

INSPECTION REPORT

Talbot Combined School

POOLE

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113700

Head teacher: Mr D. Thomas

Acting Head teacher: Mr P. Mallon

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. M. Barnes
16249

Dates of inspection: 30/04/01-3/05/01

Inspection number: 197700

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First to Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 12
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Talbot drive Wallisdown Poole Dorset
Postcode:	BH12 5ED
Telephone number:	01202 513981
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Harley
Date of previous inspection:	29th September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16249	S.M. Barnes	Registered inspector	Music, information communication technology, equality of opportunity, English as an additional language.	Characteristics, standards of attainment, how well are pupils taught, leadership and management.
13911	J Gallichan	Lay inspector		Attitudes values and behaviour, how well the school cares for its pupils, how well the school works in partnership with parents.
7465	R. Brent	Team inspector	Geography, physical education, special educational needs.	
20654	P. Knight	Team inspector	Science, design and technology.	Curricular provision.
21090	D. Manuel	Team inspector	Art, French.	
21992	J Newing	Team inspector	Provision for children under five, English.	
18926	M. Ridout	Team inspector	Mathematics, religious education.	Provision for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
32048	G. Grigg	Team inspector	History.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average primary school, with 609 boys and girls on roll between the ages of four and twelve. The school is situated in a residential area on the edges of Poole in Dorset. The previous inspection in 1997 described the area in which the school is situated as having areas of disadvantage in economic terms. The proportion of pupils having free meals is approximately eleven per cent. Virtually all pupils are of white ethnic origin and English is their first language. Just under two per cent speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry was judged to be average overall at the time of the previous inspection. This has changed and currently attainment on entry is below average overall. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average at approximately 20 per cent. The proportion of pupils with statements of their need is also average, at one per cent. At the time of the inspection the head teacher was absent through illness and the deputy head had undertaken the role of acting head teacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The leadership and management are good. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Relationships between all sections of the school community are good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children in reception are given a good start to their education. Standards are above average in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 7. Standards in design and technology are above average throughout the school.
- The school provides good standards of care, support and guidance. As a result, relationships are very good and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all good.
- The leadership and management of the school are good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is good. The provision for their social development is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is a strong emphasis on high quality, this is reflected in the consistently high standards of presentation within the school, including pupils work.
- Parents are supportive of the school and its work.

What could be improved

- Teacher knowledge and confidence in teaching information and communication technology and music.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator in non-core subjects, so that they monitor standards, teaching and learning and ensure structures and schemes are in place to promote consistency in all classes and year groups.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since that time there has been a good level of improvement. All of the issues identified have been addressed. Standards in information and communication technology have been improved and the statutory requirements are met. The accommodation has been improved. There is greater balance in the curriculum for science and history. Higher and lower attaining pupils' make appropriate progress throughout the school. All staff are aware of child protection procedures. In addition there has been improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, standards have improved in mathematics, French and science at Key Stage 2 and reading and writing and design and technology at Key Stage 1. There has also been improvement in the school's links with parents. However standards in French and geography at the end of Key Stage 2 have dipped, although they are reflect the findings of the previous report at the end of Year 7.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	C	B
mathematics	B	B	C	B
science	C	D	C	B

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

At the time of the previous inspection, attainment on entry to the reception was judged to be average. The situation has altered since that time and standards are currently below average when children first start school. During their time in reception, they make good progress towards the national early learning goals for children under five and standards are average on entry to Key Stage 1. Results of the end of key stage tests for pupils aged seven in 2000 indicated that standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average when compared to national figures, but were average when compared to similar schools when based on eligibility for free school meals. Results of the teachers' assessment of pupils' performance in science was average. There is still considerable fluctuation in attainment between year groups, despite the large size of the school. Currently standards in English have improved slightly since the last report, despite variation year on year, and standards in English in Year 2, are above average, in mathematics and science, they are average. Standards are average in all of the remaining subjects, except design and technology, where they are above average. From the table above it can be seen that standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 were all average when compared to national results. They were above average when compared to results of similar schools. Standards are currently above average in all three core subjects and also in art and design, design technology and French. They are in line with those expected of pupils of eleven in information and communication technology, history, music and physical education. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are below those expected in geography. At Year 7, standards are above average in English, and science and well above average in mathematics. In the non-core subjects standards are above those expected in design and technology and French and in line with those expected of pupils of twelve in all other subjects. Pupils throughout the school are currently making good progress overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good throughout the school. They concentrate well, listening to their teachers and each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils move around school in an orderly manner, and there is a calm, working atmosphere in classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships, including those between different sections of the school community, are very good. Pupils work together well and are polite and courteous.
Attendance	Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-12 years
Lessons seen overall	good	satisfactory	good

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

From the scrutiny of work and observation of lessons the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A significant proportion of the lessons observed during the current inspection were taught by supply teachers or teachers on short term contracts, as a number of the full time staff were absent due to illness. However these teachers were effectively supported by school systems and the overall quality of teaching and learning was maintained. During the current inspection virtually all of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, and in sixty four per cent of lessons it was good. Very good teaching occurred in sixteen per cent of lessons. The teaching of the children under five in the reception classes is good. It was always at least satisfactory in all of the lessons observed, and sixty four per cent of them it was good. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, whilst in some areas and subjects it is good, since the learning in some key areas of the curriculum is satisfactory it is still only satisfactory overall. During the week of inspection virtually all of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory and sixty two per cent of them were at least good. On one occasion the teaching was poor. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall. During the week of inspection all of the teaching was at least satisfactory or better, of that sixty six per cent was at least good and sometimes better. In nearly twenty five per cent of lessons teaching was very good and resulted in pupils making very good progress in their learning. At Key Stage 3, all of the teaching was at least satisfactory and sixty per cent of it was at least good. Very good teaching was observed in forty per cent of lessons for Year 7 pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Learning opportunities are good and have been enhanced by additional and specialist facilities and expertise for teaching science, design technology and food technology, information communication technology and swimming.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good and pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good and effectively supports pupils in their acquisition of English and in their learning in other areas of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The good overall provision in this area fully reflects the school's mission statement and aims. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Assemblies are very well planned and make a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Provision for social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils receive very good support and guidance. Close monitoring of personal and academic development ensures individual needs are met effectively and this has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning.

The school maintains good links with parents and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents find it easy to approach the school if they have any concerns.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good. There is a shared commitment to improvement and capacity to continue that improvement is good. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively maintained.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors know the school well and have a very good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. They are suitably involved in the strategic planning and daily life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has started to analyse the results of tests and assessments to ensure that pupils of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make appropriate progress in their learning. Appropriate targets have been set for improvement in the national end of key stage tests.
The strategic use of resources	Educational priorities are effectively supported by good management of resources, including deployment of learning support assistants.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School enables children to achieve a good standard of work.• The attitudes and values the school promotes have a positive effect upon the children.• Children like school.• Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school and would find it easy to approach with questions or problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There was no significant dissatisfaction in any area.

The inspection team agree with the positive points the parents raised.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment on entry to the reception was judged to be average. The situation has altered since that time and evidence from the baseline assessment, which is moderated by the local education authority, and other documentation and work examined, while standards cover the whole range, they are below average overall when children first start school. During their time in reception, children make good progress. Personal, social and emotional development are continuously well promoted and there are well-planned activities to develop literacy, mathematical skills and knowledge and understanding of the world so that children are working at the expected standard by the time they start Year 1. Those children who find aspects of learning difficult are quickly identified and offered good support so that they make good progress.
2. The previous inspection judged standards in English, mathematics and science to be broadly average at end of Key Stage 1, with some year-by-year fluctuations. Standards were broadly average in all other subjects. Results of the end of key stage tests for pupils aged seven in 2000 indicated that standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average when compared to national figures, but were average when compared to similar schools, based on eligibility for free school meals. Results of the teachers' assessment of pupils' performance in science was average. There is still considerable fluctuation in attainment between year groups, despite the large size of the school. Currently standards in English have improved slightly since the last report, despite variation year on year, and standards in English in Year 2, are above average, in mathematics and science, they are average. Standards are average in all of the remaining subjects, except design and technology, where they are above average. Last year boys attained slightly higher standards than girls in reading and mathematics, but girls out performed boys in writing. The school is aware of this and has focussed teaching accordingly. There is currently no significant variation between groups in standards within the key stage.
3. At Key Stage 2, the overall trend over time in end of key stage test results for all core subjects is slightly above the national trend. The previous inspection judged standards to be in line with those expected of pupils of eleven in English, mathematics and science. The results of the end of key stage tests in 2000 indicated that standards were average in English mathematics and science. They were above average when compared to similar schools. Standards are currently above average in all three core subjects and also in art and design, design technology and French. They are in line with those expected of pupils of eleven in information and communication technology, history, music and physical education. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are below those expected in geography.
4. At Key Stage 3, standards at the time of the previous inspection were judged to be close to what is expected of pupils of twelve in English, mathematics and science. Current findings are that standards are above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Standards in all other subjects are in line with those expected, except in design and technology and French where they are higher than those normally found.
5. The school makes appropriate progress towards the targets for results at the end of each key stage. These targets are set with the individual pupils' prior attainments firmly in mind. Pupils make good progress overall in developing skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Standards attained by pupils are at least satisfactory and often good. Parents are generally pleased with the standards their children attain. Nearly all of those who expressed an opinion, at the meeting and in the questionnaire, felt the school enabled their child to achieve good standards of work. Pupils of differing abilities, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress across the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development are good. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection and have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. Parents responding to the questionnaire recognise that their children behave well at school.
7. Pupils in reception classes settle into the day's routines happily and respond well to the encouragement and support they receive from their teachers and other adults who help them. They show interest in their work and listen carefully, remaining on task and concentrating well when required. They are considerate to one another and take turns, sharing equipment sensibly. Pupils clear away quickly and purposefully, using their own initiative. Their behaviour is always good. Pupils' good response is as a result of consistently good teaching, which meets their needs as young learners, and this has a positive impact on their learning.
8. Throughout the rest of the school pupils have good attitudes to learning. Most pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. They listen carefully to their teachers during class introductions and are keen to answer questions or offer a viewpoint. They are well motivated and enjoy being challenged, settling quickly to individual or group work. They sustain concentration well. Pupils respond to the high expectations of teachers. In a very well planned Year 3 English lesson the teacher's animated introduction captivated the pupils' interest right from the beginning. They enjoyed joining in actions and responses as the teacher read a story to them. She expected their full attention at all times and gave clear time limits in which to complete work related to the story. Pupils with special educational needs have equally good attitudes to their learning and enthusiastically join in all activities.
9. Behaviour is good. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in most classrooms and pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion. During assemblies pupils enter the hall sensibly and behave well throughout. Lunchtimes are sociable and enjoyable occasions and behaviour around the school and in the playground is good. Pupils' good behaviour results in effective learning, as teachers can spend all their time teaching. However, on just a few occasions, inconsistent classroom management results in pupils calling out, others lose concentration and then time is wasted. Progress is then inhibited. Pupils are not worried that they might encounter bullying or oppressive behaviour. Three exclusions have been necessary in the last year, each for inappropriate behaviour towards other children.
10. Very good relationships permeate the whole school community, including race relations. Pupils work collaboratively in pairs and small groups and it is particularly noticeable how well boys and girls work together in Years 6 and 7. The arrangements for setting in Years 3 to 7 means pupils from across the year group have the opportunity to work together in different groupings. Pupils are polite and courteous towards visitors and engage in conversation readily. Equipment, resources and books are treated with care. Pupils respect others views and follow the teachers' good example of valuing all contributions made to a discussion. In a Year 5 class pupils' honesty was illustrated as they marked their own work and then gave their scores to the teacher.
11. Pupils take responsibilities for organising the resources they need for the day and tidy away after themselves. They use their initiative, helping themselves to dictionaries or using information provided in displays, to help themselves in their work. Pupils given jobs, such as taking the register to the office or handing out hymn-books, carry out their duties willingly and sensibly. In some classes there are monitors or helpers appointed for the day and they wear their badges with pride. The oldest pupils take on responsibilities such as helping in the school office or helping younger pupils with their reading. Pupils are growing into confident, sensible citizens ready to play their part in the wider community.

