs 24, 49, 52, 98)
- improve the rate of attendance throughout the school so that it is in line with the national average.(paragraph 15)
- ensure that the pupils' annual reports are meaningful and do not include complex school language. (paragraph 43)
- establish more effective links with the parents so that:
 - a. they take a more active role in supporting the completion of homework, (paragraph 25)
 - b. they have a fuller involvement in the education of their children. (paragraph 41)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	54	38	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	171
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	89

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	70

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	31

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	19	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	9	7	6
	Girls	14	16	8
	Total	23	23	14
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	70 (70)	70 (60)	42 (57)
	National	82 (75)	83 (80)	87 (83)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	10	7	12
	Girls	16	9	12
	Total	26	16	24
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	79	48	73
	National	82 (80)	86 (78)	87 (83)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	40
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	325340
Total expenditure	297375
Expenditure per pupil	1825
Balance brought forward from previous year	10230
Balance carried forward to next year	38195

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	128
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	45	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	52	0	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	61	9	0	3
The teaching is good.	61	39	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	39	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	42	48	0	0	9
The school is well led and managed.	58	36	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	52	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	39	3	0	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

54. At the time of inspection, there were seven children under the age of five in the two reception classes of twenty children.
55. The children's levels of attainment on entry to the reception class, in the year in which they are five, are well below the levels expected for children of this age. Most children have a severe lack of language skills and their scores are also low in other areas. The baseline assessments show that the boys' achievements are much lower than the girls on entry to the school. These low standards reflect the lack of language skills of a significant proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and the large proportion of those with special educational needs. The children enjoy a suitable range of first hand experiences and independent play activities. However, the play activities are not structured sufficiently to give a focus to the learning and, therefore, they lack a clear purpose. **(This is a key issue for action)**. In relation to the nationally recommended Desirable Outcomes for Learning, most children still have very low skills in the area of language and literacy by the time they are five. Standards are also below those expected for their age in, mathematics, and knowledge and understanding of the world. However, their attainment is in line with expectations in physical development, creative development, personal and social development.
56. The teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn and the quality of the teaching in both reception classes has many strong features. The teaching is best when the teachers work directly with children, but as identified in the last inspection report there is a lack of adult intervention during children's play. Consequently, some opportunities for developing the children's learning language skills through practical experiences are missed. Although the children demonstrate their independence in selecting their own activity from a familiar range, they need encouragement to explore further. On many occasions they choose in a rather haphazard fashion and some children remain with one activity for too long. The teachers do not ensure that each one has a planned variety of tasks to complete

Personal and Social Development

57. By the age of five, most children attain the expected standards in their personal and social development. They are confident, happy and secure in school, although there is a small group who is still reluctant to leave a parent each morning. The adults in the reception classes instil a sense of responsibility and quiet confidence in children and have high expectations of work and behaviour. As a result, they begin to form positive and respectful relationships and to communicate effectively with one another and with adults. The teaching in this area of learning is good and children make good progress and behave sensibly at all times. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and encouraged to consider moral and social issues, such as the importance of sharing. The children are beginning to show consideration and respect for property and each other. Most children participate enthusiastically in teacher-led activities and they are attentive and eager to learn, and enjoy sharing their work with adults.

Language and literacy development

58. By the age of five, most children attain standards that are well below those expected for children of a similar age. On entry to the reception class, only a few children speak freely to adults and to one another during independent play activities. A significant number of them have speech and language

difficulties. Although, most listen attentively and respond well to stories and songs, their speech is often indistinct and difficult to hear, with one-word answers in response to questions.

59. However, the children are beginning to identify initial letters and sounds, recognise their names and make reasonable attempts at writing them. They enjoy writing 'letters' and making books but not all choose to do so. The progress shown by most children in language and literacy skills is good considering their very low standards on entry to the school. The adults' questioning skills are very good during whole group sessions, but in other activities there is insufficient structure to help children consolidate and reinforce their language skills. The children with English as a second language receive very good support from the bi-lingual support assistant and the teacher. Consequently, their progress is very good.
60. The quality of the teaching of language development is good and the teachers consistently build on what the children have already achieved. It is at its best when the teachers familiarise the children with written vocabulary through stimulating activities that focus on key words. This is particularly so in the literacy lessons where the development of early reading, writing and spelling skills are practised effectively. However, the well-structured programme of 'Jolly Phonics' is not effectively reinforced throughout the independent activities, classroom displays and interactions with play materials. There is also a lack of structure to make sure that the children's first writing activities are developed in a systematic way to provide a secure foundation. **(This is a key issue for action).**

