

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BURSTOW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Smallfield, Horley

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125292

Headteacher: Mrs E Hampson

Reporting inspector: Mr John William Paull  
22028

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> February - 1<sup>st</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 197706

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wheelers Lane Smallfield Horley Surrey
Postcode:	RH6 9PT
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Watson
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22028	J W Paull	Registered inspector	Art and design Music Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9420	D Martin	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30669	M Sandercock	Team inspector	English Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18598	C Gordon-Smith	Team inspector	Information and communication technology History Physical education	
16773	R Arora	Team inspector	Science Design and technology The foundation stage English as an additional language	
7813	K Wood	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Special educational needs	
27674	J Coe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Burstow caters for boys and girls from three to 11 years old. It is a foundation primary school in Smallfield, near Horley in Surrey. Its proximity to Gatwick Airport influences its characteristics strongly, including patterns of employment. It is much bigger than most other primary schools, with nearly 400 pupils. Of these, 37 attend for a morning or afternoon and are placed in the school's own nursery or one of two reception classes. Another 26 attend the reception on a full-time basis. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, or other distinct groups, but none is at an early stage of acquiring English. Currently around 14 per cent of pupils are known to qualify for free school meals, which is average. Around 23 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is broadly average. Most of these pupils are identified as having a learning difficulty, although others have emotional and behavioural difficulties, or impairments to their speech. Five have statements of need maintained by the local authority. Most pupils entering the school attain close to what is usually found at their age and a few are above. However, a sizeable proportion is below. Overall attainment on entry is, therefore, below what is usually found. Socio-economic circumstances in the area are broadly average.

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

Burstow is an effective school. Its strengths clearly outweigh its few weaknesses and it adds to pupils' experiences and understanding so that, by the time they leave, overall attainment is no longer below average, but at levels broadly in line with what is found nationally. The 2000 National Curriculum test results show that the attainment of 11-year-olds was above the average of similar schools. Overall, these standards represent sound achievement, bearing in mind attainment on entry to the school. They result directly from good teaching. Behaviour is generally good and pupils' relationships are usually strong. Most pupils work hard for their teachers, co-operating on tasks and activities. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and governors provide strong direction for the future. Decisions are shared openly and clearly with the staff. This good leadership has already brought about improvements to teaching and learning and, combined with better planning of the curriculum, is starting to raise standards. The school's income per pupil is fairly high because of extra funding as it changes from grant-maintained to foundation status. Nevertheless, in view of pupils' achievements, good standards of behaviour and good teaching, value for money is sound.

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

- Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening and religious education are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus and their basic skills in information and communication technology are good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good in classes for pupils aged five and upward.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are usually very good and their behaviour and attitudes towards school and work are good, helping them to concentrate and learn.
- The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, leading to good progress amongst these pupils.
- Opportunities for personal, social and health education are excellent and activities that the school offers pupils outside lessons are very good.
- The headteacher and governors are providing very clear direction for the school's future, which is beginning to raise standards: identified areas for improvement are supported very well by financial planning.

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

- The attainment of seven-year-olds is below average in science.
- The attainment of 11-year-olds is below expectations in design and technology.
- The organisation of accommodation and learning for children under five is not conducive to their progress.
- Provision for higher attaining pupils does not consistently meet their needs.

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

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

The school has improved well in several important respects since its last inspection of September 1997. Teaching has improved considerably. The proportions of good and very good teaching have risen and unsatisfactory teaching has virtually been eliminated (a key issue in the last inspection). What is taught is planned better (another key issue). The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, added to the use of

nationally recommended schemes of work in other subjects, have resulted in a far more secure match of what is taught with what the National Curriculum requires. The headteacher (not the same as at the last inspection) is involved well in planning developments in the curriculum. These changes have resulted in several improvements in standards attained in subjects, many of which were judged as “unsatisfactory” in the last report. Proportions of 11-year-olds attaining expected levels in National Curriculum tests have kept pace with national improvements. Furthermore, inspectors found much better attainment in religious education, which, by the age of 11, is now above expectations in the locally agreed syllabus. Attainments in geography, history, music and art now match national expectations when previously they were below, and pupils’ basic skills in information and communication technology are improving. A particular strength in pupils’ skills in ball games is also now evident. Higher attainers are also doing better now than in 1997, although not enough 11-year-olds are attaining higher than expected levels in science and mathematics. Systems for assessing pupils’ progress, setting targets and monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have also been improved. The good standards in the last inspection in aspects such as pupils’ attitudes and behaviour, have been well maintained. Commitment to improve further is very strong.

## 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	C	C	C	A
mathematics	D	D	C	B
science	C	D	C	C

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

The table shows that, in 2000, the school’s National Curriculum test results for English, mathematics and science were average compared with all schools in the country, as they were at the last inspection. However, national results now are much higher than then, which means that the school’s achievement has in fact improved in line with national trends. In comparison with similar schools, the 2000 results show that standards are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. The comparisons take into account the proportions of pupils who achieve at different levels. The main reason that science is not as good in comparison with similar schools is that fewer pupils gain higher than expected levels. Indications are that the school is on course to achieve targets that have been set for its future results. Although speaking and listening were often above expected levels, and investigative and practical work in mathematics and science were often below expectations, overall attainment in English, mathematics and science was generally average during the inspection, which matches the test results closely. Currently, seven-year-olds are also attaining average standards in these subjects. Bearing in mind pupils’ overall attainment on entry to the school, these attainments represent good achievement. It is based on good teaching as pupils move through the school. No significant differences were found in the performances of boys and girls. Attainment in religious education is above expectations at seven and 11. Many older pupils demonstrate good basic skills with the mouse and keyboard in information and communication technology, although overall attainment is in line with expectations at seven and 11. Pupils’ skills in designing and evaluating models and products are below expected levels at the age of 11. Standards in other subjects match expectations, with a particular strength in skills associated with ball control in physical education. French and German lessons offer good early experiences of modern foreign languages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good – nearly all pupils like coming to school, work sensibly and try hard. They are helpful towards each other and their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good – pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They move about sensibly and are polite and helpful to visitors, often holding doors. Children under five settle quickly in lessons and take turns well.
Personal development and relationships	Good – pupils' growing maturity is seen in their willingness to volunteer as monitors and to offer help to others. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school are very good, including children under five.
Attendance	Satisfactory – attendance is in line with the national average. Punctuality is very good. Very few pupils arrive at school late and lessons begin and end on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. It is better for five- to 11-year-olds than for children under five. The main reason is that the quality and use of accommodation for younger children restrict the organisation and planning of activities and have a negative impact on learning. All teaching, except for one unsatisfactory lesson, was satisfactory or better. Two-thirds was good, including just over 30 per cent that was very good. This very good teaching was spread through the school in a range of subjects that included literacy and numeracy. Examples of excellent teaching also occurred in an English lesson in Year 1 and mathematics and geography lessons in Year 2. Most lessons for children under five were satisfactory. The unsatisfactory lesson occurred in science. The overall quality of teaching in English and mathematics lessons is good throughout the school. This high quality of teaching helps pupils to make a good effort and contributes well to good overall learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and consequently learn effectively, making good progress towards their targets. Literacy and numeracy are generally taught well and help the school to achieve targets in English and mathematics that are agreed with the local authority. Boys and girls are generally taught equally effectively.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory – statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education are met, although design and evaluation are not sufficiently emphasised in classes for older pupils. Activities that are provided outside lessons and personal, social and health education are strengths. French in Year 5 and German in Year 6 enhance the normal curriculum in these age groups. The areas of learning for children under five are provided adequately.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good – identification of needs is carried out efficiently and pupils receive careful support to help them make progress towards their targets. Pupils with a statement of need are also well catered for, receiving the full provision that their statements suggest.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none is at an early stage of acquiring English. However, those who do attend the school receive careful support and consideration to help them to make progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good – moral and social provision is very good. Systems for encouraging good attitudes and deeds and for teaching what is right are very strong. Similarly, many opportunities, such as a shop and a council, exist for pupils to serve the school. Assemblies meet statutory requirements for collective worship. Cultural arrangements are generally sound, but lack breadth in multi-cultural provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Generally good – procedures for child protection are good, but a few health and safety issues were found. Uses of assessment to adapt curricular planning are sound.