12. Pupils attend school regularly and attendance levels are very close to the national average. There is little unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive in school in good time, keen to start the day's activities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school. The good standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. A significant proportion of the lessons observed during the current inspection were taught by supply teachers or teachers on short term contracts, as a number of the full time staff were absent due to illness. However these teachers were effectively supported by school systems and the overall quality of teaching and learning was maintained. During the current inspection virtually all of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, and in sixty four per cent of lessons it was good. Very good teaching occurred in sixteen per cent of lessons. Good teaching occurred in the foundation years and in each key stage.
14. The teaching of the children under five in the reception classes is good. It was always at least satisfactory in all of the lessons observed, and in sixty four per cent of them it was good. The teaching of all aspects of the curriculum for children under five is good and has a direct impact on the good progress the children make in their learning in all of the areas of learning for reception children. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, whilst in some areas and subjects it is good, since the learning in some key areas of the curriculum is satisfactory it is still only satisfactory overall. During the week of inspection virtually all of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory and sixty two per cent of them were at least good. On occasion they were very good. The lesson that resulted in poor teaching and learning, was not taken by a regular member of the school staff. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall. During the week of inspection all of the teaching was at least satisfactory, of that sixty six per cent was at least good. In nearly a quarter of lessons teaching was very good and resulted in pupils making very good progress in their learning. At Key Stage 3, all of the teaching was at least satisfactory and sixty per cent of it was at least good. Very good teaching was also observed in forty per cent of lessons for Year 7 pupils. From the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils about what they know, understand and can do, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is good overall.
15. The characteristics of the good and very good teaching throughout the school is good teaching of the basic skills, good planning, good use of ongoing assessment, good deployment of suitably skilled and qualified support staff and generally good use of homework. For example, in very good design and technology lesson for pupils in Year 3 on the use of air pressure to produce movement, the lesson was very well prepared and presented. The teacher's subject knowledge was very good and the activity was appropriate and interesting to the pupils and built very well on their previous learning. The teacher had planned effectively to ensure that the support teacher was efficiently deployed and knew what questions to ask to focus pupils' learning effectively. Time was used well and the teacher had tremendous energy and enthusiasm so that the lesson had good pace. There was a good match of the work to the differing levels of prior attainment of the pupils in the class. Those with special educational needs, for example, were effectively supported in their learning. As a result of this good teaching, pupils were very well behaved and enthusiastic. They showed good levels of co-operation and very good concentration. They made very good progress in their learning and their presentation of work and initiative were good. Relationships within the class were good and there was an appropriate emphasis on safety. In another very good English lesson for pupils in Year 1, the lesson was well planned to ensure effective learning by all pupils. The introduction was clear and appropriately brisk. The good specific questioning by the teacher gave all pupils the chance to be involved. They were very enthusiastic as a result and gave good examples of sentences that needed exclamation marks and question marks. The

teacher had good knowledge of teaching phonic skills and the pupils made good progress in learning about the way different letters can be combined to make similar sounds in words. Relationships in the class were good and pupils were confident to try hard as a result. The teacher's timely interactions with the pupils, to support them in their work, combined with well directed, high level of adult support within the class resulted in very good levels of progress being made by the pupils.

16. On the occasion when the teaching was poor, this was mainly due to the lesson being taken by a supply teacher who had little previous knowledge of the pupils, and to work being set which failed to engage their interest.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and contributes to the good progress these pupils make. Teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils with special educational needs within their classes and adapt their teaching methods according to individual needs. In addition these pupils receive extra individual or group support from a well-trained specialist teacher. This enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress towards their learning targets. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good and they make good progress in developing their language skills. Teachers' planning and provision enables generally good equality of access and opportunity for pupils from all groups. Lower and higher attaining pupils are suitably catered for in teachers' planning. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when inappropriate work was set for these pupils in some lessons, resulting in work being too hard for some and insufficiently challenging for others. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good throughout the school. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop enquiry skills in science and history. However while the teaching of information and communication technology is good in specially designated lessons, there is, as yet, too little regular opportunity for pupils to develop the use of these skills in other subject lessons. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching music.

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

18. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the foundation stage and for pupils at Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 are good. The curriculum for children under five covers all the areas of the early learning goals including the provision of outdoor play activities. The curriculum for the statutory years is satisfactory. Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection but the integration into other subjects is still not fully met. In music and geography the quality and range of the curriculum is variable and this is an area for improvement. Religious education is fully covered and good use is made of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The balance of the curriculum is generally satisfactory with improvements in the provision for investigative science, but there is a weakness in the effective use of time at Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 where the overlong lessons have a negative impact on pupils' learning. However in the remaining part of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 these longer lessons are appropriate and have a beneficial impact on learning. In particular the opportunity for pupils to carry out practical activities, carry out fair tests and arrive at corporate conclusions with their group and record their findings is good and has a positive impact on standards. Improvements were also noted in the provision for French. The inclusion of the pupils in Year 6 has a good impact on standards in Year 7.
19. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively introduced and the decision to implement ability sets has resulted in improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. Good use is made of teacher expertise where it occurs and this is to be seen in the teaching of science in Years 6 and 7, in design and technology and in information technology.

20. The school has a good curriculum map, which effectively links subjects across the curriculum though information and communication technology is still not fully integrated in all subjects. These effective links have a positive effect on pupils' academic learning and their social development. The impact of provision for the higher attaining pupils is satisfactory and there are strengths in the core subjects, through ability sets in literacy and numeracy, and the specialist teaching in science at the end of Key Stage 2.
21. The school has up to date policies and schemes of work to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The governors have approved all of these policies during the last six months. Schemes of work have been adapted from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority documents and these ensure the appropriate coverage of the programmes of study to meet the particular needs of the school. Time allocated to teaching is adequate. During the inspection appropriate examples were observed of the setting and use of homework in a range of subjects to support pupils' progress in learning.
22. Personal, social and health education receives very good emphasis within the whole school curriculum. The well-planned programme is taught through a discrete lesson each week but also receives constant attention during the normal routines of the school day. The programme is being developed continually to provide the best possible support and guidance to pupils as they mature and includes teaching for citizenship as required for Year 7. There are appropriate arrangements for sex education and teaching about drugs awareness. Individual lessons are planned and taught well.
23. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' learning and experiences. Lunchtime and after school activities include football, swimming, tennis, choir, band and cycle proficiency. All year groups enjoy educational visits linked to their classroom work; for example pupils visit Priest House when studying the Victorians or Brownsea Island when studying the Vikings. Older pupils enjoy residential visits to the Midlands and the Isle of Wight. Visitors such as the community police officer, local vicar or individuals with particular skills, such as a sculptress, come into school to talk with pupils or share their expertise. The wide variety of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal, social and cultural development.
24. Good links with the wider community have a positive impact on learning and increase pupils' understanding of the world beyond home and school. Pupils make visits into the community and study the local area. The church is used as a valuable learning resource. The choir and school band entertains within the community, particularly at Christmas time. The pupils' collection of harvest gifts is sent to a home for adults with learning difficulties. Members of the local community come into school either to help as volunteers in classrooms or to share their expertise. Useful business links have been made with a large supermarket and a garden centre providing not only first-hand experiences but also additional resources for the school. The community makes considerable use of the school's swimming pool.
25. There are established links with the local pyramid of schools providing opportunities for pupils to work with pupils from different schools, taking part in joint concerts or theatre visits. Exchange visits are organised helping pupils to feel confident as they move onto their secondary school. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school effectively complies with the Code of Practice.
26. The school makes good provision overall for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, and cultural development, through daily assemblies, areas of the curriculum and many other aspects of the school's work. The provision for their social development is very good. The thoughtful provision enriches the curriculum and has a very positive impact in raising pupils' self-esteem. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained the many strengths in its provision to promote pupils' social and moral development and it has significantly improved the provision made to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.