Mathematical area of learning

61. By the age of five most children attain standards that are below the expected levels for their age, but their progress is good overall. Most can match, sort and count using every day objects. A few children are able to count to ten, and have a satisfactory grasp of 'one to one' when counting. Many children recognise basic shapes and gain some knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. However, opportunities to reinforce these mathematical ideas when children play with construction kits and table toys are missed. This is because what is to be learned from these activities is not specifically planned. Most children demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of how to solve simple problems involving addition and subtraction. They also lack an understanding of instructions and questions such as, 'add one more', 'take one more away', 'how many altogether?' and 'how many are left?'.
62. The teaching in this area of learning is best when the teachers are involved in direct teaching; it is then good. In these instances there are sufficient opportunities, especially for the most able, to write the number symbols correctly. The children are constantly challenged when being directly taught but there are opportunities in other activities around the classroom when the teaching of mathematical terms and literacy skills could be pursued with more rigour if as stated at the time of the last inspection the teachers identified 'where informal play is being structured to lead to specific learning objectives'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Most children under five have knowledge and understanding of the world that are below that expected for their age. A few confident children talk with a limited vocabulary about their brothers and sisters and where they live. They ask questions when encouraged. The children grow potato plants that help them to understand the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and to support their understanding of the idea of growth. The most able understand the care that seedlings need in order for them to survive. The children are effectively supported in their understanding through the use of the immediate school environment. The adults in the school respond positively to the children's remarks and provide appropriate explanations for their questions.

Physical Development

64. By the age of five most children have achieved the desirable outcomes for learning in physical education. The overall progress in the physical development of all the under-fives is generally good. For example, the children's movements are well co-ordinated and self-assured when climbing on large blocks and apparatus. They move imaginatively, demonstrating satisfactory body control and awareness of space. They can use construction toys and demonstrate reasonable hand and eye co-ordination. The children are beginning to follow simple patterns to make models out of constructional equipment for example. They are confidently developing hand control and manipulative skills when using tools such as scissors, glue and tape. For a physical education lesson in the hall, the teachers generally plan effectively to match tasks to their own expectations and children's level of functioning and skill. They provide calm and sensitive support and show a good understanding of how young children learn. The new outdoor resources are also used sufficiently well to promote skills such as running, riding, throwing and catching, balancing, climbing and jumping.

Creative development

65. Most children show good progress in all areas of creative learning and reach the expectations of the Desirable Outcomes for Learning. They have suitable opportunities to experiment with paint and use their observations and imagination to create pleasing results. They are given opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form, through working with a wide range of materials, for example, to create collages of favourite stories and patterns and pictures. There are opportunities for the children to explore sound and depict ideas and feelings through using percussion instruments. They sing and clap rhythms and express enjoyment when they learn to sing and march to 'The Grand Old Duke Of York'. The role-play areas, such as the doctor's surgery and the castle, provide opportunities for pupils to play co-operatively and imaginatively. Overall teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is better in this area when the adults intervene appropriately to talk to the children and ask relevant questions to extend their vocabulary.

ENGLISH

66. In the national tests for Key Stage 1 pupils in 1999, the proportion of the pupils that reached the expected Level 2 or above was well below the national average in both reading and writing. No pupil exceeded Level 2 in writing. The results over the past three years show there is a significant difference between the achievement of girls and boys in these tests. The performance of boys has gone down and has not kept pace with the national picture for boys whereas the girls have increased their rate of progress to be better than the girls nationally. The performance of the boys and the proportion that reach the expected level in reading has declined, but in writing it has remained constant. The performance of the girls has improved and the proportion reaching the expected levels has risen. When these results are compared with those of schools with similar characteristics, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 in reading is well below average but the proportion reaching the expected Level 2 or above in writing is in line with the average. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection.
67. The inspection findings confirm that by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are well below expectations in speaking and listening and below the national average in reading and writing. The pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 1. By the time they leave the school, at the end of Year 4, the pupils have made good progress, and although the standards are still below those expected for nine-year-olds the proportion reaching the expected standards for their age has improved. This rate of progress in the pupils' achievement is a substantial improvement since the

last inspection when progress was judged to be '*unsatisfactory in most aspects of English*'. The school has a high number of pupils with special educational needs and another significant proportion of pupils come into school with English as an additional language. Moreover, some pupils have special educational needs that means they are unlikely to reach expected levels. Nevertheless, the high quality additional support provided for these pupils and the good teaching ensure that both of these groups make good and sometimes very good progress during their time in school. During the inspection, there was very little difference in the performance of girls and boys during English lessons throughout the school.