Parents' views of the school are generally sound. Nearly all parents are positive about what the school provides and help to enhance resources through their support of the Friends of Burstow School (a type of parent-teacher association). The quality of the school's information for parents is usually good and several good opportunities are provided for parents to meet teachers to discuss the progress that their children make.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good – the headteacher has established what the school needs to do to improve very well. Other senior staff support her well and subject co-ordinators are generally knowledgeable and effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good – governors are knowledgeable, keep in close contact with the school and share a strong vision for its future development with the staff. Chairs of committees are conscientious and effective in guiding decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good – weaknesses in the curriculum have been identified over the past year or so and good corrective action has been taken. Teaching has also been carefully monitored and improved since the last inspection.
The strategic use of resources	Good – senior staff and governors have good procedures for setting a budget that addresses priorities in the school's improvement plan. They understand the importance of seeking professional advice before committing the school to capital expenditure and are beginning to apply principles of seeking best value.

Overall levels of staffing and learning resources are sound. Accommodation generally meets the learning needs of primary education. However, several areas are in poor condition and the way that the nursery is set

out restricts flexible uses of the available space. The exterior building that, for part of the day, houses some of the reception-aged children is unsatisfactory to the learning needs of young children.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and their children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school helps children to grow in maturity and behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Staff at the school are approachable.</li> <li>• Children get the right amount of work to do at home and an interesting range of activities is available outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents believe that the school does not work closely with them or give enough information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' generally positive views of the school. At the meeting, parents were particularly supportive of the headteacher and staff. However, concern was expressed at the dilapidated condition of parts of the accommodation and, especially, the outbuilding that is used by a reception class for part of the day. This building does not support the learning of these young children. A sizeable minority of parents feels that the school does not work closely with them and does not supply sufficient information about their children's progress. Inspectors found that the school's pattern of meetings, the willingness of its staff to discuss pupils' work and annual reports on progress are often of good quality. However, changes to these arrangements are not fully in place.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests of 11-year-olds, attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly in line with national averages. In this respect, results look similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection in 1997. However, the national average has improved considerably since then. More pupils are, therefore, reaching the expected level for their age in all three subjects now than was the case then. The proportion of pupils that attains the expected level or higher is in fact above the national average in all three subjects. However, except in English, attainment at higher than expected levels is not as strong and it is for this reason that overall standards are in line with national averages, rather than above. Due weight is given to schools' results at these higher than expected levels and this factor is the main reason that the school's performance in science is not as good as in either mathematics or English in comparison with similar schools. Compared with those of similar schools, these results are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and in line with average in science. In mathematics and especially so in science, although an above average proportion of pupils reaches the expected level for their age, the percentage that reaches a higher level is below average. During the inspection, measures such as different levels of work for groups of differing prior attainments and rearranged classes that brought pupils of similar attainment together were in use. However, this was the case more consistently in English and mathematics than in science, which contributes to the differences in standards. Trends show that, since the last inspection, test results of 11-year-olds have matched national improvements. Differences between the results of boys and girls are not significant. The results of National Curriculum tests of seven-year-olds indicate that, in reading and writing, attainment is broadly in line with the national figure, whereas in mathematics it is below average. No national tests exist in science, but statutory teachers' assessments indicate a standard that is well below average. Trends in results of seven-year-olds tend to vary considerably from year to year, but have been around average for the past two years.
2. Although at the age of seven standards indicated by test results are not as high as at 11, this factor is nevertheless consistent with the school's good teaching. Baseline assessments take place on entry to the reception class. Results of these indicate that, although most five-year-olds attain broadly average standards, another sizeable group, larger than normally found, does not. Only a few pupils are clearly above what is normal for their age. Inspectors found that this matched closely with their judgements of standards. A larger proportion than usual is unlikely to attain the early learning goals that are described in the new *Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a national document that explains what should be taught in nursery and reception classes). For example, in the important areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics, and knowledge and understanding of the world, attainment was below that described in the early learning goals (a description of the normal standards expected for the age group). Overall attainment on entry is, therefore, below average and pupils make good progress to reach the average levels that they do in reading and writing, and above average levels in speaking and listening.
3. Seven-year-olds' speaking and listening skills are generally above the expected levels for their age. Nearly all pupils listen attentively and talk with some confidence, explaining themselves clearly and demonstrating a growing awareness of the needs of listeners. Good examples of this occurred across the curriculum as well as in English lessons. A particularly strong discussion took place in a music lesson on Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia Antarctica*, with pupils offering relevant opinions of what the music meant to them. By the age of 11, standards remain above what is normally expected. Pupils have good listening skills and many are confident speakers who explain their views logically and express them clearly. For example, they talk enthusiastically about poetry, books and authors, responding to what others say and taking each other's views into account in their own explanations. Betjeman's *Summoned by Bells*, for example, produced a lively discussion of this nature.
4. The results of national tests are reflected in the standards of attainment that were found in reading and writing during the inspection. Literacy hours are taught well and pupils are encouraged to use reading to seek information and writing to express their ideas in a range of different styles for different purposes. Seven-year-olds generally read accurately, talking about stories and giving

reasons for their likes and dislikes. As they progress, texts become more complicated. By the age of 11, reading remains in line with what is normally expected. A few higher attaining pupils read at a higher level than expected for their age. These higher attainers clearly enjoy reading, and speak enthusiastically about authors and styles.

5. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils' overall attainment in writing is average and includes several who reach a level higher than expected. The school has taken positive steps to improve standards in writing, which are average amongst current Year 2 pupils. A scheme that teaches the sounds of letters has been introduced to improve spelling among the younger pupils and the quality of writing in Year 1 shows steady improvement since the beginning of the year. However, this programme is not used in Year 2 and, although progress in constructing sentences and sequencing them into stories is good, improvements in spelling are not as rapid as in other aspects of the subject. Average attaining pupils in Year 2 form letters carefully and accurately and handwriting is of an even size. They usually use capital letters and full stops correctly. Imaginative writing is developing well. For example, when exploring horror, pupils produced ideas such as "I will make some soup, and you will be the ingredients". The range of written work is appropriate for pupils' ages and higher attaining pupils learn about spelling rules, including suffixes and prefixes.
6. Skills are developed further in classes for seven- to 11-year-olds. Since the last inspection, considerable effort has been put into ensuring a wide range of writing experiences for pupils. As a result, by 11, standards in writing have kept pace with national improvements well. Nearly all seven- to 11-year-olds attain levels appropriate for their age, although handwriting does not improve consistently in line with other aspects. Good teaching, coupled with very good support, helps pupils with special educational needs to make progress at good rates. As a result, several with lower stages of need learn sufficiently well to reach the expected level and many others attain close to it. Identified higher attainers also make sound progress and nearly all of them reach a level higher than expected at the age of 11.
7. In mathematics, evidence during the inspection demonstrated that, at the ages of seven and 11, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. This finding is better than that of the test results of seven-year-olds. It is owing to the good quality of teaching and good behaviour and attitudes of pupils, which is improving attainment from the younger age groups upward. In lessons, for example, pupils in Year 2 sequenced numbers up to 100 and understood the concept of place value well for their age. Even lower-attaining pupils, through excellent teaching, were able to recognise the numbers missing from a sequence. Work on shape and space also matches expectations. The attainment of 11-year-olds remains broadly in line with the national average, although the proportion attaining at a higher than expected level is a little below average. The main reason is that, owing to a lack of emphasis on the development of investigative and problem-solving skills, standards in this important element of the subject do not increase beyond the expected level. In work on shape and space, pupils in Year 6 identified reflex, acute, obtuse and right angles and named several properties of different shapes accurately. Higher attainers were able to identify opposite angles and made confident contributions to a discussion on intersecting lines. Even lower-attaining pupils had a satisfactory understanding of square numbers and square roots.
8. The results of tests and assessments are used to set targets for both individuals' attainment and attainment overall. Teachers and pupils share individuals' targets with parents and a parents' meeting is specifically held for the purpose. Progress in English and mathematics is tracked well through the school and evidence from the inspection suggests that the school is well placed to meet future targets that have been agreed with the local authority. In science, inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment is currently below the national average at the age of seven, rather than well below, which is what was indicated by the 2000 statutory assessments. Despite this improvement, standards remain lower in science than in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, in classes for seven to 11-year-olds, pupils are currently making good progress as a result of generally good teaching. This feature is gradually raising levels of attainment closer to the national average, so that, by the time pupils leave the school at 11, it is broadly in line. However, work is not consistently adapted to the needs of pupils with different levels of prior knowledge. Opportunities for pupils to reach higher than expected levels are, therefore, limited. Most seven-year-olds show a basic understanding of a range of scientific skills and knowledge. For example, in their study of living things, younger pupils accurately named facial features and the external parts of the human body. However, while pupils explore various objects and materials, the vocabulary that they acquire to describe the properties of these materials rarely goes beyond everyday English such as "hard",

“soft”, “rough” and “smooth”. Pupils know about senses and group objects according to criteria suggested to them. Most pupils learn that ‘pushes’ and ‘pulls’ are types of force. By 11, most pupils gain an insight into the world of living things and accurately name the major organs of the human body. They investigate dissolving of different solids and show increased knowledge of the properties of various substances, such as sugar, sand, salt, cornflour and others, and they know several facts about light and sound. However, weaknesses were found in observational and experimental work. These weaknesses were owing to a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of planning their own scientific observations and experiments independently.

9. Bearing in mind pupils’ attainments when they begin the National Curriculum, these standards in English, mathematics and science represent good overall achievement. By the time, they leave the school, a much larger group than at the age of five is attaining at normally expected levels. However, this is not true at levels higher than expected for their age. The school is aware of this, and has introduced measures to improve the position in English and mathematics particularly. However, in science, little evidence was found in the inspection that work is rigorously adapted to meet the needs of pupils with different prior attainments.
10. By the time pupils leave at 11 years old, better teaching and curricular planning than at the time of the last inspection produce attainment in many other subjects that is higher now than then. Attainment in religious education, for example, is now above expectations described in the locally agreed syllabus. It is also above expectations in important aspects of history. Attainments in geography, music, physical education and art now match national expectations, whereas in 1997 some of these subjects were below. In physical education, pupils’ skills with a ball are particularly strong. Their basic skills in information and communication technology are also improving steadily. Basic keyboard skills, and the range of programs that pupils control confidently, using menus and toolbars, are above what is normally expected. However, standards in design and technology are below expectations, largely because designing products and evaluation of work are weaknesses. However, attainment of seven-year-olds in all these subjects is in line with expectations, except for religious education in which they are above.
11. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is generally good. Targets set in their individual education plans are used to decide what they ought to learn and how to teach it. Furthermore, teachers and classroom assistants know these pupils well and understand what to do to help them. As they make progress, targets are adapted and stages of need are altered accordingly in the school’s register of pupils with special educational needs. Some pupils make sufficient progress to be removed from this register completely.
12. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and none of these is currently at an early stage of acquiring English. However, it is evident that on occasions when extra support is required, it is forthcoming and of good quality. A small number of travelling pupils currently at the school are well catered for, including being given work to take with them when they are not living locally. As a result, they are well integrated and accepted into the school and they make progress at an appropriate rate.

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

13. At the time of the last inspection, pupils’ attitudes and behaviour were generally good. They enjoyed learning and related well to each other and to their teachers. Behaviour around the school was generally orderly. These strengths have been maintained.
14. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and to what the school offers them. They take responsibility for their own education and personal development. For example, they enjoy the active involvement that the school permits them in agreeing rules for behaviour in classrooms and around the school. They are also enthusiastic about the extensive programme of residential and external visits which are provided.
15. Pupils are polite, honest, courteous and caring and are respectful to each other and to adults. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Children under five settle down quickly at the start of sessions. Simple classroom rules are shared and discussed clearly with all these young children to ensure their understanding of what it means to behave sensibly in a classroom situation. Consequently, they make good progress as they learn to co-operate, share and take turns.