27. The school develops pupils' spiritual awareness and sensitivity well. Daily assemblies, including an appropriate act of collective worship, are very well planned and make a very good contribution by ensuring pupils listen to and reflect upon such topics as the wonders of modern communications, the natural world and the message of Easter. Good opportunities for guided prayer and reflection are provided and the pupils' response is thoughtful and reverent. Through the well considered religious education programme the school provides pupils with knowledge and insight into a range of values and beliefs. These studies are well supported by lessons in personal and social education where pupils are positively encouraged to reflect on their experiences, to consider ethical questions and to develop empathy towards others, including minority groups. Some opportunities to reflect and marvel are made in other subjects, such as when pupils in Year 3 showed a sense of awe and wonder when looking at the colour and texture of the feathers of a Jay.
28. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Principles promoting right from wrong are promoted clearly and consistently by all staff, who provide very good role models for the pupils. From an early age pupils are taught to think about the impact of their own and others' actions. For example, pupils discuss the behaviour of characters in stories. The school has a clear code of conduct and a well understood system of behaviour management. Staff promote 'fair play' and 'take a turn' consistently. Pupils are appropriately involved in setting class rules and they respond well to the school's positive approach. Pupils are encouraged to acknowledge the consequences of their actions and to resolve disputes fairly. The school's clear moral code provides a secure basis for the good behaviour evident throughout the school, both in the classroom and outside.
29. The quality of provision for pupils' social development is very good and a particular feature of the school. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and to take responsibility for their work. Older pupils regularly undertake a range of responsibilities around the school. Class and school responsibilities increase appropriately as pupils move through the school. Older pupils regularly offer to help their teachers in the classroom, for example. Throughout the school pupils willingly volunteer to undertake duties and in doing so they demonstrate a good level of commitment. Supporting charities through fundraising events and links with community groups effectively develops pupils' social awareness and their knowledge and understanding of the community. A good range of extra-curricular clubs, particularly in sport and music, together with residential visits offered to all pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, strongly influence the development of good social skills.
30. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to appreciate their own cultural traditions, especially through participating in a variety of activities with other schools, such as musical events, participating in the local carnival and visiting sites in connection with their historical and geographical studies. An appropriate range of opportunities is provided for pupils to develop an understanding of the diversity of cultures. Much of this is taught through studies of contrasting communities in geography, considering a range of literature in English, study of the work of a range of artists, appraisal of music from other cultures and the study of other religions in religious education lessons. Good efforts are made to build on the cultures within the school and local community. Visitors to the school, such as a theatre group, enable pupils to appreciate Indian music and drama and opportunities are also provided for pupils to experience multi-cultural cooking.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. Pupils receive very good support and guidance throughout their time at Talbot Combined School. The care and welfare of all pupils is of the utmost importance to the whole school community. Very good relationships permeate the whole school and this underpins the positive, caring ethos. Good provision was reported at the time of the last inspection; the school continues to improve and build on its success in this area and it is now very good.

32. Good attention is paid to matters of health and safety and supervision levels of pupils during lunchtime are high. The premises are checked regularly for potential hazards and safety. Members of the governing body have particular expertise in this area and make a considerable contribution in ensuring a safe environment. A full-time welfare assistant takes responsibility for the care of children who require medication or become sick whilst at school. First aid procedures are extremely well organised and incidences of any sort are recorded methodically. Pupils with specific medical needs are well known and training takes place regularly to ensure staff are confident to deal with medical emergencies.
33. Child protection procedures, which were part of the key issues at the time of the last inspection, are very good. A thorough policy is in place, which gives good guidance and information for staff in line with local procedures. The designated teacher has received training and procedures are in place to cover for absence. There is close liaison with the educational welfare officer and the school contacts outside agencies as necessary to support the needs of individual pupils.
34. The school recognises that levels of attendance are at a satisfactory level but they want to improve on this. A new policy has recently been agreed and is in the process of being implemented. This involves first-day follow-up of all absences. The school uses its computerised system effectively to monitor attendance and quickly identifies those individuals who give concern regarding irregular attendance or unexplained absence. Procedures are now very good and the school looks forward to improved figures in the future.
35. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are good. A consistent, positive approach is taken to discipline. Pupils have been involved in the writing of their own class rules and teachers make reference to these to serve as reminders of the expected behaviour. A variety of reward systems are used effectively and pupils enjoy working for stars, stickers or merits. A wider system operates across the whole school where pupils' efforts are recognised in assemblies through the award of certificates. Specific programmes are implemented to support any pupils who have particular difficulty in behaving consistently. Aggressive or oppressive behaviour is not tolerated and a new anti-bullying policy has been produced following a survey of all pupils in Year 3 to 7. If incidents do occur, they are dealt with promptly. All pupils are treated fairly in a way that supports their individual personal development.
36. Thorough and sensitive induction procedures ensure pupils make a confident start to school. Pupils are well known by teachers, and as a result of the setting arrangements, they have regular contact with more than just their class teacher, giving them a choice of adult to approach if they have any problems or concerns. Information about pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development is drawn together when teachers report to parents at the end of the school year. The well-structured personal, social and health education programme ensures pupils' receive good support and advice on how to keep safe and live healthy lives. Visitors also make their contribution, for example, a police officer and railway representative comes into school to talk about road and railway safety. Cycling proficiency training is provided for the oldest pupils.
37. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. All staff share a very practical understanding of the purposes and uses of assessment which is quite rightly seen as a major factor in the continuing efforts to raise pupil's standards. This philosophy provides a clear direction for the development of assessment within the school. As a result, the very good quality of the school's arrangements, identified in the previous inspection, is now firmly embedded as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. This enables teachers to track pupils' progress very accurately and set continually challenging targets for all pupils whatever their gender, background or prior attainment.
38. When children first enter the school they are carefully assessed and the information is used to match children of similar attainment levels in the Foundation Stage and to plan suitable teaching

programmes for this age. Work is assessed in relation to the Early Learning Goals. This information is also used very successfully as a first step in the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. Upon entry to statutory schooling in Year 1, this information is transferred to a 'Talbot Book' for each pupil. Regular assessment and monitoring of on-going work take place in year teams and regular tasks at the end of half-termly study units are assessed and annotated to identify strengths and areas for improvement. In addition to the statutory tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1, non-statutory assessments in English and mathematics are used in Years 3, 4 and 5. Year teams meet annually with the year group above and the year group below. Teachers find that this comprehensive range of procedures is manageable and produces information that is helpful to pupils' current and future teachers as they move from year to year. The same high standards are maintained in Year 7.

39. Through these procedures, which are consistently and conscientiously implemented in all classes, the school gathers a considerable amount of information about its pupils that builds into a detailed picture of their strengths and weaknesses. The careful recording of this information enables the school to monitor the performance of individuals and whole year groups and to track their progress carefully as they move through the school. As a result teachers are able to set challenging individual targets in literacy, numeracy and personal development, which provide a clear focus for pupils' work in school and at home. The head teacher and subject co-ordinators rigorously analyse the results of tests and assessments in order to identify and address any areas of weakness. For example, analysis of the results of past English tests identified weaknesses in independent writing in Year 1 and narrative writing in Year 6. This led to modifications to the curriculum in order to improve its quality and team meetings have identified improvements a year later. Shorter-term changes are agreed in year teams who make necessary adjustments as they are needed. Portfolios of pupils' completed work are kept in English, mathematics and science showing detailed analysis of work at all levels and all aspects of the subjects. These records provide very good support for the consistency and accuracy of marking and assessment throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Links with parents were judged to be good at the time of the previous inspection. The school continues to work in partnership with its parents, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents responding to the questionnaire express their satisfaction with the education their children receive and the way in which the school encourages their involvement in the life of the school. They find it easy to approach the school if they have concerns. They feel their children enjoy coming to school, that they achieve a good standard of work and that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on them.
41. New parents to the school are provided with good quality information and a home visit, which lays the foundation for a close partnership between school and parents. Frequent newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events and activities and the school has been conscientious in its efforts to keep them well informed about changes in staffing due to recent illnesses. The prospectus and governors' annual report, are both informative documents, although there are a few minor omissions of required information. The 'First Letter of the Year', provides clear and helpful information about the expectations for the year ahead and includes information about what topics and areas of study will be covered. This letter is followed-up with a year group meeting in the first weeks of the academic year to clarify this information and respond to parents' queries and questions.
42. Parents have an opportunity each term to meet formally with teachers and discuss their child's progress. Reports are satisfactory and parents are pleased with the information they receive. However, reports for reception children are written to National Curriculum headings, which does

not reflect the actual curriculum and experiences they receive. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend regular reviews of their child's progress.

43. Parents' involvement in the life of the school and their children's work at home has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Many parents support their children particularly well during the early stages of reading. Reading record books are used well to record children's progress which can be monitored by parents. Parents receive good information about homework which enables them to support their children with work at home. They willingly loan artefacts or resources they might have which relate to topics being studied. A good number of parent's help in classrooms and others respond to specific requests from teachers for help with special activities. Their help is appreciated and often enables more children to have adult support during group work or to be heard to read more often. There is currently no parents' association, but fund raising events organised by the school are supported well by both parents and the local community.
44. This area was reported on favourably at the time of the last inspection and remains a strong and important feature of the school's work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The leadership and management of the school are good. There is a shared commitment to improvement and capacity to continue that improvement is good. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively maintained. The school's aims are known to all, in each class and office, and are well reflected in its daily life. The school's values and policies are well integrated into planning and implementation. There is a commitment to equality of opportunity and good relationships throughout the school. The head teacher provides effective leadership. The acting head teacher, in his role as information and communication technology co-ordinator, provides a good role model for curriculum co-ordinators to develop their areas of responsibility. The head teacher monitors standards and progress in classes. Curriculum co-ordinators have a good level of subject expertise. Those with responsibility for core areas of the curriculum have opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects. However, as yet co-ordinators of non-core subjects have had little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects.
46. The governing body are suitably involved in the strategic planning and daily life of the school. Governors know the school well and have a very good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan is an effective document, which is suitably linked to financial planning. Its priorities are appropriately linked to the action plan following the previous report and are reviewed annually. Costing, responsible persons, timetable for action and evaluation of success of initiatives are in built and this has a positive impact on the quality of education that the pupils receive as a result.
47. The ethos of the school is good. It reflects the commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The monitoring of progress and documentation is good. The Code of Practice is fully followed and the school fully complies with statutory requirements in respect of pupils with statements of their needs. Statutory requirements are met, with the exception of some minor requirements of the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. The school's response to its previous inspection has resulted in a good level of improvement. The management systems now in place put the school in a good position to continue to improve.
48. The school has implemented the process of appraisal of teachers. Induction procedures for new staff are appropriate and there is a clear, well-written handbook to guide teachers, supply teachers and student teachers to ensure efficient and smooth running of the school day. The school places a strong emphasis on the continuing professional development of all staff. Teachers and support

staff have suitable opportunities to attend appropriate training courses and an effective programme of staff appraisal has been followed. Procedures for performance management are developing appropriately. Staff development strikes an effective balance between the needs of individual teachers and the needs of the school. There is a current focus on developing teacher expertise in information and communication technology. However there are areas of insecurity in teachers' expertise in some non core subjects, notably geography and music, which have not yet been addressed.