68. Most pupils come into the school with poor speaking and listening skills and a very limited vocabulary. Their attainment is still below expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 but by the time they leave school at the end of Year 4 they have made good progress and well over three fifths of them are achieving standards expected of pupils of this age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show an interest in language work but do not always listen carefully enough to retain the information they are given. Most are confident and eager to answer questions about stories and characters in the literacy hour, but many still need encouragement to make contributions. In a successful lesson about rhyming words in Year 2, the teacher gave time for the pupils to consider a picture and as a result they made very thoughtful remarks and used interesting vocabulary. Nevertheless, by the time they leave the school, many pupils' command of spoken English is still below expectations; the subjects and verbs of their sentences do not agree and they frequently use tenses incorrectly. **(This is a key issue for action).**
69. The proportion of the pupils that reaches the expected levels in reading is also below average, both at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave school at the end of Year 4. Those readers of average ability in Year 2 read their books with some hesitation but usually manage simple words accurately. However, most pupils are below average and are unable to read common words, such as 'who' and 'here', and have too few strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. (This is a key issue for action). In the classes with younger pupils and also for lower attaining pupils, the recent introduction of a phonics system that includes supplementary books and listening tapes is a positive measure designed to encourage a love of books and develop a firm foundation of reading skills. This is already having a positive effect on the pupils' reading standards. In a mixed Year 1 and 2 class pupils enthusiastically offered ideas about what a bear might meet in the dark. However, few pupils choose to read at home and they have difficulty in talking about their favourite books and re-telling stories. Many of the more able pupils read with confidence and expression, but often lack fluency. On weekly visits to the school library, the pupils exchange their books, and enjoy looking at a suitable variety of story and information books together. There is a high proportion of pupils who frequently forget their library books and who do not read at home. A minority talks about books with understanding and can make predictions about what they think might happen next in their stories.
70. Only a small minority of more able pupils in Year 4 can name their favourite authors. Although they enjoy listening to stories told by their teacher, they are rarely able to give reasons for their choices. They read their chosen books with growing confidence and most make good attempts to read difficult words, using mainly phonetic and contextual clues. The pupils are slowly beginning to develop research skills and during lessons they locate particular words in their texts. Most know the difference between fact and fiction and are familiar with the terms index and contents but are not always sure how to use them.
71. Overall, the standard of the pupils' writing is below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. However, it is line with the average standards attained by schools of a similar type. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. From a very low start when they enter the school, the pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. The pupils' overall attainment is below the average because of the high percentage of

pupils with special educational needs. At the end of Key Stage 1, for example, the pupils make good gains in their understanding of spelling patterns. The most able pupils are independent writers and are beginning to use more thoughtful ideas in their work. They write simple sentences with a sound knowledge of the use of capital letters, and show a growing awareness of different forms of punctuation including apostrophes and speech marks, although they are unable to recall the correct names. In writing lists of words with similar sounds the teacher encourages the use of dictionaries. When the pupils write about their own experiences and re-tell stories, most of them frequently mix capital and lower case letters and their writing does not always have a logical sequence. Their sentence construction is not yet secure and there are many inaccuracies including basic spelling errors. In spite of regular practice, the pupils' form their letters incorrectly and consequently their handwriting is of an unsatisfactory standard. **(This is a key issue for action).**

72. By the end of Key Stage 2, through the structure provided by the Literacy Strategy, the pupils are becoming increasingly confident as writers and the descriptive content of their work is much improved. The pupils complete a suitable range of work based on the literacy strategy.
73. The quality of teaching in English is good overall. Over two thirds of lessons seen during the inspection were judged to be good or better. The quality of teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. The effective introduction and implementation of the National Literacy strategy is leading to a steady improvement in pupils' reading and writing skills. Newly implemented assessment procedures are being used effectively to plan activities that are more closely linked to what the pupils have previously learned and understood in both key stages. Good quality teaching throughout the school, and in particular, the effective support for those with special educational needs and with English as a second language, promotes good progress by pupils of all abilities. The pupils benefit from the regular support of bi-lingual assistants. The school makes very good use of additional learning support assistants who implement a most effective programme of language development for individual pupils.
74. In the best lessons in Key Stage 2, the teachers challenge the more able pupils well and extend their learning. They show sensitivity to their pupils' needs, and plan lessons well to provide tasks for their different abilities. The targets are set for pupils to work towards and these are written appropriately in the pupils' books. However, they are not always written in language easily understood by either the pupils or their parents. The teaching of reading is satisfactory overall but the use of reading diaries is unclear to the pupils and although they contain encouraging comments they do little to show how well a pupils has managed with the book or whether or not has enjoyed the story.
75. The pupils are not always expected to put the writing skills they have learned into practice in their everyday work. This encourages untidy presentation. **(This is a key issue for action).**

MATHEMATICS

76. The proportion of the pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above in the national tests in mathematics 1999 was well below the national average and also well below the average performance of schools of a similar type. However, the progress that the pupils make from the time they enter the school to the end of Key Stage 1 is good though not sufficient to bring standards up to the national average. Nevertheless, there are good signs that the standards are improving. The unconfirmed results of the most recent tests for 2000 show that there has been a significant improvement in standards and the proportion reaching the expected Level 2 has risen to almost two thirds of the year group. There are still no pupils who exceed the expected levels. Since the last inspection there has been a marked increase in the achievements and the progress of most pupils from the levels they show on entry the school.