16. Standards of behaviour are good. Pupils listen to their teachers sensibly and help lessons to flow naturally by their constant readiness to attempt answers to questions and to carry out tasks. They move around the school in an orderly manner, even when not directly supervised. On rare occasions in lessons, pupils' chattiness interrupts the flow of teaching, but usually only a little time is lost, as they respond to correction well. No bullying was witnessed during the inspection and pupils stated that it occurs very seldom. However, a few girls explained that they sometimes find inappropriate language of a small number of boys to be oppressive when they are on the playground. One pupil was excluded for a fixed period of time during the past school year.
17. Pupils volunteer readily to act as monitors and are proud of being elected as representatives to the School Council, showing initiative and exercising responsibility.
18. Pupils with special educational needs generally behave well and are optimistic about their future work. As a result, they are usually well motivated, which contributes strongly to their progress. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulty make sound progress towards their targets for personal development.
19. Attendance rates are satisfactory. Absences, including unauthorised absences, are in line with the national average. Punctuality is very good. Very small numbers of pupils arrived late during the inspection. In classes for seven to 11-year-olds, the school's morning pattern of lessons is innovative and very efficient in its use of time. It is, however, very dependent on punctuality and it is a credit to the school and its pupils that this is achieved so well.
20. The attitudes and values that pupils develop in response to the provision made by the school are considerable strengths in the education provided.

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

21. At the time of the last inspection, teaching across the school was sound, but contained a significant amount that was unsatisfactory. Teaching of children under five was good. The overall quality of teaching through the school has improved considerably since then. It is now good and includes a significant proportion of very good and excellent lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching has virtually gone. However, poor accommodation of children under five is affecting teaching and learning of this age group adversely, restricting organisation of activities and having a negative impact on use of time. Although teaching of children under five is satisfactory and contained no unsatisfactory teaching, it is not as good as in the last inspection.
22. Throughout the school, two-thirds of lessons were good, including nearly a third that were very good or excellent. Only one unsatisfactory lesson occurred, which was in science. All the rest was satisfactory. This good quality of teaching is producing good learning amongst pupils. It ensures their interest in what is taught, so that nearly always they concentrate well and put in a good effort. As a result, they make good progress. Many children enter the nursery with attainment below what is usually found, but, by the time they leave the school at 11 years old, overall standards are in line with what is nationally expected. During the inspection, examples of very good teaching were spread out well through the school and occurred in a range of subjects that included literacy and numeracy. Excellent teaching was found in English in Year 1 and in mathematics and geography lessons in Year 2.
23. In classes for pupils aged five and over, teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum and how to teach basic skills is good. Planning is generally sound and often good and ensures that teachers are clear about what they want pupils to know and understand by the end of lessons. Management and control of pupils are strong and lead to good attitudes and behaviour. As a result, the amount of time that is spent on work and the rate at which pupils acquire skills are good. Information from assessment is used well to adapt what is planned in English and mathematics, but less so in other subjects. Nevertheless, what teachers plan usually matches their pupils' levels of understanding well. Marking is conscientiously kept up to date, although sometimes written comments are restricted to a few words, such as "Good, you tried hard", rather than guidance about how the work could be improved. A good range of methods is used through the school. A particular strength is how discussion about ideas is nearly always encouraged, based on very good questioning. Examples of this were seen in many lessons and one of the most telling was when Year 2 pupils



discussed why a polar bear could not prey on a penguin. Teachers often set homework to support the work of classrooms. It is appropriate and many pupils agreed that they enjoy doing it, understanding that it helps them to make further progress. In responses to questionnaires, the majority of parents also indicated satisfaction about the work that pupils take home.

24. Accommodation for children under five is unsatisfactory and, in some respects, poor. One of the reception classes is housed in a small outbuilding. A lot of valuable teaching and learning time is wasted in moving such young children to and from this area for some lessons. On occasions when both reception classes combine in a confined space, the quality of learning is again adversely affected, reducing the rate of children's progress to less than it might otherwise be. Nevertheless, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers provide experiences that are relevant, imaginative and enjoyable in language, communication and literacy, mathematical development, creative development such as collage, painting, singing and imaginative play. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and the range of planned activities broadly reflects the required areas of learning. In the reception classes, planned learning is extended to embrace and link with the work that children will encounter when they begin the National Curriculum. For these reasons, teaching and children's learning are basically sound, despite the restrictions that the accommodation causes. In personal, social and emotional development, by the time they leave the reception classes, children are often reaching the standard described in the early learning goals. This judgement reflects skilful teaching in this area of learning.
25. Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy hours are generally taught well, following the pattern for lessons as suggested in the national projects. Whole class sessions contain a clear focus and are followed by tasks that help pupils to extend and consolidate learning. The closing plenary sessions reinforce learning and offer pupils insights into the quality of their own learning and what will follow. These good methods are helping the school to achieve its targets in English and mathematics. Teaching in English lessons is good across the school. It is slightly stronger in Years 1, 2 and 6 than in other year groups. Nevertheless, very good teaching occurred through the school and amounted to a quarter of lessons. Teachers are confident about what they are teaching and clearly enjoy words and literature, which is conveyed to pupils and motivates them well. Good questions and opportunities for discussion suit pupils' needs and a good use of time in lessons ensures that progress occurs at a good rate.
26. In mathematics, the overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school, including just under a third that is very good. Planning is good and includes targets for learning that are often shared with pupils. As a result, they know where the teaching is leading them and what they are supposed to understand at the end of lessons. Each new step builds carefully on what has gone before. For example, in Year 2, the logical sequence in which skills were taught was very evident during the week of the inspection. The complexity of each step built steadily as pupils acquired the understanding to split and share two-digit numbers successfully. Many of these well-planned lessons were very focused, adding to the clarity with which learning took place. Such lessons were well supported with a range of teaching strategies and resources such as the use of dice and number paddles to develop understanding. The use of classroom support assistants ensured that pupils with special educational needs made good progress.
27. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory overall. It is better in classes for seven- to 11-year-olds than in classes for younger pupils. One unsatisfactory lesson occurred in Year 2. In the good teaching, much use was made of open-ended questions that produced lengthy answers from pupils. Such responses prompt good detail and further enquiry. However, in some lessons, teachers did not ensure that pupils used enough scientific terminology. Conversely, in classes for older pupils, teachers take care to teach and use scientific words and to ensure that pupils understand them. The unsatisfactory lesson occurred because its content was not sufficiently linked to pupils' previous work and skills, leading to lack of understanding.
28. Teaching in other subjects reflected most of the good features that were found in English and mathematics lessons. Planning is often good and contains information about what pupils are expected to know at the end of lessons. For example, teaching is good throughout the school in information and communication technology, in which training is having a strong impact. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is often good. Time is used very well by first explaining to pupils in their classrooms exactly what will be taught when they get to the computer suite. Practical experiences of using programs are therefore maximised, helping pupils to achieve a good pace of working. In

physical education, teaching is good overall, with instances of very good teaching in some classes. The teaching of religious education has improved since the last inspection, with instances of very good teaching occurring.

29. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught in their own classrooms and in small groups for specific work on reading and writing. When they are taken out of their classes individually to be taught by the special educational needs' co-ordinator (SENCO), it is of high quality. Teachers ensure that any adaptations of work for these pupils are designed to meet their needs as identified in individual education plans. Classroom learning assistants are very effective, helping pupils in lessons with tact and rigour. They discuss their work well with class teachers, which helps to ensure that their approach is consistent.
30. A small number of travelling pupils currently at the school are well taught, including good choices of homework to help them remain interested and able to keep up when they are away from the locality. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils of different ethnic groups, ensuring that they understand what to do to make progress.

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

31. At the time of the last inspection, although provision was judged to be satisfactory, weaknesses were identified in both the quality and range of opportunities provided across the curriculum and the school did not have schemes of work in all subjects. Every aspect of curriculum provision has improved. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place for each age group and provision is invariably satisfactory. The school uses the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy well. It makes exceptionally good provision for personal and health education and very good provision for social and moral education. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of statutory requirements and has taken a leading role in identifying and eradicating weaknesses. Policies have been implemented to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all pupils and covers a wide range of opportunities. Each subject now has a scheme of work, which is either fully in place or in the final stages of preparation. These schemes ensure that pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding appropriately as they move through the school.
32. What is planned for the very young children in the nursery and reception classes includes the areas of learning in *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a recently published national document that lays down what children should be taught before they begin the National Curriculum). Planning reasonably reflects a range of activities across these areas of learning. However, some difficulties arise from the impact of poor accommodation. The provision of tasks for some reception-aged pupils is adversely affected by loss of time going to and from an outbuilding that is, anyway, in a weak state of repair. Although the teacher has worked extremely hard to improve the internal appearance of this building, its use is not conducive to young children's styles of learning. Furthermore, its separation makes it difficult for teachers of nursery and reception classes to plan areas of learning together.
33. Curricular time is allocated well throughout the school. The staggering of playtimes, which results in three sessions each morning for older pupils, is both innovative and highly efficient in ensuring that available hours are spent productively, cutting out situations when time can drift. Religious education is taught in accordance with the guidelines of the local authority and gives insights into the beliefs of Christians and those who follow a number of other faiths such as Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. Topics and themes are sometimes employed to link science with other subjects, such as geography, music and others. Links are also emphasised in the teaching of history and geography. Computers are now used better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are frequently given opportunities to word-process their work and use a range of programs in their specialist lessons or at home, which supports learning effectively. In addition to the National Curriculum, the school provides opportunities for older pupils to learn French and German, which help pupils to make a confident start when they meet these modern languages subjects at secondary school. Design and technology, however, contains a weakness. Opportunities for designing and evaluating products, models and artefacts are not sufficiently emphasised, especially in the work of older pupils. In science, in observational and experimental work, pupils are not given enough opportunities to plan their own experiments and to find ways of ensuring fair tests.

34. Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are generally very good. Targets are becoming increasingly precise and measurable and, therefore, useable for adapting the curriculum to pupils' needs. These targets are increasingly taking account of subjects other than literacy or personal development, such as mathematical, behavioural and physical needs. However, this is less the case for science.
35. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and teachers ensure that skills learned in English are well used in other subjects. For example, good opportunities occur for discussion. As a result, many pupils become confident speakers, expressing their views clearly. In Year 3, a formal debate about Ancient Greece was set up, including issues such as attending school. Older pupils use their reading skills in a number of subjects, confidently searching non-fiction texts, and recording their findings in a variety of ways. The effectiveness of the school's numeracy strategy is also good. Opportunities for mental mathematics are provided in all numeracy lessons and a sense of the relative sizes of different numbers is developed. Numeracy skills are applied across the curriculum in, for example, geography and science.
36. Parents are very appreciative of the range of activities provided for pupils outside the school day and the inspection team supports the view that provision is very generous. Among several lunchtime and after-school activities, the school includes opportunities for different musical activities, several sports and drama. The wide range of activities enhances learning opportunities and enriches pupils' lives considerably. Clubs and booster classes are well supported by pupils and very good relationships are evident during such sessions. Members of the drama club work well together, exploring many ideas and themes. Activities of these kinds make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Furthermore, the school arranges a full programme of residential visits, which pupils thoroughly enjoy. From the age of seven up to 11, pupils have the opportunity to take part and benefit from local studies, team building activities and adventurous pursuits.
37. Equality of access to what the school provides is generally good. The importance of inclusiveness permeates the school. A tiny number of pupils receive support from the Service for Travellers' Education. These pupils speak confidently about feeling secure in the school and the support that it provides. Inspectors agree. For example, work is provided for them when they are travelling away from the school and is marked for them upon their return. A sound, clear policy for the additional support of gifted and talented pupils, which offers advice on teaching strategies, has been devised. However, this is not yet being applied. Nevertheless, the school is well placed to meet its forthcoming statutory obligations in this respect.
38. The provision for personal, social and health education is excellent. Planning ensures the steady development of a full understanding of health related issues as pupils move through the school. Issues about healthy eating and keeping fit are addressed strongly with all pupils. Six- and seven-year-olds are taught what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. For example, they are shown that 'Sick Simon' will feel better if he "drinks lots of water" and that 'Healthy Helen' is fit because "she skips a lot". Tolerance and respect are strongly promoted across the curriculum and the specific teaching of issues surrounding the misuse of drugs is extremely well focused, and sex education is sensitively handled. Parents are encouraged to become involved in these sensitive areas and are given good opportunities to see what will be provided for pupils. Both boys and girls are very well supported in such matters. Throughout the school, outside agencies, such as the police, are well used to support learning.
39. The school has established very good links within the locality and uses the area very well to support pupils' learning. Involvement in the life of the village is strong. Regular contributions are made to the parish magazine and a major involvement in millennium celebrations fostered links very positively. Pupils sing and perform for the local Stroke Club and at the Hospice's Christmas Bazaar. They welcome the sharing of facilities and enjoy showing others their school at, for example, Brownie meetings. This involvement is well reciprocated, with members of the community supporting the school in very tangible ways. Members of the community come into school to hear pupils read and others helped to manufacture a cover for the sandpit. Railtrack and the school nurse help with the teaching programme, supporting health and safety. Links with local pre-school groups, a special school and other local schools are strong. For example, the school's sporting facilities are shared when the school hosts the 'District Primary School's Sports'. Very good links have been established with the local secondary school and former pupils have returned to help with the creation of a mural in the entrance hall. The school values the community very highly. It

demonstrates its strong support by celebrating the achievements of former pupils, displaying newspaper cuttings of their achievements and examination results. This practice produces further reinforcement for those still at the school, giving a very strong message that what happens in their lives, both now and in the future, is important.