49. Despite much recent staff illness, the school has sufficient, suitably qualified teachers to meet the needs of the primary curriculum for children under five and at each key stage. There are a good number of support staff who are well trained and experienced. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, which noted that the numbers of support staff were low at that time. Levels of administrative and lunch-time support are good. All staff have clearly set out roles and responsibilities and as a result the school functions efficiently at all times of the day.
50. The accommodation is very good the main building is large and spacious, with specialist classrooms for design and technology, science and textiles, two computer suites, a music room, library, indoor heated swimming pool and ample storage areas. Many parts of the building are new, and the school has effectively addressed a key issue of the previous report, which noted that many pupils were taught in mobile classrooms, which were in a poor state of repair. All classrooms are maintained to a high standard and teachers succeed in creating an attractive and stimulating learning environment with good use of appropriate displays of pupils' work. The school is set in extensive and very attractive grounds, which provide an interesting and varied environment. The grounds greatly extend the learning opportunities available to pupils, particularly in science, physical education and geography. The large playing field includes a tennis court and changing rooms as well as the large environmental area. There is ample room for the youngest pupils to use large play equipment in the newly created play area for reception children. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection, which noted that access to outside play areas for children under five was restricted at that time. Resources in all subjects are good. Resources for special educational needs are good and include a wide range of appropriate support materials.
51. The school is efficiently run. The strengths highlighted by the previous inspection have been maintained and built upon. The school has started to analyse the results of tests and assessments to ensure that pupils of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make appropriate progress in their learning. Appropriate targets have been set for improvement in the national end of key stage tests.
52. The school's development planning is appropriately linked to the available budget. The school's arrangements for financial planning, control and administration are very good. The head teacher and governors make good use of the expertise of the Bursar and technological support systems to manage the resources effectively. The principles of best value are effectively applied. The recommendations of the latest auditors report have all been implemented. The school administration is very efficient and unobtrusive and contributes effectively to the quality of education provided. Good use is made of grants and other funds to improve the provision for pupils, including training for information and communication technology and support for pupils with special educational needs. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are well deployed and resources for these pupils are managed effectively. The school has a large carry forward which it plans to use part of to continue with the programme of refurbishment. Part is needed to protect against potential differences of uptake in Year 7. Good use is generally made of time during the school day, lessons and assemblies start and finish promptly. However the system of planning science lessons to last for the whole afternoon, sometimes results in diminished concentration for some of the pupils in Key Stage 1.
53. Overall in view of the standards of the pupils on entry and those achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and 3, their generally good progress throughout the school, their good behaviour and the school's provision within the budget available to it, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards the head teacher and governors should:-

- 1) improve teacher knowledge and confidence in teaching information and communication technology and music. (The school has identified the need for training for information and communication technology, and a programme has already begun.)
(Paragraph No's. 17. 113. 117).
- 2) develop the role of the subject co-ordinator in non-core subjects, so that they monitor standards, teaching and learning and ensure structures and schemes are in place to promote consistency of provision in all classes and year groups.
(Paragraph No's. 45. 111. 119. 126. 133).

The governors may also wish to address the following minor issues:-

- a) continue with plans to fully integrate the teaching of information and communication technology into each subject area at Key Stage 2, as planned already by the school, and
(Paragraph No's. 18. 100. 114. 119. 133)
- b) shorten teaching sessions for science at Key Stage 1, so that they are more appropriate to the attention span of younger pupils.
(Paragraph No's. 18. 52).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

108

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

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	48	35	0	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	609
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR– Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	124

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	43

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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
	2000	40	22	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	33	34
	Girls	19	21	19
	Total	51	54	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (85)	87 (93)	85 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	35	37
	Girls	21	20	21
	Total	54	55	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (87)	89 (96)	94 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	36	50	86

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	25	32
	Girls	43	41	46
	Total	66	66	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (82)	77 (76)	91 (82)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	27	29
	Girls	45	41	46
	Total	72	68	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (80)	79 (77)	87 (83)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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	1
Black – other	5
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	521
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	25.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	359

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	999,582
Total expenditure	975,741
Expenditure per pupil	1571
Balance brought forward from previous year	62662
Balance carried forward to next year	86503

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	609
Number of questionnaires returned	271

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	36	51	8	3	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	41	50	6	3	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	15	51	25	7	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	22	58	13	7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24	58	10	7	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36	59	7	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	28	45	20	6	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25	60	6	7	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	31	51	15	1	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	23	56	14	6	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	47	43	6	3	1

Please note figures may not always add up to 100 due to rounding up or down of percentages.
Due to a misunderstanding the questionnaire which was sent out was not the most recent format.

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. From the baseline assessment, which is moderated by the local education authority, and other documentation examined, children's attainment on entry is below the county average and national expectations. However, personal, social and emotional development are continuously well promoted in the reception classes and there are well-planned activities to develop literacy, mathematical skills and knowledge and understanding of the world so that currently children are working at the expected standard by the time they move into Year 1. Those children who find aspects of learning difficult are quickly identified and offered good support so that they make good progress.
55. Nearly all the children have had some pre-school experience in a local playgroup. There is a good induction programme, which offers parents the opportunity to meet the head teacher and the early years' co-ordinator to hear about the school's expectations. Visits are arranged for parents and children to visit the classroom in the term before the child starts school. There are three reception classes in the foundation stage. Two classes are taught by teachers who are recently qualified, but are keen and enthusiastic. During the inspection the other class was taught by a supply teacher who had only been with the children for two weeks.
56. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the way young children learn. They have established clear routines, which provide the children with a safe and secure learning environment. Planning ensures that all areas of learning are covered and they are well linked together to provide stimulating learning experiences. Teachers plan interesting activities together so that all children receive similar learning opportunities. Teaching assistants are well informed and are used very effectively. They have a significant impact on the good progress these young children make. Good relationships have been established; teachers and teaching assistants interact well with the children to create a good learning environment.
57. Most of the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of term. This represents good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development.

58. Personal, social and emotional development is promoted well through all areas of learning. Teachers have appropriately high expectations and children are taught to listen, not to call out, put hands up, share and take turns. They are provided with varied interesting activities, which motivate them to learn. They are confident in selecting their own materials, for example, when making a bed for a pet from junk materials. They clear away quickly at the end of sessions and return everything to its proper place. They sit quietly in 'Circle Time' and take it in turns to explain how to look after a pet. They have made satisfactory relationships and work well together in the role-play area, which during the inspection was a vet's surgery. Pupils understand what is right and what is wrong and teachers help children who find it difficult to conform sensitively, but firmly.

Communication, language and literacy

59. Children communicate well in small groups, for example, sorting objects that various pets need and describing how to care for different pets. They listen with enjoyment to stories and share books with adults. They are developing a good basic sight vocabulary and most children know their initial sounds. Many children are beginning to blend sounds together to make words like cat, dog, run. Many children can read a simple text accurately and with understanding. There is a structured approach to reading. Children read in small groups during the literacy hour as well as

individually to the teacher, teaching assistant and a parent helper. Children take reading books home every evening to share with parents and carers. They have individual words to learn. This support from home and the daily school input mean that children make good progress. Children are learning to form letters correctly, to make them a uniform size and to leave spaces between words. Most children can write their names. Many children can write a simple sentence with some support, for example, when they wrote a thank-you card to nanny for looking after a pet. When reading the story of Jack and the beanstalk, children correctly sequenced various parts of the story and wrote simple sentences such as 'Jack's mum was cross' to accompany a picture.

Mathematical development

60. A range of activities is provided to enable children to develop their mathematical skills. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the reception year. The majority of children can count confidently to ten, and many to twenty. They understand addition when it means adding two sets together. To illustrate this they put play-dough spots on a dog template and record the sum they have made, $7+2$ is 9; $10+4$ is 14. Attractive displays introduce the concept of subtraction, for example, five rabbits in the garden, two ran away, how many left? They can count forwards and backwards on a number line and identify a number that the teacher misses out. Through playing in the pet shop children learn to recognize the value of coins; they select the correct ones to buy the various animals. Children know the names of the most familiar shapes, square, rectangle, triangle and circle and can use these to copy and extend a repeating pattern.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. Throughout the year children have been provided with a good range of activities to extend their knowledge and understanding in this area. During the topic on families they looked at the changes that took place between babyhood and the present time. When reading stories about Postman Pat they looked at the village where he lived, where they live and drew simple maps of both locations. Last term children made a wormery and were fascinated to see how the earthworms moved the soil. They planted beans under various conditions and considered why some grew and some did not. Displays show that during the present topic on pets children are learning about the characteristics of living things, birds, bumble bee, fish, rabbit. Children have regular opportunities to use the computer in the classroom to support their learning, especially in literacy and mathematics, as well as a weekly lesson in the new ICT suite when they develop specific ICT skills.

Creative development

62. There are well-planned activities to enable children to make good progress in this area and most children will achieve the expected standard by the end of the reception year. They have good expertise in making clay models of animals, tortoise, snake, rabbit and dog. They are building well on earlier experiences of clay work when they make thumb pots. During this activity the children work with real enjoyment, sustained concentration, moulding and using tools competently to add features. They paint pictures of pets, mixing paints carefully to find the right shade. Good teaching enables children to explore how sounds can be made and changed, using hands to make sounds loud, soft, fast and slow. They recognize and copy a simple rhythmic pattern. They sing songs from memory, which they accompany with actions and percussion instruments. The children work well together with great enjoyment. Children co-operate well with role-play, taking it in turns to be the vet, the assistant and the owner of the sick animal. Children select their own materials when making a bed for a pet. They experiment with various joining techniques, masking tape, pins and different types of glue. They work well together, offering help and suggestions to each other.

Physical development

63. The school has this term built a large secure outside play area for children in the foundation stage. There are exciting plans for its development and it will then be an excellent resource for the youngest children. At present, all children in the reception year have regular opportunities to play outside with large wheeled toys, balls and hoops, as well as sand and water. The children also have a timetabled session in the hall to develop movement skills and throwing, catching and bouncing skills. During the lesson seen many children had great difficulty in controlling a ball, but generally children are likely to reach the expected standard in physical development by the end of the year. Teachers' planning indicates that all areas of physical development are covered. Children have many good opportunities to develop manipulative skills in the classroom through modelling, cutting and sticking and using a range of construction sets.