77. Well over half of the pupils have secure number skills and knowledge and are developing sound understanding of numeracy. Most can do addition up to 100 accurately in their heads. They are working satisfactorily at the levels expected for pupils of their age, and some exceed these expectations in their number work. Nevertheless, there are weaknesses in their understanding and knowledge of shapes, space and measurements. Most pupils can name two and three-dimensional forms, but they are not sure of the properties when asked to describe what is special about a shape.
78. By the time the pupils reach the end of Year 4, their standards have improved. From the scrutiny of work and the results of the most recent intermediate Year 4 national tests it is clear that standards are closer to the national average by the time they leave the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Nearly two thirds of the pupils are comfortable working at the expected levels for their age. They use mental calculations appropriately and confidently. They use fractions and can measure in standards units of length, weight and volume. Most have mastered the calculation of hundreds, tens and units and are aware of place values to higher numbers. Several pupils demonstrated their abilities to work out answers using brackets, for example $20 * 8 = (2 * 8) * 10 =$. Where there are weaknesses in mathematics, they arise because of the pupils' poorly developed writing skills. Their written calculations are not presented clearly and are difficult to read. Their lack of mathematical words and skills in speaking restricts their descriptions of their calculations and reasoning.
79. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching throughout the school has improved. Nearly all lessons seen during the inspection were good. The national strategies for teaching numeracy are having a substantial impact upon the work of the pupils but as yet there is no evidence to show how numeracy is being developed in other subjects. The teachers plan their lessons well and effectively cover the basic skills of number calculation at the beginning of each lesson. The activities used in the opening session of each lesson are well structured and the teachers ask probing questions. They ensure that all pupils remain thinking and that all have a chance to explain their own methods of calculating an answer. In one Year 3 lesson, for example, the pupils were challenged to add three numbers in their heads and then explain their ways of working. The pupils split the numbers into manageable groups of tens and units; they first added 20, 10 and 10 and then added the units. They then described many different methods they had found. The teachers have a growing confidence in this style of teaching through Key Stages 1 and 2 and this is reflected in the attitudes of the pupils. For example, following one lesson in Key Stage 2 the pupils left the classroom talking about how they could find other ways to reach the answer to a calculation they had all been working on.
80. In Key Stage 1 the Year 1 and 2 pupils are grouped according to their prior learning. This means that some Year 1 pupils are working with Year 2 pupils. This arrangement is most successful and is already raising the standards of both higher attaining and lower attaining pupils. The Key Stage 2 pupils are organised into year groups and this arrangement is also proving successful. The teachers use whole class sessions effectively and then extend the work through group work that is appropriately adjusted so that all pupils are set work that builds upon their previous learning and the level of challenge matches their abilities well. There is some use made of the pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects such as date lines in history.