40. At the time of the last inspection, provision for spiritual, moral and social education was satisfactory but arrangements for cultural development were inconsistent and, therefore, not as strong. The school has made significant improvements, so that social and moral developments are now very good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, with good provision in the arts and religious education.
41. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, with good opportunities provided in assemblies, religious education, music, dance and art. In religious education, pupils explore the values and beliefs of people of other faiths and the programme is suitably supported by visits to places of worship. Opportunities in music are promoted well. A Year 2 class studying cold climates were given an excellent opportunity to immerse themselves in the imagery created by the music of Vaughan Williams' *Sinfonia Antarctica* and responded extremely sensitively. However, opportunities for spiritual development are not consistently identified across the curriculum and openings for pupils to reflect thoughtfully on the beauty of literature or the environment are not always offered. The Collective Act of Worship supports spiritual development well and meets statutory requirements. There is a feeling of quietness and worship and a strong sense of peacefulness is engendered in a busy day. Teachers and pupils leading assemblies ensure a feeling of reverence and a time for prayer and reflection is invariably provided.
42. The provision for moral development is very good. All adults in school make a positive contribution, modelling supportive relationships very well, thus reinforcing the high standards of behaviour. Pupils clearly know what is right and what is wrong and the school's Code of Conduct is visibly displayed and understood. Year 3 pupils discussed the democratic system of Ancient Greece, linking it to what they knew of modern rules for creating a fair and just society. Year 6 pupils are sure that everyone knows, understands and sticks to the rules of the school, as best they can. One or two parents expressed the view that rewards are used too generously to encourage pupils with behavioural difficulties, whereas normally well-behaved pupils often pass unrecognised. Little evidence of this was found and pupils who were asked acknowledged that the system is fair. Inspectors also felt that this is the case, with team points, stickers and the headteacher's awards and *Best of Burstow* certificates highly valued by pupils. Pupils understood fully that rewards are better than sanctions as a means to securing good behaviour and co-operation. They believed that sanctions are seldom necessary, but, when used, are fairly administered. Regular reminders about being considerate to others are given in assembly. When a new pupil was welcomed, for example, others were warmly encouraged to befriend him. Pupils are respectful in their dealings with others and teachers work very hard to develop these skills – so necessary in creating a fair and happy school.
43. The school makes very good provision for social development through a wide range of good opportunities that are promoted positively. The school council is developing well and older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, for example, by acting as library monitors and as assistants in the school shop. Strong role models and very good relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils promote warm and trusting relationships. In lessons, pupils support each other well and this encourages orderly conduct and a purposeful use of time. Pupils respect each other's views and feelings, and this contributes positively to their very high level of enthusiasm. Pupils explore issues such as bullying and being a good friend during personal, social and health education, and behaviour in the playground reflects their learning very well. The staggering of playtimes, which ensures plenty of space, has contributed to the improved provision since the last inspection. Supervision ensures that pupils play together happily.
44. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities in religious education are good and pupils use a wide range of artefacts when studying the lives and faith of people from other cultures, such as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and followers of Judaism. The study of western art and music is adequately promoted but opportunities for looking at the work of famous artists, particularly non-European artists, to support the development of techniques and extend skills, are sometimes missed. Opportunities to study the culture of peoples in non-western locations are provided in

geography, but lack development across the curriculum. The richness and diversity of the United Kingdom's cultural heritage is not yet fully exploited.

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

45. Improvements have occurred since the last inspection. The school makes good provision for identifying, monitoring and supporting the welfare of pupils, including the assessment of their academic progress. Pupils are able to influence what is provided for them through the School Council. Procedures for dealing with child protection match local requirements closely and are of good quality.
46. Behaviour is effectively monitored during both teaching and times when pupils are at play, such as with the use of an incident book, available to both teachers and non-teaching assistants. The school has introduced a revised timetable since the last inspection, which provides for staggered playtimes and has been influential in improving the level of behaviour and supervision. It goes some way to meet concerns of a small number of parents and has also helped learning by improving the use of time.
47. The needs of individual pupils are known to staff and assistants and a full range of effective measures is provided, both within the curriculum and by the use of external agencies, to support their academic and personal development. Examples include the use of homework, deployment of classroom assistants and the use of the Home and Hospital service. The educational psychologist helps and advises with the assessment and identification of pupils with special needs. Assessment of needs matches the requirements and advice of the current Code of Practice, placing pupils on one of five stages of need. Reviews are then carried out and pupils are moved up and down this scale accordingly.
48. Attendance registers are regularly checked for patterns or extended absences and any necessary remedial action is taken, including the use of letters to parents and visits from the Educational Welfare Officer. However, registers are not always fully or correctly completed in accordance with daily requirements.
49. Formal assessment procedures in English and mathematics are good. Records are kept carefully and include both statutory and voluntary uses of tests. These are used to establish targets for pupils, which are shared with them and with their parents, and to track the amount of progress that they make through successive classes. The headteacher and senior managers analyse results and pass information to class teachers to enable them to adapt their teaching and planning accordingly. However, the use of assessment in these ways in other subjects is at an early stage of development. Baseline assessments take place on entry to the reception classes and support planning of work to meet children's specific learning needs. However, procedures for assessing children on a daily basis are not rigorous enough and do not establish and ensure the match of task to children's level of functioning and skill. The school monitors the performance of different groups of pupils, including boys and girls. Very few currently attend the school from different ethnic backgrounds and none with English as an additional language at an early stage of acquiring English. Travelling pupils are well known to teachers and their academic needs are well catered for.
50. The school undertakes regular health and safety checks on premises and equipment and pupils are not exposed to any undue risk. However, some instances were identified during the inspection where statutory requirements were not being met. These were drawn to the attention of the governors' new committee for health and safety, which is beginning to improve provision in this area. Overall, the school's many strengths in the care of its pupils far outweigh minor weaknesses.

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

51. The school's partnership with parents was generally satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. In a number of respects, it is now better than it was then. Overall, the substantial strengths of the school's partnership with parents outweigh the minor weaknesses and are a significant factor in the quality of the education that the school provides. Pupils' education benefits from parents' involvement, both in the classrooms and in other areas of activity, such as fund-raising carried out by the *Friends of Burstow School*, which has continued to make a very strong contribution to

resources of many kinds. Newsletters provide adequate information about activities and school functions now, as they did then.