ENGLISH

64. Standards in English have improved slightly since the last report, although evidence shows considerable variation year on year. Standards seen in Year 2, and Year 6 during the inspection are higher than those in the 2000 national tests. However, last year's results indicate that the school is achieving results in line with the national average and when results are compared to similar schools on the basis of eligibility for free school meals, they are above.
65. When pupils enter the school at the age of 4 years old they lack confidence in speaking and their listening skills are poor. Reading skills and mathematical development are below those normally seen for children of this age. These limitations are addressed well in the reception year and children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
66. By the end of Year 2 most pupils listen attentively when the teacher is introducing a task or giving an explanation. They are keen to answer questions, share their learning, talk about their experiences or offer opinions. By the end of Year 6 pupils take part in discussions confidently, listen to one another and modify their contributions. A good example, of this was seen in a lesson when pupils were discussing personification in The Rain Poem. In Year 7 some pupils confidently give a short speech to persuade the rest of the class why they should not be thrown out of the hot air balloon! The good attitudes pupils have to the subject has a positive effect of their learning and the progress they make.
67. Reading standards are above average throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are reading at the expected level, with a large proportion reading at a higher level. Reading strategies are well taught during the literacy hour and pupils have frequent opportunities to practise the skills they have acquired as they read individually to teachers, teaching assistants and parent helpers. Most pupils read regularly at home – there is a strong partnership between home and school and this has a significant impact on progress. Both teachers and parents conscientiously complete the home and school reading diaries so that pupils' progress is closely monitored. Reading is well managed in Key Stage 2. Pupils have opportunities to read silently, individually to another adult and in small groups during guided reading sessions. They have some opportunities to use the school library, but this resource is not used as much as it should be. Pupils read a wide range of books, including stories from other cultures. By the end of Year 6 pupils read a range of text competently and these good reading standards have a significant impact of the standards achieved in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are able to read information they download from the Internet when they undertake research in science, history and geography. Year 7 pupils tackle advanced texts very well, for example reading The Merchant of Venice with expression and understanding.
68. Standards in writing are above average. The school identified writing as the weakest element in English and has made this area a special focus. Pupils are taught about sentence construction and punctuation and are presented with interesting writing tasks, to practise these skills, for example,

Year 1 pupils were asked to write three simple sentences about their grandma after reading the book 'Gran, Gran'. Year 2 pupils write stories, reports, letters and instructions that are well sequenced, use imaginative vocabulary and express ideas logically, for example, they wrote reports of the sea rescue as if they were Grace Darling. By the age of 11 most pupils are working at the expected level with many achieving the higher level. They write poems using metaphors and similes, stories and reports, which are clear and well structured and words are chosen carefully to create the desired effect. These good standards are maintained in Year 7 when pupils write about the characteristics of the Shakespearean character, Portia. Pupils write well in science, history and geography using the appropriate technical language.

69. Standards in handwriting are above average. Pupils are taught to join letters in Year 2 and have regular practise to develop this skill. By Year 6 most pupils have developed a legible style. Presentation, especially in Key Stage 2, is a significant strength of the school. Pupils' writing is well formed and neat in all their books. Handwriting is assessed each term and extra support provided for any pupils who are not achieving the expected standard.
70. Spelling is good throughout the school. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of phonics and by Year 2 most pupils can spell words that have a regular pattern. Spelling patterns continue to be taught in Key Stage 2 and pupils learn spellings that are tested weekly. In Years 6 and 7 pupils' spelling is generally accurate and written work contains few errors. Pupils are strongly encouraged to use dictionaries and thesaurus and to check their work.
71. Teaching is at least satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally very good. Teaching at the top of Key Stage 2, by the permanent teachers, is consistently at least good and often very good and pupils make good progress in years 5, 6 and 7. Teachers' very high expectations and very good relationships are the significant features of this good and very good teaching. Teachers across the school have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They are clear about what it is they want pupils to know and often share this information with the pupils. There are examples of very good marking in some classes, but it is consistently good in Years 5,6 and 7. Such marking tells pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to achieve a higher standard. Teaching assistants are used effectively throughout the school. They have considerable expertise, are well informed, support pupils' well, especially those of lower ability and those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. This good support makes a positive contribution to the good progress these groups make as a result. Most teachers manage pupils well and there is a calm purposeful atmosphere in classrooms so that all pupils can work effectively. Literacy skills are effectively developed across the curriculum.
72. Management of English is satisfactory. The literacy hour has been successfully implemented and the head teacher and the co-ordinator have monitored teaching and learning. The library is a satisfactory resource, but its potential for learning is not maximised.

MATHEMATICS

73. Standards of attainment are in line with the national average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 7 attain very good standards. Since the previous inspection in 1997 standards have declined at the end of Year 2 and improved by the end of Year 6, and also in Year 7. Pupils of differing abilities, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress across the school.
74. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for seven and eleven year olds in 2000 were below average for the number of pupils attaining level 2 and above at the end of Key stage 1 and average for the number attaining level 4 and above at the end of Key Stage 2. In comparison with similar schools results were average at age seven and above average at age eleven. Analysis of

the results for younger pupils shows few attained the higher levels and there was little difference in the performance of boys and girls. Although results were better in 1999, the trend in the school's results over time is below the national trend. The results for the older pupils show the performance of boys and girls to be in line with the national figures, however the trend in the school's results over time is above the national picture.

75. Pupils in Year 1 count up to 20 objects accurately and order numbers within 20. They are beginning to recognise number patterns and more able pupils understand the place value of 'ten' and that other numbers are 'units'. These pupils can recognise higher numbers on a 'hundred square' and are beginning to predict the number before and after. The majority are keen to participate in counting games, they count in 2s, 5s and 10s for example, and many can add and subtract numbers within 100. They are gaining confidence in using number bonds and patterns to find solutions. In practical activities, pupils sort and classify objects by given criteria, use appropriate language to describe two and three-dimensional shapes, and make simple measurements. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of addition and subtraction facts to 10 and make increasing use of mental strategies to find answers. Many confidently check their answers using a number line or square. Most have a secure knowledge of place value to 100, can order numbers within 100 and recognise number sequences and patterns with the aid of a number square. Pupils are becoming increasingly adept at doubling, halving, counting in 2's, 5's and 10's in ascending and descending order and predicting the next number in the sequence. Many show increasing confidence in explaining their method for adding or subtracting 9 from a two-digit number, by calculating ten more or less, and adjusting the answer by 1. Pupils have a good understanding of number patterns and use appropriate mathematical language. They have a good knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes, they can name common shapes and describe properties such as the number of sides, angles and vertices. They use measurement appropriately and are beginning to collect information and record their findings in tables and graphs.
76. By the end of Year 6, pupils can solve challenging computations using the four operations. Many work accurately with numbers greater than 1000, they develop a clear knowledge of fractions and successfully simplify them. Pupils understand the relationship between fractions and percentages and many are confident in calculating percentages. Most have a good understanding of decimal notation. Pupils gain a good knowledge of measurement, many can calculate perimeter and area accurately and the more able pupils have a particularly good knowledge of angles and lines of symmetry and can describe the properties of a range of shapes. They collect information and learn to draw a variety of graphs and can interpret graphical information. Pupils cover the full range of mathematical topics and the good emphasis on practical applications, especially in shape and measurement ensures they achieve well. Progress is maintained in Year 7. Several pupils are very capable. They solve complex mathematical problems, breaking them down into small steps independently and present information in a variety of ways. They calculate accurately to three decimal places, have a good knowledge of chords, segments and sectors and make good use of geometric notation.
77. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour is good. This is a direct reflection of skilled teaching. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities respond appropriately to well-organised lessons in the certain knowledge that their teachers value them and their efforts. In most lessons the pupils maintain concentration and work hard to complete their tasks. However, in those lessons where the level of expectation and rapport drops, or the pace and direction of learning slows, attention waivers and the quality of learning becomes uneven. The majority of older pupils show a good capacity to work independently, and clearly enjoy the challenge of the subject.
78. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is most consistent and effective with the older pupils where progress accelerates. In the lessons observed teaching ranged between satisfactory and very good. With pupils up to the age of seven, almost two thirds of the teaching was good and

one third was satisfactory. In one instance teaching was very good. In half the lessons observed with pupils in Years 3 to 6 teaching was very good and in one third it was good. In two lessons teaching was satisfactory. Overall, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the very good whole-school planning supports them well in the planning of lessons. This helps to ensure pupils acquire appropriate mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. The teaching of basic number skills is good. Numeracy is appropriately developed across the curriculum.

79. The rate of learning for pupils in Year 2 was good when strategies to calculate missing numbers, in addition and subtraction sums, were clearly explained and modelled. Pupils confidently used a 'number square' or 'number line' to help them find answers. The more able pupils used such aids to check their mental calculations. The tasks required pupils to work hard and they are becoming adept at explaining their methods. The pace of working slows where tasks require only a limited effort and teaching does not extend the use of appropriate mathematical language when investigating shapes, for example.
80. Most teachers use a good range of methods to promote learning and manage learning well. This promotes good levels of interest and concentration, which are maintained well. This was clearly demonstrated in a lesson where able pupils in Year 3 demonstrated good recall of the 2, 5 and 10 times tables and associated number facts and then worked with a high level of involvement when investigating the properties of two dimensional shapes. In such lessons pupils have a good understanding of the task and show a good level of independence. This results from the effective use of assessment to match the task to the pupils' capabilities and good use of resources. However, where lesson organisation is less precise and the challenge of work is not maintained the quality of learning is reduced.
81. Several particular strengths distinguish the good and very good teaching, especially with pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7. These teachers have good levels of subject expertise and interest that generates high expectations and clear direction for learning. This also enables them to assess and adjust the course of learning for pupils of different attainments and needs within ability sets. Their questioning techniques are skilful and rigorous, and they use them effectively to engage all pupils in thinking about mathematical problems, such as how to draw a triangle with an area of eight square centimeters.
82. The quality of the curriculum is very good and a strength of the school. There is a well-considered whole-school plan for the subject that has been effectively updated to further strengthen the teaching of numeracy. This provides effective guidance for teachers and ensures appropriate breadth and balance across all aspects of the subject. The good range of learning activities is relevant to pupils' learning needs and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Curricular provision enables all pupils to be fully involved in all lessons and all groups of pupils have equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum provided. The school successfully ensures all groups of pupils participate fully in the learning programme. Boys and girls often work together and the learning needs of pupils of differing abilities, including those with special educational needs, are well considered. The organisation of pupils into ability sets is having a very positive impact on standards as learning is closely matched to pupils' needs and this enables them to achieve well. There are very good arrangements to monitor pupils' progress in mathematics. Teachers regularly assess pupils' achievement against clearly defined learning objectives. There are examples of particularly good practice in the older classes where day-to-day assessments are used well to promote progress in lessons and to adapt planning to ensure the next stage of learning is both relevant and challenging. The school makes effective use of the performance data provided by a well-planned programme of tests, to group pupils, set targets and to ensure the planned curriculum is sufficiently challenging.
83. The very good quality of leadership and management provided for the subject has been maintained since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is particularly effective in ensuring a clear educational direction for the subject. This is clearly reflected in the very good quality of planning

for the subject. This provides particularly well for continuity of lessons and progression in pupils' learning and ensures the staff is effectively supported in weekly planning. The co-ordinator regularly audits the subject and has established clear priorities for development. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. The subject is well resourced and suitable use is made of information and communications technology to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