SCIENCE

81. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum assessments of seven-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level was well below the national average. Few pupils attained the higher level and this was also below the national average. Moreover, the results are also below average when compared to those of similar schools. The results reflect the fact that the school has a large proportion of its pupils on the special needs register.
82. The inspection findings also confirm that at the end of Key Stage 1 standards are below average with few pupils attaining a higher level. Although the standard reached by the pupils in Year 4 are also below average, approximately three fifths of these pupils are on course to attain the expected level by the age of nine and just a few might attain a higher level. However, when taking into account the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 4, it is clear that the school is making good progress. Since the last inspection the quality of work remains below the expected levels but there has been a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils that now reach the expected standards for their ages. The quality of the pupils' written work seen during the inspection at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4 belies the true depth of scientific skills, knowledge and understanding that the pupils have acquired. They understand much more than is evident in their written work.
83. Through discussions with the pupils, including those with special educational needs, it is clear that they make good progress and they learn about life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Much of the pupils' work in Key Stage 1 is practical and they are beginning to develop their understanding of what a fair test is. Although they can carry out the test and record their findings, many of the pupils need additional support to present their results and to decide what to write. They are able to think about what might happen and to give reasons why something did happen. This was shown in an experiment to do with blowing bubbles from different shaped pieces of wire. Many pupils thought the triangular piece of wire would produce triangular bubbles. They discovered by doing this experiment proof that they were wrong, and that all the bubbles were round whatever the shape of the wire.
84. Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3 and 4 are able to devise a test for deciding how much water a plant needs to survive and can make predictions about whether or not a material is magnetic. They know the parts of the body, the senses, what to eat for a healthy diet, what the heart does and how it beats faster after exercise. They have designed a poster warning of the dangers of taking pills and medicine. They also know that plants need light, warmth and water in order to grow and that too much water will drown them. They understand that a battery and the right connections are needed to light a bulb. Through looking at different habitats in the school grounds, pupils can suggest what creatures may live in them. A practical session exploring these habitats proves whether the pupils were right or wrong.
85. The pupils continue to make progress through Year 3 and Year 4. They are becoming surer of what a fair test is and how to complete an experiment. For instance, they make predictions about whether a horseshoe magnet or a bar magnet is stronger and then decide how to prove it. Again, much of the pupils' experiences are through practical work. Where the results are recorded, many pupils have some support from an adult. The pupils know about the skeleton, how muscles move and the importance of a healthy diet. The pupils know what a plant needs to live and they have also experimented with celery to find out how water reaches the leaves of the plants. They made careful drawings to record what they saw. They are also exploring the school grounds looking at different types of habitat and studying the creatures they find there. They were amazed at the number of insects they found under a rotting log, including woodlice, slugs, beetles and centipedes. They are

aware of the different needs of the creatures found and are knowledgeable about the life cycle of many of the insects such as the frogs and damsel-flies that they found.

86. In both key stages the pupils are keen and interested. They enjoy the practical science especially when they were able to explore the school grounds and look at the creatures living there. Whilst working outside the pupils remain on task and concentrate and are well behaved. They use scientific equipment safely and responsibly, but are not so enthusiastic when asked to record their findings in their books. They would rather talk about them, listening carefully to each other and their teachers.
87. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching in science especially investigative work has improved substantially. In both key stages, the lessons seen during the inspection were nearly always good. The lessons are well planned giving the pupils lots of practical tasks to do such as collecting creatures from various places in the school ground. The teachers take care to ensure that the pupils learn the right skills and understand what is happening. They give clear explanations and instructions to make sure that the pupils know what is expected of them. The pupils are more successful in discussions and in using drawings to refine and record what they have learned, than they are in their writing. Written recording is done but often with support from adults in the classroom. The class teacher ensures this is well done by telling the adults what sort of questions to ask the pupils. For example, when recording an experiment the pupils had to decide what to use, how to do it and the possible outcome. Many needed adult support and further questions to decide their answers, but because the adults had been well briefed they were able to give the pupils lots of help. Although teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, occasionally they do not tell the pupils the right scientific words. For example, when talking about creatures in the school ground only one teacher used the word invertebrates to describe them. In all lessons, the teachers' expectations of the pupils' behaviour and attitudes are clear. **(This is a key issue for action).**
88. The science co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and has introduced effective assessment routines since the last inspection. The teachers use the results to help them plan the next stage of learning. The school makes good use of the local environment, has enjoyed a visit from a theatre company performing "The Big Drip" and had an interesting visit to the Natural History Museum. All these ventures help to give the pupils additional first hand experiences of science.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. Art and design technology are taught together throughout the school. The pupils are taught the skills required in both subjects through this joint approach to the subjects and in most lessons these skills are linked to the art themes. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection, and these were both in Key Stage 2. Examples of pupils' work were seen in classrooms, corridors and folders and these form the basis for the evidence about the quality of work throughout the school.
90. In both of these subjects, the quality of the pupils' work is in line with expectations for the age group. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when the quality of work in both subjects was below the expected levels throughout the school. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, the pupils experience a suitable variety of materials, tools and techniques and are given sufficient opportunities to express their ideas through drawing, painting, printing, collage and two and three-dimensional work. In the planning of art work there is a good balance between learning new skills and techniques, such as colour mixing, papier-mâché and printing, and opportunities for the pupils to use their imaginations and creativity. The pupils combined their skills of drawing and painting when they created portraits of one another in a lesson in Key Stage 2, gaining an appreciation of form and shape. They also use shading techniques appropriately. In the planning of design and technology the teachers identify the skills of planning, making and evaluating what has been made. Consequently the pupils have experience of producing their own designs to

make cards and models, often using information technology. In Key Stage 2 they cut, fold and stick materials to learn joining techniques when they design and make bags or cards for Mothering Sunday. They also make 'pop-up' models, successfully combining different materials. The past work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrates a wide variety of printing techniques being used to good effect to create pictures of trees. In a Year 4 lesson, the pupils developed an understanding of colour mixing and design by using painting techniques to follow and develop a given pattern. A minority of pupils shows a high level of creativity, with a good eye for composition and design. They match colours accurately with great care and use their imaginations well to continue and develop an idea. The pupils apply themselves well, becoming absorbed in the task.