52. Most parents have positive views of the school, its activities and the education it provides for their children. An exception is the amount of concern raised at the pre-inspection meeting about an outbuilding used to accommodate some of the reception-aged children. Inspectors agree that this provision is unsatisfactory and leads to difficulties in organisation, planning and use of time for children under five. Significant, but minority, negative views relate to the information provided by the school and collaboration with parents in respect of pupils' progress. However, evidence gathered in the inspection did not fully justify this view. The school's pattern of meetings and written reports exceeds what is provided in many similar schools and teachers are open and willing to discuss their pupils' work. Annual reports usually indicate work that has been done and what pupils have achieved. Furthermore, opportunities are provided to set targets for each pupil in the presence of parents. These targets are subsequently monitored and reviewed. Parents have several opportunities during the school year to discuss their child's development, on both formal and informal occasions. However, the timings of these meetings in the year have recently changed and it is possible that a little confusion has arisen amongst some parents about the new arrangements.
53. Parents are consulted and are able to offer suggestions for evenings about curricular-related matters for the School Improvement Plan and the content of Home/School Agreements. Parents are also encouraged to participate in their child's homework and home reading, which many do, to the benefit of their children's learning.
54. Statutory information that Governors should provide in their annual report is not fully completed in accordance with requirements. However, other statutory elements, such as informing parents about and involving them in reviews of provision for pupils with special educational needs, are met well.

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

55. At the time of the last inspection in September 1997, leadership and management were satisfactory. Governors were very supportive of the school, working through an established structure of committees. The headteacher (not the present one) had been instrumental in establishing a good climate for learning and bringing about improvements in maintenance of the buildings. However, he was not sufficiently involved in curricular development. The present headteacher had recently been appointed to the position of deputy head and had been very effective in beginning to rectify weaknesses in the curriculum, working within a new senior management team. However, this development was not properly reflected in the school's development plan and its vision for raising standards in the future was unclear. Nearly two years ago, the headteacher retired. The deputy head was promoted to the position and is now headteacher. The improvements in curricular planning were continued and a shared vision for future development is evident. Through identification of weaknesses, followed by training, the overall quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good, with a significant proportion that is very good. The significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the last inspection has virtually been eliminated. As a result, standards have improved steadily, at least keeping pace with national improvements. For example, National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science show that a higher proportion of 11-year-olds attains the expected level for their age now than in 1997. In science, although weaknesses have been found in pupils' achievements at higher than expected levels, the increase at the expected level is considerable, going from 69 per cent in 1997, to 94 per cent in 2000.
56. The headteacher and other senior managers work well together, providing clear leadership and direction. The school's main mission is summed up in the sentence: "Burstow School equips today's children to achieve tomorrow's ambitions". The headteacher has very good knowledge of the school, its strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to move towards this aim. Subject co-ordinators and staff share in decisions about targets and values that are established, and how policies should be put into practice. For example, a strong emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the National Curriculum is effectively taught. Much of the school's planning is based on national guidance, such as that of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority or the National Literacy and Numeracy Projects. Literacy and numeracy hours have been introduced well and follow the structures that are suggested in the guidance closely. Co-ordinators understand their roles well and many are in the process of adapting national guidance to the particular requirements of pupils and groups of pupils who attend the school. The school manages provision for special

educational needs very well. Its policy is clear, helpful and up-to-date. It conforms both to recommendations and statutory requirements of the national Code of Practice well. This policy is very well implemented. Good communication occurs between the governor with responsibility for special needs, the co-ordinator, learning assistants and outside agencies. Parents agreed that pupils are well supported. However, one or two parents felt that pupils' needs were not identified early enough. Little evidence to support this view was found during the inspection.

57. The governing body understands the school's vision for future progress very well. Its chairs of committees are clearly very knowledgeable about what needs to be done to raise standards further. Several individual governors, including the chair, keep in close contact with the school, discussing frequently with the headteacher how provision and developments are proceeding. The use of strategic resources such as finance is well managed. However, despite considerable work on the fabric of the building in the past, many areas are still in poor repair. Furthermore, some of the outbuildings, including that used by some reception-aged children, are not conducive to learning. Parents of these children raised considerable concern about this provision at their meeting before the inspection. The headteacher and governors are aware of the problem and solutions are being sought. However, at present, the difficulty remains. Minor weaknesses in compliance with some statutory procedures related to health and safety issues were found. However, the governors' involvement in strategic leadership is generally very good.
58. The school's monitoring and evaluation of its own performance are good. The headteacher and staff have been very successful in improving uses of time. A particularly strong and innovative feature in classes for seven to 11-year-olds has been the splitting of the morning into three sessions, punctuated by short break times. Inspectors were impressed with the efficiency of these sessions. Typically, pupils and staff alike were ready at the start, and ended them promptly, so that no slippage occurred. As a result, maximum time was spent on work that is directly related to the National Curriculum. Teaching and the curriculum have been under review since the last inspection and, again, improvements have resulted. Assessment of pupils' performance is strong in English and mathematics. Class teachers and senior staff use the results of this assessment to set realistic individual and whole school targets that are shared with both parents and pupils. This process contributes well to the achievement of such targets, ensuring that teaching and support staff, as well as pupils, know what has to be done. Similar good practice occurs for pupils with special educational needs. Good procedures exist to monitor behaviour and personal development and pupils respond well to these arrangements. New staff are offered clear guidance about the school's routines. Newly qualified teachers are welcomed and supported effectively. The school's headteacher, staff and governors all share a strong commitment to pupils' wellbeing and the school's continued improvement and success.
59. The strategic use of resources, especially the school's public funding, is good. The chair of governors and headteacher are very clear about the process of setting a budget and allocating funds to address areas identified as priorities for development. The school's development plan is a useful working document in this respect. It is both realistic and thorough in the action that it suggests for the school's future direction, listing priorities in a clear and coherent manner, naming tasks, responsible persons, possible costs and timescales. This clarity contributes considerably to the way in which funding can be allocated to good effect. The spending of specific grants such as transitional funding as the school moves from grant-maintained to foundation status is carefully kept under review and used only for designated purposes. New technology is used adequately to keep records and to maintain information about how the budget is being spent. Office staff are competent and efficient in the day-to-day management of accounts and support the headteacher and educational staff well. They are clearly helpful to parents and general public alike in their responses to administrative queries and in providing relevant information. The caretaker also helps to ensure that the school runs smoothly, carrying out his duties efficiently and liaising well with building contractors and local authority staff whenever required.
60. Recently, capital expenditure was necessary to relieve an area that was prone to flooding. Expert advice, competitive estimates and checks of how the work was proceeding were all evidence that the school is applying principles of best value when such undertakings are necessary.
61. Overall levels of staffing and learning resources are adequate for teaching a full primary curriculum. Teaching staff and learning resources are also sufficient to promote the work of children under five. However, limited provision of other adult help in classes for under fives restricts support of their

learning. The staff are sufficiently well qualified and all subjects are led by co-ordinators who are either originally trained in them or who have an aptitude or special interest. Support staff are similarly suited to their roles. Learning resources and artefacts are available to staff to support them in the teaching of their classes so that pupils' understanding is properly enhanced. In some subjects, notably history, physical education and religious education, these resources are good. The quality of accommodation is generally good enough to support the teaching of the National Curriculum. However, parts of the fabric, including some window frames, are in poor condition. The way that the nursery is set out restricts flexible uses of the available space and the exterior building that houses some of the reception-aged children for parts of the day is not conducive to the learning of young children.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The governors, headteacher and staff are aware that accommodation for children under five is unsuitable and are seeking alternative arrangements. Improvements in provision for higher attainers, such as teaching them in groups or separate classes (known as sets), have been introduced. These changes are recent and are only just beginning to raise attainment in English and mathematics. In science, adaptations of what is taught are less evident.