84. By the end of Year 2, standards in science are broadly in line with those expected of pupils of seven, but at the end of Year 6 and when the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7 standards are a little above average. These findings are in line with the end of key stage teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, which judged pupils to attain average standards, and also in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils' results were average compared to standards nationally and above average when compared to results in similar schools. This represents a slight improvement since the last inspection in 1997 when the standards of pupils leaving the school were judged to be average. The overall trend over time is slightly above the national trend. Pupils from different groups including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall in their learning and at the end of Year 2, there are some good features, particularly when studying life processes and making good use of the school's extensive environmental area. At the end of Years 6 and 7, learning is always at least good and sometimes very good. This is mainly due to the good subject knowledge and expertise of the teachers, who make lessons interesting and challenging. There has been an improvement in the confidence and quality of teaching overall, which has resulted in a greater focus upon experimental and investigative work in lessons. However, in other parts of the school teachers' knowledge is not always secure, and this has a negative impact on the progress of the higher attaining pupils whose work is not always challenging enough to extend their learning further.
85. Inspection evidence shows pupils are familiar with the principle of fair testing when applied to their investigations in both physical and life processes and in their study of materials. It was only possible to observe the teaching of life processes and as a result of good and very good teaching most pupils understood the need to make predictions and use appropriate scientific language to record their observations. The more able pupils extend their learning by subdividing their original classification of animals and plants into animals that fly, and plants that attract insects such as bees. From the scrutiny of work there was substantial evidence to show that pupils have a sound understanding of physical processes, make predictions and carry out experiments to show that different shapes and surfaces generate different amounts of friction. In recording the results of their experiments on materials pupils hypothesise on whether materials, which are dissolved, can be changed back or not.
86. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of either Year 6 or Year 7, standards are a little above average particularly amongst pupils in the last three years of the key stage. Pupils make good progress and this is particularly noticeable in the quality of their recorded work, which shows a good level of maturity and a pride not often seen. In Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of the parts of the plant and their function. They carry out a fair test to determine whether plants grow without leaves. In Year 4 pupils learn how to use a force meter to measure Newtons. Pupils make sensible predictions to determine the force necessary to move objects of differing weights. In Year 5 and 6, pupils experiment on materials. In year five they learnt that some materials cannot be changed back and in Year 6 progress on to learn that a chemical change is required for a material to be irreversibly changed. In Year 7 pupils learn that a gas is produced and heat is often generated when a new compound is formed. The development of an appropriate scientific language is part of their learning. They know that saturated solutions leave sediment and that evaporation and condensation are closely linked when materials are heated.

87. The teaching observed was always at least satisfactory and often good. On occasion it was very good. Teachers are now providing good opportunities for pupils in investigative science and this is having a good impact on standards and pupil's learning. As a result pupils enjoy lessons and behave well, concentrating on their work appropriately and asking and answering questions sensibly. Literacy, and numeracy skills are appropriately developed. Teachers' make good use of the very good resources available, particularly the school grounds and the excellent environmental area. The pupils are currently developing a pond using resources they won through speaking on environmental issues. The purpose built science laboratory also has a good impact on learning though the restricted amount of space is a handicap for a normal sized primary class and is only to be seen at its best with the 21 pupils in the Year 7 class. The scrutiny of work revealed that much of the work contributed by pupils under the age of seven was of an appropriate standard and well presented. At Key Stage 2 and Year 7, the content and presentation of work was always at least of a good standard, and often very good. There is a drive for high standards particularly at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, but the practice of copying substantial sections of text from the board whilst enhancing the presentation is of limited importance in helping pupils to learn effectively. Pupils are managed well and they respond enthusiastically to most teachers. There are very good systems for assessing pupil performance and the profiles of work are annotated and kept up to date. This is complemented by good testing procedures for all year groups and includes an appropriate test set by one of the main contributing secondary schools. There is a weakness in the subject knowledge of some teachers particularly in some programmes of study related to the physical processes. The good planning procedures for medium and short-term plans overcome this weakness to some extent and teachers share ideas and lesson plans appropriately in parallel classes. Support staff are used effectively and pupils with special educational needs receive individual help where necessary. The use of information and communication technology is inconsistent and although there are good examples of its inclusion much more could be done to make it effective. Marking is good and there are many useful words of encouragement written by the teachers to help pupils improve.
88. The co-ordinator is newly appointed for the summer term owing to the long-term illness of the permanent post holder. As a science graduate she is ideally placed to support colleagues and monitor the subject. The co-ordinator is also a budget holder and requests for specific items are usually met. She is currently undertaking a revision of the health and safety arrangements and will then carry out a risk assessment. Both of these procedures are necessary. Resources of materials and books are adequate but books for the new curriculum 2000 are limited. Resources specifically for pupils in Year 7 have been ordered. Monitoring of teaching has not been carried out this year due to the absence of the post holder and this is an area of weakness. Also the effective use of time is an issue up to Year 3 and this will require timetabling amendments.

ART AND DESIGN

89. By the end of Key Stage 1 almost all pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning in the full range of the subject and attain standards that are at expected levels. Pupils develop their early skills effectively in a good range of media and experiences. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement is good, building well on their earlier skills and most pupils attain standards that are above expected levels. By the end of Year 7, when pupils leave the school, achievement is satisfactory and standards are at expected levels. These judgements are similar to those made at each key stage in the previous inspection. Teaching staff place a strong emphasis upon artwork and its value in supporting learning across the curriculum. This approach supported by good teaching in Key Stage, 2 is successful in motivating and inspiring pupils, whatever their gender, background or prior attainment, to express themselves well in different media and subject links.
90. Pupils in Year 1 experiment with the different properties of pencils, pens and crayons, when drawing and colouring dolls from other countries, in their topic of 'Where In The World?' Using good resources provided by teachers, pupils successfully developed their observational skills,

representing the differences between French, Brazilian and Mexican dolls and their own. Year 2 pupils' artwork also supports their work in literacy. Having written about a special 'Secret Place', real or imaginary, they created pictures of these places. Some were real, such as on a beach or in a forest, others were imaginary such as a Magic World. Pupils also work successfully with a range of other materials and textures to communicate imaginatively what they see, feel and think. By the age of seven, all pupils enjoy the subject and benefit from the planned sequence of experiences supported by teachers who celebrate their work in colourful displays.

91. At Key Stage 2 pupils develop good skills in using different materials. For example, Year 3 pupils experiment with paint to create colour tones and colour blends and make good use of line and shading in pencil sketches to add depth and shape. Year 4 pupils make very good use of their artistic skills to support their history work about World War 2 to design eye-catching posters such as 'Dig For Victory' and 'Careless Talk Costs Lives'. Older pupils extend their knowledge of art and design in links with a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, computer work, geography and religious education. They develop and evaluate their own work, learn to value different ideas and appreciate the efforts of others. Year 5 pupils learnt about the life and works of famous artists and recently designed good quality patterns of colour in the style of Pablo Picasso. Year 6 pupils develop good skills in batik, fabric printing and tie-dyeing and in their studies of India and in their French work, learn about other cultures. All pupils show great enthusiasm for the subject and teachers are highly successful in encouraging older pupils to achieve well and attain standards which are above expected levels. Year 7 pupils attain expected levels despite being without their class teacher for some time.
92. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and in Year 7 is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good. The school has a well-structured approach to developing and assessing pupils' skills and high expectations of all pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to plan, think and feel in relation to this subject and pupils respond extremely well as a result. In Key Stage 2 in particular, good planning is evident and a good range of resources is made available. Teachers allow time for pupils to develop a piece of work and this contributes to the good standards achieved. The co-ordinator provides good leadership in the subject and monitors standards of pupils' work regularly.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Attainment at the end of both key stages and at Year 7 is above that normally found, particularly in the stages of designing and making. Pupils from all groups and of all levels of prior attainment achieve well. This is an improvement on the last inspection when attainments at Key Stage 1 were judged to be in line with national expectations. There was limited evidence of the evaluation stage during the lesson observations as most activities involved designing and making stages. However around the school there were many good examples of models either completed or in the construction stage. The range of work on display also indicated clearly that the progression in pupils' learning is good. This progress in learning spans both key stages and Year 7.
94. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are actively involved in designing their favourite play equipment using the real life models in the playground to work from. The discussion stage was observed and showed pupils' enthusiasm for design. The drawings of the models were good. Pupils with special educational needs were supported appropriately by classroom assistants and produced worthwhile pictures, which were added to the class pictogram. Other classes produced a range of models including designing and making a glove puppet, a wheeled vehicle and a wind up mechanism to raise and lower a model. By careful planning it was possible for pupils to make all three. Food technology formed an important part of the curriculum and there was a strong emphasis on healthy eating when completing their designs, including designing and making a healthy sandwich and different kinds of salads. Pupils also made appropriate use of a computer program to construct plans of playground equipment.

95. At the end of Years 6 and 7 pupils have a good understanding of the stages necessary to produce a workable model. They have learnt correctly how to incorporate the evaluation stage and improve their models. In Year 3 they learn about air pressure and pneumatics to create movement and make model monsters to a good standard, which move in different directions in response to air pressure. In Year 4 pupils learn appropriately to disassemble torches and evaluate the different materials and their purposes. The pupils, working in pairs, then designed their own light. This met with mixed success depending upon which pairs worked together. In Year 5 pupils discussed the principles of a cam shaft and discussed how to make a model to demonstrate its uses. The discussion stage was well controlled and pupils showed a good understanding but found the design stage difficult because of their limited fine motor skills and sense of scale. However their ideas were good and the movements ranged from a ship at sea to riding a horse. Food technology formed an essential part of the curriculum and one of the very best efforts from Year 7 was the design and make of a lunch box and a range of appropriate food to go in it. This was a comprehensive study and involved testing a range of materials, for strength and insulation, choosing a suitable design to enclose the food and a suitable shape.
96. The pupils enjoy technology and respond well to the challenge of making their design; they choose materials sensibly and use the tools correctly. In most cases they shared their equipment and materials and worked well together. Concentration was best when they were constructing their design and worst when they were drawing their plans. The majority of pupils did not enjoy evaluating and improving their models and preferred to move on to the next task. Behaviour was never less than satisfactory and often good. Pupils show pride in their work in particular in the lessons where the teachers demand high standards.
97. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and occasionally very good. Lessons are well planned and the teachers show satisfactory subject knowledge in the lessons seen. One very good lesson was observed in which the teacher was seen to have a particular skill for teaching design and technology. Teachers provided a good balance between direct teaching and interaction with the groups. Classroom assistants and special needs support staff are deployed effectively. In the best lessons teachers make good use of praise and demonstrate examples of good work by the pupils. There is some effective use of information technology for instance a “bird’s eye view” of a room plan and one good example of links with history showing how technology has changed since the 1930’s.
98. The co-ordinators are very enthusiastic and have a very good influence on the standards achieved through the support and advice they provide. The planning and organisation of the subject is good and the material resources and tools excellent. There are purpose built rooms for food technology and design and technology and these are good and contain all the resources necessary, however the design room has limitations due to its shape and size which limits effective use to half a normal primary class. There is an up to date policy and scheme of work, which has been adapted to meet the school’s requirements.