91. In Key Stage 1, the pupils develop an awareness of line through experimenting with different sized brushes in art. Good examples of the creative use of brush strokes and colour are evident in the pictures based on the style of Monet that are displayed in Year 2. In design and technology themes the pupils develop their understanding of simple moving mechanisms, pupils in Year 2 have designed and created vehicles with wheels and axles. These are decorated in paint and crayon. The youngest children make simple prints with a variety of shapes. These skills are extended when pupils design and produce their own printing blocks using string to develop their understanding of pattern and colour.
92. In the two lessons seen during the inspection the quality of the teaching was satisfactory overall. Although there are guidelines for teachers to follow in art, those for design and technology have yet to be agreed. The teachers are well prepared and give good introductions so that the pupils fully understand what they have to do. The classroom assistants are generally well deployed and make a useful contribution. The teachers support and encourage pupils well, but there are times when more use could be made of demonstration and the sharing of what is working well in order to give confidence to the less artistic and skilled pupils. The pupils are given suitable opportunities to look at art in a variety of different cultures, such as aboriginal art and Mendhi patterns. The teachers also teach the pupils about Islamic patterns and use writing techniques to design prayer mats in Year 2. There are planned opportunities to examine the work of various artists, such as Marc Chagal and Claude Monet and there are displays of the work of different artists around the school.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

93. There was no geography being taught in either key stages during the inspection period because it was taught last half term and this half term the emphasis is on history. However, by looking at the pupils' previous work, the teachers' planning and the displays around the school, it was possible to make judgements about how well the pupils achieve and what they do.
94. In both key stages there are examples of maps being used. For example, in Key Stage 1, maps are used to find places where pupils have been on holiday. In one classroom, a display about the Island of Struay shows that the pupils have also spent time looking at features of an island and comparing them to Northampton. In Key Stage 2, maps are used in science to identify habitats in the school grounds and in history so that the pupils can locate Athens and Sparta in Ancient Greece. The pupils' written work is well below the standard for pupils of this age but they are able to talk about places, recognise the map of Great Britain and name the countries. They are able to talk knowledgeably about the differences between a hot place like Greece and where they live.

95. In both key stages, scrutiny of the pupils' written work in history and geography shows that standards are below the expected standards. The quality of work remains the same as at the time of the last inspection when it was below the expected levels in both subjects. However, when talking to the pupils' it is clear that their knowledge is not fully reflected in their writing. In Key Stage 1, they know the difference between modern and old-fashioned kitchens. The pupils are very interested in history and one class in Key Stage 1 was very excited when a local resident was invited into school to talk to them about her memories of holidays in the 1930's. The pupils learnt a lot from this piece of "living history". The questions they asked were well thought out and they enjoyed the experience. At Key Stage 2, they can talk about the Ancient Greeks, their life style and how it is different from their own. They know that the Greek alphabet is different, homes are different, school is very different as are the clothes they wore. The pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class were mesmerised by the story of Arachne especially when Athene, a Greek Goddess turned her into a spider. Overall, progress is good although the pupils' written work does not give a true picture of their understanding. They are beginning to develop the skills of asking relevant questions about life in the past and relating them to today.
96. The teachers give the pupils opportunities to discuss and develop their understanding of Ancient Greece and holidays in the past. The provision of various books at different levels ensures that all pupils can carry out some simple research. All teachers have good relationships with their class. The teachers in Key Stage 1 are very sensitive to the fact that not all pupils have been to the seaside and so show them lots of photographs. They encourage those who have been to describe what they did and how they felt. Although a range of tasks is planned for the pupils, there is a need, particularly in Key Stage 2 to give the more able ones a greater challenge of working out their own questions to answer from their research instead of just telling them what they must find out. All teachers try to make the lessons exciting and to stimulate the pupils by providing practical activities as well as discussion. The pupils are interested and remain on task during history lessons, and tackle their written work with enthusiasm. They often show disappointment when they have to stop work to clear up. Good teaching and careful planning help to develop the pupils' understanding of history.
97. The final schemes of work for history and geography have yet to be finalised with the Middle school and other local primary schools. At present, the work is planned from the national documents, which helps to ensure that skills are taught in the right order. The use of the local area and visits add stimulating first hand experiences to the coverage of these two subjects and support the good progress that all pupils make in gaining understanding and knowledge that is obvious from their conversations.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

98. The quality of the pupils' work throughout the school is below the expected levels for their ages. **(This is a key issue for action)**. Since the last inspection little progress has been made in raising standards even though the school has strived to provide computers in each class and the curriculum is now more fully covered throughout the school.
99. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can use the computer, follow instruction when using a CD Rom and print out their work competently. Nevertheless, by the time they reach the end of Year 4, their skills have not increased as much as should have done. This shortfall in improvement is due to lack of equipment and purposeful programs and the teachers' inadequate expertise.
100. Most of the equipment and software programs in the school are out of date and have been begged and donated to the school following enterprising efforts by the coordinator. She has managed to acquire a computer for each class but many machines are over 10 years old and can only be used for

very old styles of text processing with programs that are difficult to use. For example, the Year 4 teacher was determined that the pupils should use word processing to record their stories but the “Caxton” program failed to run on this occasion because of a lack of memory within the machine.

101. The only machines that can be successfully relied upon are two that the school has recently purchased and one acquired through the National Grid for Learning Project. The Year 3 and 4 pupils operate these and they are beginning to develop skills of using the Internet.
102. There are good examples in Key Stage 1 and in the reception class, of the pupils’ use of graphics to create cards and to draw pictures. They have inserted headlines into their finished printing and this work forms a pleasing display. The quality of this work is in line with the expected levels for their ages and the pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of their skills. They have developed a sound understanding of the use of a word processor and know that labels and text can be printed out in different sized fonts and colours.
103. The older pupils in the school were observed creating a database of animals from a series of record cards. They selected appropriate ‘field’ labels to list the habitat, food, size and colour of these creatures. They based each record on the investigation of the animals living in and around the school pond. The quality of this work is in line with the expected levels for their age.
104. There are no computer programs in school that are suitable for the pupils with special educational needs. It would be beneficial if these pupils could use phonics, spelling and number programs to support the structured approach to reading and numeracy that they already follow.
105. The national guidance from the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is used as a scheme for the whole school. This is an improvement since the last inspection and provides good guidelines for assessing what skills and knowledge the pupils have learned. The planning throughout the school now covers all strands of the curriculum for information technology but the development of the pupils’ skills and knowledge at Key Stage 2 is restricted by the poor quality of the computers that are available. There are few occasions when the teachers consider using the computers to support the writing and reading skills that they are teaching. This is an area that should be developed so that pupils who find the controlling of a pencil difficult can express their ideas and thoughts in an alternative way. The school intends to improve quality of the computers and has identified some of the funds carried forward from last year to purchase new machines. The headteacher in consultation with the co-ordinator, intends to extend the depth of the teachers’ knowledge and to improve their skills in the use of information technology by following a series of training sessions with a neighbouring school under the ‘New Opportunities Funding’ initiative.

MUSIC

106. Only one music lesson was seen during the inspection and the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Other evidence was gained from hearing the singing of various groups of pupils in Key Stage 2. Although the school provides a good environment in which the pupils can appreciate and experience music making, especially singing, the quality of the pupils’ work is below the expected levels for their age.
107. There has been little improvement in the quality of music throughout the school since the last inspection.

108. There are few opportunities for the pupils to experience simple composing although through the scheme of work used they are beginning to understand the different qualities of music such as tempo, pitch and dynamics and the elements of composing and performing. Some pupils who have chosen to learn to play the recorder and violin can read simple pieces of music. All pupils listen with concentration to the pieces of music played at the beginning and ends of assemblies.
109. A group of older pupils in Key Stage 2 have recently performed in the local theatre and they sang their songs again during lunchtime on one of the inspection days. They sing tunefully with clear diction and keep a steady rhythm without accompaniment. Other examples of the pupils' singing are demonstrated on a recording of the Key Stage 2 pupils performing 'Songs from the Millennium'. The teachers involved in this project have raised the quality of the singing effectively and have given the pupils a wide experience of British songs from the past hundred years. From the recording it is clear that the pupils enjoyed this activity. The low levels of reading in the school mean that the pupils have to memorise the words of the songs. Many do this very well and their performance is satisfactory.
110. In the one lesson seen during the inspection, the pupils enjoyed the work planned by the teacher. It was based on a published scheme and accompanying recordings which are being used by all staff in planning the curriculum. This gives the teachers who do not have particular skills in music a good basis to plan their lessons. As yet there is no record kept to show how well the pupils have developed their musical skills but the planning through the published scheme ensures that they experience the required variety of skills, knowledge and understanding as they proceed through the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. During the inspection there was no opportunity to see any outdoor games lessons, as none were timetabled. The parents expressed a concern about the lack of out door sports lessons and it does appear that this is correct. The lessons seen were in either dance or gymnastics. At both key stages, the standard of achievement in physical education in both key stages is in line with what is expected for pupils of this age. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
112. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to control balls using hands, feet and heads, and can roll a balls to a partner. Some are quite skilful at this. They can throw and catch. They have good control of their bodies, can stop suddenly to the sound of a tambourine and can interpret a story with interesting movements.
113. The pupils in Year 3 and 4 are able to skip very well. They can control their actions when asked to move round room, stopping still and then moving in a different way. They can move smoothly between a high position and a low position, pretending to "stalk" their prey. The pupils can put together a sequence of movements with a partner, including a run, jump, bridge and roll. Many pupils are able to do a forward roll and some are able to make a bridge like a crab. There is also evidence that the majority of pupils leave the school being able to swim a minimum of 10 metres. The school has a football team and they practice regularly and take part in matches with other schools. Although the girls are invited to play football with the boys there is no other activity arranged for them such as netball, which according to the older ones they would like to play.
114. The pupils make good progress in acquiring the skills of throwing and catching, and in learning how to control their bodies to make up a sequence of movements and swimming.