GEOGRAPHY

99. Pupils’ attainments by the age of seven are in line with those expected. At eleven standards are marginally below expectations but by the end of Year 7 they have improved and are in line with those expected of pupils of twelve. This fluctuation is the result of a number of factors, some of which were noted in the earlier report. For example, at Key Stage 2, the geography curriculum is not yet fully developed; proportionately more time has been spent on the study of history and the teaching of specifically geographical skills have lacked consistency from year to year. Nevertheless, some aspects of the curriculum, such as the environment, have been covered well. Additionally, in Year 7, where over an hour a week is given to the study of geography, progress, particularly in physical geography, is good.

100. Pupils get off to a satisfactory start at Key Stage 1 where they learn about location and direction through mapping the area from home to school. Visits to places such as Hengistbury Head give them experience of elementary fieldwork skills when they note details of cliffs and rocks. Later, at Key Stage 2, although some pupils tabulate the litter and rubbish produced by the school, by the age of eleven most have limited experience of recording weather patterns, temperature and aspects of the local area such as shops and traffic. In this respect, the subject does not take sufficient advantage of opportunities offered by information and communication technology and, in particular, the inter-net.
101. The school works hard to provide valuable residential visits for Key Stage 2 pupils in the Midlands and the Isle of Wight and some interesting geographical work is done. However, a current curricular weakness is the absence of a detailed comparative study of Wallisdown with places both in the United Kingdom and abroad. Occasionally, pupils compare Bournemouth's temperature with that of Florida or the United Kingdom's rainfall with India's but the opportunity to develop geographical skills and knowledge through systematic comparisons is lost. This absence both of first hand inquiry and related shortcomings in the progression of geographical skills was noted in the earlier report and improvement has therefore been unsatisfactory.
102. By the end of Year 7, pupils have a clear grasp of physical geography and good work was seen on weathering, plate tectonics, earthquakes and flooding. This reflects a clear syllabus with defined geographical objectives in contrast, for example, to the less structured arrangement in Year 5 where geography is incorporated within a history project on the Second World War.
103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Two lessons for pupils in Key Stage 1 were good because they used imaginative methods to enhance the quality of learning, pupils identified large photographs of the local area as a prelude to producing their own maps of their routes to and from school. Lessons in Key Stage 2 were satisfactory: a good feature was the relationships with the pupils; however, the bulk of both lessons consisted of colouring in either major countries or mountain ranges with the result that higher attaining pupils, in particular, were not challenged.
104. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy development; pupils are encouraged to write in a variety of styles, as when writing a letter home with their impressions of Calcutta. There is limited evidence of numeracy development and data handling but pupils do produce tables of results. Geography makes a good contribution to cultural development as a result of the emphasis on identifying places around the world and presenting relevant details. For example, there are lively displays of dolls from around the world and postcards from exotic places all identified clearly on large, colourful world maps.
105. The recently appointed co-ordinator is aware of the need to continue to develop the curriculum and to provide more detailed assessment procedures so that staff can check pupils' progress and plan their lessons. Provided this is managed effectively, the school should be in a position to improve both standards and curriculum in geography.

HISTORY

106. Pupils' attainment in history is in line with standards expected of pupils at seven eleven and twelve in all key stages. The school has maintained standards since the previous inspection.
107. Sound progress has been made in relation to the key issue of improving historical inquiry, raised during the last inspection. This is now an embedded aspect of children's work across the school. Pupils know that there is a range of ways to find out about the past and have good opportunities to use information sources. Year 2 pupils, for instance, talked about what they could learn from a portrait of Charles II, while Year 5 pupils showed keen interest in using reference books to find out about music, fashion and transport in Britain since 1930. However, pupils, particularly at Key

Stage 2, do not always have sufficient opportunities to learn how to select information and ask, as well as answer, questions about the past.

108. Overall, pupils of all groups and of all levels of prior attainment make satisfactory progress in historical understanding. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to retell the main events in stories of famous people from the past, such as Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling. Pupils' sense of chronology is developing well as teachers make effective use of timelines, stories and visual sources. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' historical understanding has developed so that they appreciate that there were difference experiences within a time period, such as in the lives of rich and poor in Victorian society. Generally, pupils are able to present and communicate their history work in an organised, neat and varied manner, reflecting positive attitudes towards the subject. Written work is marked regularly, although the good practice seen in one Year 6 class of using clear, history-based criteria, by which pupils know what to do next in order to improve their historical knowledge and understanding, is not widely followed in the school.
109. The quality of history teaching is satisfactory with some good examples, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. Although no teaching of history was observed in Year 7, evidence from discussions with selected pupils, a study of displays and pupils' work, indicated that teaching was satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Across the school, teachers take suitable opportunities to develop pupils' language, for example through the introduction of historical vocabulary and the writing of newspaper headlines to describe past events. In planning lessons, the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs are appropriately taken into account. This has a positive impact on the progress these pupils make. Work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment and understanding and all pupils are made to feel part of the class study. For example, Year 6 pupils researching life in ancient Greece were all provided with suitable tasks and reference material according to their reading ability. Such provision meant that children supported each other and relationships were good. More able pupils have good factual recall of historical information, can evaluate historical sources, such as portraits, and have a clear understanding of when peoples lived in British history.
110. The provision of resources in history has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils have opportunities to handle artefacts, consult a range of reference books, use the inter-net and CD-Rom facilities, watch appropriate video material, and study photographs. Stimulating history-based wall displays featured around the school helping to promote pupils' understanding of different cultures, such as the Aztecs, and revealing strong levels of parental support, as illustrated by the lending of valuable artefacts such as war medals and personal photographs. Pupils gain valuable experiences through historical visits across the key stages. In particular, Scalpen's Court is visited by a number of classes studying the Tudors, Victorians, and life as an evacuee in World War Two. There is an increasing need, mentioned in the previous report, to formally catalogue resources.
111. The recently-appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic about raising standards in history, but as yet the role has not been fully developed. The monitoring of pupils' work across the school to ensure progression in learning is recognised as an action point. There is also a need to review existing planning and practice to ensure that longstanding and recent curriculum requirements for overview and study in depth are fully covered. For example, while the school makes good use of nearby museums, the local history unit for Key Stage 2 is not systematically planned.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected of pupils of seven, eleven and twelve at the end of both key stages and in Year 7. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, which judged standards to be close to those expected at the end of Key Stage 1, but below at the end of Key Stage 2. No judgement was made in

respect of Year 3, due to insufficient evidence. A key issue of that report was to improve standards by ensuring that the National Curriculum was fully met, by improving resources for the subject and by ensuring programmes of study in other subjects, which needed the use of computers, was fully covered.

113. Since that time the school has worked hard to improve the curriculum offered. There has been considerable investment in providing two computer suites, as well as installing them in classrooms. New software has been bought to provide support for learning in other subjects and the school is connected to the inter-net. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has audited resources throughout the school, including noting teachers' general lack of expertise and confidence in the subject. The audit highlighted the fact that whilst some teachers have good levels of expertise, a significant proportion of them lack confidence with the equipment and software. As a result, a thorough training programme has been planned and started for all staff.
114. Currently all classes have lessons in the computer suites and are taught, in rotation, by those teachers who have appropriate skills and understanding of the subject. The quality of teaching in these lessons is good overall at both key stages and for Year 7. As a result pupils of all levels of prior attainment and from different groups, including those for whom English is an additional language, higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, all make good progress in learning to use the computers and the various software programs. Lessons are appropriately linked to the other subjects of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 3 learnt how to construct bar charts to illustrate the differences between birds in a lesson linked to mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 5 design "healthy diet" posters in work linked to design and technology and design and print patterns in work linked to art, whilst those in Year 6 use computers to support their work in literacy, when writing poetry. However as yet, insufficient regular use is made of computers in some classes to support work in other subjects of the curriculum. The co-ordinator is aware of this and the school has identified the need to continue with staff training and developing planning further in order to resolve the situation.
115. Pupils are keen to use the computers and treat the equipment with respect as they confidently log on to the program they require. This was demonstrated by the high levels of attendance at the voluntary computer club, held during the lunch break, for pupils in Year 6 and 7. Pupils in the club use the computers confidently for a range of activities, including researching work for lessons, trying out new programs, practicing skills and using the inter-net. Pupils throughout the school have a positive approach to the subject. They listen attentively to their teachers in lessons and follow instructions carefully, maintaining good levels of concentration. They are well behaved and support each other when learning new skills. Their good behaviour ensures that they remain on task, even when there is disruption caused by large numbers of pupils passing through the suite, as happens on occasion when lessons for Key Stage 1 pupils overlap playtime for Key Stage 2, and large numbers of the oldest pupils pass through on their way to the playground or toilets.

MUSIC

116. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged to be in line with the nationally expected standard at the end of both key stages. There was not sufficient evidence at that time to judge standards at the end of Year 7. Currently standards in music are in line with those expected of pupils of seven, eleven and twelve at the end of both key stages and at Year 7. The progress that pupils make in their learning is satisfactory overall throughout the school, although there is variation between classes in some year groups. While pupils in some classes make good progress, overall progress in others is unsatisfactory, due to limited opportunities to experience the full range of the subject on a sufficiently regular basis.
117. The variation in the progress pupils make in their learning is a result of the differences in teachers' confidence, which varies between classes. While some teachers are very confident in their

knowledge of the subject, others are not. In addition the arrangements to teach music vary between year groups. In Year 5, for example, all of the teaching of music is undertaken by the music co-ordinator on a rota basis. This ensures that pupils in all classes in that year have the same good opportunities to learn all of the required aspects of the subject. As a result pupils in each of these three classes make good progress, although there is notable difference in their prior attainments. This arrangement does not happen in all years, and whilst teaching is satisfactory overall and teachers throughout the school base their planning on government guidelines, there is not one whole school scheme to guide teaching. A variety of different schemes are used as a basis for lessons, resulting different emphasis to the different aspects of the subject in different classes. Some of these schemes do not sufficiently support the teaching of the new National Curriculum for teachers whose subject knowledge is insecure. As a result, pupils in different classes within some year groups have differing experiences and opportunities for learning in the subject and by the older classes at Key Stage 2, they vary considerably in their knowledge and skills. This is exemplified by the differences in pupils in the three Year 5 classes have in their ability to compose simple tunes or play instruments, for example. Whilst pupils in one class are confident in their ability to work together to compose and perform a short piece of music to illustrate a poem about space, pupils in the other two classes approach the task with diffidence. The progress made by different groups within each class in the school, such as higher attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is similar to that made by the majority in that class.

118. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons and have good attitudes towards the subject. They are well behaved and attentive when teachers are giving instructions. They join in with the singing of songs and rhymes and ask and answer questions sensibly during discussion and plenary sessions. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Pupils have suitable opportunities to work together and to take turns and share equipment. There are appropriate opportunities to learn about music in a range of different styles from different cultures. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, and those whose parents wish it can learn to play any one of a range of brass instruments. A number of boys and girls do learn to play these instruments and the school has a band, which meets regularly and performs at school and local functions. Pupils also sing at Christmas for patients in local hospitals. There are suitable links to literacy and pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to write about composers and the parts of the orchestra. However, on too many occasions all pupils in Year 6 and 7 copy the same writing from the board or work sheet, and so the opportunities to use this to develop their literacy skills is limited.
119. The school is aware of the need to provide pupils with opportunities to use information and communication technology to enhance their learning in music. A range of new programs has recently been purchased, but as yet they are not regularly incorporated in teachers' planning for lessons. The co-ordinator is aware that there is a need to review the subject to provide more structure for lessons. She currently monitors planning, but does not have opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Standards in the subject are average overall. During the inspection lessons were only seen in gymnastics; however, evidence was also gained from a study of planning, records of pupils achievements and discussions with staff and pupils. Attainment at the end of both Year 6 and Year 7 is average overall in games, above average in swimming and below average in gymnastics.
121. The school has its own swimming pool and pupils have good opportunities to develop their swimming skills. As a result of an appropriate, well-balanced time allocation and the additional expertise of a swimming instructor and the co-ordinator, the quality of learning is good and subsequent achievement is above average. Most pupils have a sound understanding of water safety and almost all can swim the required 25 metres by the age of eleven. Standards are also effectively enhanced through preparation for galas and other events.
122. Standards in games, particularly football, rugby and netball, are satisfactory as a result of regular sessions for most pupils on well appointed playgrounds and a good school field. There is a good take-up of extra-curricular games and the school competes in local competitions successfully, including the town athletics Sports Day.
123. In lessons seen during the inspection, standards in gymnastics are below those expected. In some lessons, pupils follow a commercial tape recording with the teacher overseeing things. In others there was too little development of skills over time. Although there is a policy and a recently developed scheme of work, pupils in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 were given as their main activity the throwing and catching of bean bags. Little improvement in skills was seen from reception to Year 2. As a result, the rate of progress, particularly with apparatus work, is unsatisfactory.
124. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers generally start lessons on time, have good relationships and manage pupils well. However, the most significant weakness in lessons that were judged to be satisfactory overall was a lack of teacher expertise and confidence in gymnastics. Consequently, pupils' progress in the necessary skills is restricted. This was emphasised by the very good Year 5 lesson taken by the co-ordinator who is a subject specialist. He occupied two classes simultaneously in a range of indoor activities, including sprinting and star jumps. The lesson was conducted briskly: all pupils were regularly challenged by a range of activities such as mini-relays and other activities that fully involved all pupils and they were always encouraged to use space and direction sensibly.
125. The subject co-ordinator is planning to develop the use of the digital camera more widely in lessons to sharpen pupils' ICT awareness and evaluation skills; however, the subjects contribution to numeracy development: for example, by taking turns and counting scores is limited. Physical education makes a good contribution to moral and social development, particularly in games, where team spirit and a respect for fair play are inculcated.
126. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. This is largely due to the vigorous efforts of the co-ordinator. He is well aware of the need for more training and support for some staff but opportunities are limited because of both a lack of non-contact time and the fact that the subject is not a priority in the schools' strategic plan. Currently, there is no system for assessing and recording the progress of pupils and this has an adverse effect on the quality learning. Nevertheless, given the desire for improvement and the facilities available, prospects are satisfactory provided that the scheme of work and in-service training are developed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. By the age of seven and eleven pupils attain standards in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus for this age range. In Year 7, pupils' attainment is above expected standards. Pupils of different abilities, including those with special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress across the school. Pupils achieve well in the older age groups. Standards were found to be above expectations by the age of seven in 1997 but a new agreed syllabus and scheme of work has been introduced since that inspection. Standards have been maintained in other age groups. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' awareness of Britain as a pluralist society.
128. By the end of Year 2, pupils gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They also have a developing knowledge of other faiths, including Judaism. The younger pupils know the Easter story and have recorded the main events in a sequence of pictures. They know that a church is a special place and that Easter is a Christian festival. They are beginning to identify religious symbols such as the cross. The older pupils have a developing knowledge of festivals and celebrations related to their own experience. They have studied the features of a local church and know that Jews worship in a synagogue. When discussing stories about religious leaders such as, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, the pupils begin to appreciate the depth of trust they showed in God.
129. By the end of Year 6, pupils become more aware of symbolism in religions and gain a deeper understanding of the importance of religion in a range of cultures. They know the Bible, Torah and Qur'an are important religious scriptures. In Years 3 and 4 pupils know that parables hold messages, which help us to reflect on how we live our lives and relate to other people. They study the birth of Jesus and some of his later teachings, and have a good knowledge of the features of a range of Christian churches and styles of worship. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are aware of the important part which religion has played in the lives of many people and of the commitment some people make to particular faiths. They are beginning to understand that ethical and moral questions rarely have clear-cut answers and compare the reactions of the travellers in the story of the Good Samaritan, for example. The pupils become increasingly aware that everyone needs support during critical times in their lives and that many people turn to their own God for this.
130. In Year 7 pupils further their consideration of ethical questions and how we should behave. They have a good knowledge of religious figures including, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Ghandi and Martin Luther King and learn the details of customs and traditions associated with religious festivals such as Hannukah and Pesach.
131. The overall quality of teaching is good. In the two lessons observed with pupils up to the age of seven, teaching was good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in lessons with the older pupils and in one instance it was very good. The most effective teaching is characterised by high expectations, good planning, confidence in the subject and a lively interactive approach that promotes pupils' interest and builds well on their previous knowledge. This was particularly evident in a lesson with pupils in Year 5 when they were encouraged to consider different types of questions. Very good relationships and positive attitudes to the subject enabled pupils to contribute to the lesson purposefully and to learn from listening to the views of others. The skilled use of open questions challenged pupils to think deeply and to begin to form their own views. Less effective lessons reflected a lack of detailed planning, weaknesses in the management of learning and shortcomings in the teacher's knowledge of the subject. For example, whilst pupils listened to the story of Joan of Arc, the subsequent teaching lacked focus and pupils were not sufficiently involved in the lesson. This led to an increasing number of pupils becoming unsettled.
132. The curriculum is good overall. The scheme of work provides a well-considered programme of topics, which ensure pupils progressively 'find out' about and 'learn from' several religions as they move through the school. Adequate guidance is provided to assist teachers in planning units of work but for those teachers less confident in teaching the subject there is insufficient advice on how to plan the details of lessons. Wide variation in the planning of lessons on the same theme

was observed in Year 4, for example. There are few formalised arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress but the reporting of pupils' attainments in annual reports to parents is adequate.

133. Leadership and management of the subject are good overall. The co-ordinator continues to work hard to promote the subject and has successfully managed the implementation of the present scheme of work and the provision of a good range of information sources and artefacts to support pupils' learning. The use of information and communications technology is at a very early stage of development. The co-ordinator provides good professional support for colleagues on a largely informal basis and although she is aware of particular strengths and shortcomings in provision there are no formal arrangements to monitor standards across the school and plan the way ahead in developing the subject. This was a criticism raised by the previous inspection.

FRENCH

134. Although the teaching of a modern foreign language is not a compulsory part of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 2, the school chooses to teach French to pupils in Year 6 and does so well. Most pupils attain levels above those expected for pupils of this age who are learning the language. This provides valuable educational, social and cultural experiences for all Year 6 pupils. French is continued for Year 7 pupils in Key Stage 3 where a modern foreign language is compulsory. They achieve well in a wider range of language skills, particularly in written work, and attain standards above levels expected for this age group. These judgements are similar to those of the previous inspection and show that good standards have been maintained.
135. Year 6 pupils achieve well, developing good communication skills and laying good foundations for future language learning. French language is used exclusively in all lessons and pupils listen carefully to their teacher and respond well to questions, demonstrating their understanding and their ability to convey their meaning. Good progress is made in the quality of their pronunciation and intonation when holding conversations. Most pupils communicate well with the teacher and each other in French. They understand and use a suitable range of vocabulary. Year 7 pupils build effectively on their previous knowledge of the language and extend their learning to writing French. When speaking, their pronunciation is good and when writing, they apply simple grammatical rules correctly and use spelling lists accurately. They speak, write and understand progressively longer texts and with increasing accuracy. All these skills were demonstrated well when pupils were learning the names for different buildings and amenities, describing their use and positions and giving directions both orally and in writing. They also develop a good awareness of French people and their culture as for example, learning about French food, sport and famous artists. All pupils have obvious enthusiasm for the subject as a result of the stimulating teaching they receive. They are keen to communicate in the language and do so willingly, learning quickly from their mistakes.
136. The quality of teaching is good. All teaching in Years 6 and 7 is done by the same specialist teacher, who has very good subject knowledge and provides a very good role model. She plans lessons well, has high expectations of what all pupils should learn and creates very good relationships in a stimulating learning environment. The target language is used exclusively to promote consistency. Different strategies are used effectively, including the progressive teaching of skills, the good use of games and resources and the regular involvement of all pupils and their contributions. A particular strength is the structured involvement of all pupils in paired conversational work. This ensures that pupils of all levels of attainment gain in confidence and reinforce their knowledge and understanding. These factors have a significant impact on pupils' good attitudes and achievement. Good use is made of day-to-day assessment to plan effectively for what pupils need to learn next. All work is marked regularly and all comments are in French. The co-ordinator has amended the policy and schemes of work to ensure good progression in skills, topic by topic. Good links are maintained with other middle schools in the town and the

receiving secondary schools to ensure appropriate and relevant curriculum provision. Resources are good and include up-to-date books and other literature, games and computer software.