115. Physical education is popular in both key stages and all pupils enjoy their lessons. They are well behaved and listen carefully. The pupils work together sensibly in pairs when throwing balls to each other or making a sequence. They share their ideas and are happy to show the rest of the class what they can do. In Key Stage 2 the pupils are keen to answer questions about how they could improve their movements. They are encouraged to talk about each other's sequences without being too critical.
116. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good throughout the school. In the lessons where the teaching is good, the pupils are given a wide range of tasks to complete and the lessons move along quickly so that pupils do not have time to get bored. The teachers use pupils to show their work and then ask the rest of the class to comment and make suggestions as to how improvements could be made. The suggestions include stretching more, jumping higher and using more control. In lessons where the range of activities is inadequate, the pupils neither develop their skills, nor make such good progress. All teachers included a warm up before the main part of the lessons. The pupils are relaxed by lying on the floor at the end of each lesson and before they leave the hall.
117. Although the physical education syllabus, covers all the basic skills for indoor activities, including dance and gymnastics, there are few opportunities for the pupils to do some of the outdoor activities although all pupils go swimming at the local pool some time during the year. The quality of resources is adequate and the large hall is an added bonus for physical education lessons. There is a large field but this is rarely used during the winter months, as pupils do not come adequately prepared for outdoor lessons in colder weather.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. In both key stages, the standard the pupils' written work is well below what is expected by the agreed syllabus and in this respect there has been little improvement since the last inspection. However, discussions with the pupils show that they know more about this subject than their writing suggests. Standards are therefore judged to be in line with the expected levels in the agreed syllabus rather than well below.
119. The pupils in Key Stage 1 talk confidently about sharing and caring for each other. They explain what they would like to share and why. "I'd share my Barbie with my friend if she shares with me" or "I would share everything" They remember the Christmas story and know about Lent. One pupil said that they would give up crisps for Lent and another said chocolate. Other religions covered include Judaism and Islam. For instance, the celebration of Eid involved the Bengali parents and pupils sharing their festival with the whole school through food, dress, music, art and dance. The older children are learning about St. George and the Dragon and St. Francis of Assisi. To them both St. George and St. Francis were brave men. The assembly themes are closely linked to the religious education lessons and also discussed during circle time. The pupils are encouraged to reflect on themes such as sharing, honesty, respect and trust. Much of the discussion shows how sensitive the pupils are to the needs of others. The local vicar takes assembly once or twice a term and follows the theme of that moment. He is also an example of someone from within the community who helps and supports others.
120. The pupils make good progress developing an understanding of other religions and how to live together in harmony. They learn that sharing and caring are important. They enjoy religious education lessons and are keen to express their views and opinions. They listen to their teachers and friends and are willing to share their thoughts. They are not so keen when asked to write down information, but do so. They all enjoyed the assembly led by the local vicar and showed how quickly

they could settle when something exciting had happened.

121. The teaching of religious education is at least satisfactory and often good. The teachers' knowledge is good and they plan the lessons carefully. Good discussion helps the pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Well-framed questions encourage the pupils to think for themselves about the topic and the effects of actions on others. The telling of stories with enthusiasm holds the pupils' attention. It is by speaking and listening, rather than writing that these pupils learn most effectively about religious education. All the teachers have good relationships with their classes and respond sensitively to their pupils' needs.
122. Visits to the local churches, the sharing of festivals from other religions and the visit to the mosque helps the pupils understand that the different religions and cultures are important.