The governors, headteacher and staff should:

- i. Raise the attainment of seven-year-olds in science by:
  - a) adapting and refining what is taught to meet the needs of pupils with different levels of prior attainment (see paragraphs 1, 9, 34, 90 and 92);
  - b) teaching and using scientific language more systematically (see paragraphs 27, 91, 93 and 94);
  - c) offering opportunities for pupils to acquire more complex observational and experimental skills (see paragraphs 8, 33, 91 and 92); and
  - d) ensuring that the teaching of skills builds systematically on what has gone before (see paragraphs 27 and 92).
- ii. Raise the attainment of 11-year-olds in design and technology by:
  - a) placing more emphasis on planning and designing models and products (see paragraphs 10, 33 and 103);
  - b) ensuring that pupils have more experience of how real products are designed for a purpose constructed with suitable materials, and joined (paragraphs 103 and 105);
  - c) allowing pupils opportunities to evaluate their own work and real products (see paragraphs 33, 103, and 105); and
  - d) ensuring that what is taught builds systematically on what has been taught previously (see paragraphs 103 and 104).
- iii. Improve the quality of learning and thereby the progress of children under five by:
  - a) reviewing the use of accommodation in the nursery to find a way of better planning, organising activities, structured play and tasks (see paragraphs 21, 32, 52, 61 and 63);
  - b) reviewing whether the present overall use of accommodation for children under five is the most conducive to good uses of time (see paragraphs 21, 32, 52, 61 and 63); and
  - c) increasing the ratio of adults to children (see paragraphs 61 and 63).
- iv. Improve provision for higher attaining pupils, by:
  - a) continuing to group pupils according to their prior attainment (see paragraphs 1 and 74);
  - b) ensuring that work is consistently and rigorously adapted to their needs, whenever appropriate (see paragraphs 1, 34 and 78);
  - c) in mathematics and science, improving opportunities for them to take greater responsibility for their own work, especially in practical, investigative and experimental aspects of the subjects (see paragraphs 8, 84, 85 and 91); and
  - d) fully introduce the strategies for gifted and talented pupils in the new policy document that relates to these pupils (see paragraph 37).

## LESS IMPORTANT FEATURES THAT GOVERNORS MIGHT WISH TO INCLUDE IN AN ACTION PLAN

- a. Ensure that statutory requirements that relate first to health and safety matters and, secondly, to the Governors' Annual Report to Parents are fully met (see paragraphs 50 and 54).
- b. Improve provision for multi-cultural education with a particular focus on the richness and diversity of what is available in the United Kingdom (see paragraph 44).
- c. Review how terminology acquired in English lessons might support learning in French and German (see paragraph 129).
- d. Increase the emphasis on control technology and the availability of computers in classrooms as funding permits (see paragraphs 123, 124 and 125).

- e. Improve the consistency of quality of pupils' handwriting by the age of 11 (see paragraphs 79 and 80).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	30	37	28	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	10	374
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	92

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	29	25	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	27
	Girls	20	22	23
	Total	43	45	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (86)	83 (91)	93 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	26	24
	Girls	18	22	18
	Total	39	48	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (71)	89 (83)	78 (88)
	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	24	29	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	21
	Girls	29	27	29
	Total	44	42	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (70)	79 (68)	94 (73)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	17	20
	Girls	27	27	29
	Total	42	44	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (57)	83 (55)	92 (61)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	399
Any other minority ethnic group	4

*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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25

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

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	161

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	733,830
Total expenditure	731,834
Expenditure per pupil	1,830
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,918
Balance carried forward to next year	3,914

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	402
Number of questionnaires returned	92

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	48	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	45	12	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	62	7	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	56	6	5	1
The teaching is good.	42	50	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	40	24	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	51	4	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	49	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	28	41	26	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	41	13	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	53	5	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	49	2	0	8

## **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**

63. At the time of the last inspection, children made satisfactory and often good progress. The staff worked well as a team, planning effectively for children in two separate groups. Currently, children are grouped into a nursery class and two reception classes. This arrangement has had knock-on effects in the way that activities are planned and organised, which are, in some important respects, unsatisfactory. For example, an outbuilding has been brought into use for one of the reception classes. This building is in poor condition and is not conducive to learning. On occasions, time is lost in walking young children to and from the rest of the accommodation for under fives. Teaching was generally good in the last report; it is now satisfactory, albeit consistently so.
64. Four-year-olds are admitted to the nursery at the start of each term. They transfer to the reception classes as rising fives twice in each year. At the time of inspection, most children in the reception classes were under five. The nursery is staffed with one full-time teacher to 19 children who attend for a morning or an afternoon. One nursery nurse is employed to support children in indoor and outdoor activities. This factor presents children with limited provision of adult help in classes to support their learning. Accommodation and use of the available space adversely affect the organisation of classes in the foundation stage. In fact, parts of the accommodation are poor. One of the reception classes is housed in a small outbuilding. A lot of valuable learning time is wasted in moving children between this room and other accommodation for under-fives. On occasions when both reception classes combine in a confined space, the quality of learning is adversely affected, reducing the rate of children's progress to less than it might otherwise be.
65. Overall attainment on entry to the nursery is lower than normally found, especially in language and literacy. However, most children make satisfactory gains in all areas of learning. Five-year-olds attain most of the early learning goals in the areas of creative, physical and personal, social and emotional development by the time that they begin the National Curriculum. However, a larger proportion than usually found does not reach the goals in the important areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, although several do reach these goals. Children with special educational needs receive good support to enhance their progress.
66. The overall quality of teaching in all areas of learning is satisfactory in both nursery and reception classes. Teachers provide experiences that are relevant, imaginative and enjoyable such as creative work including collage, painting and imaginative play. They have sound knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. The range of activities broadly reflects all areas of learning. In the reception classes, the learning is extended to embrace and link with the work that children will encounter when they begin the National Curriculum, particularly in the literacy and numeracy strategies. Although the teachers promote most of the early learning goals satisfactorily in their planning, often their learning intentions are too broad and do not identify precisely the skills that will be taught and what pupils will learn. The nursery and reception teachers do not plan together sufficiently rigorously to ensure that children build systematically on previously acquired skills and knowledge. However, their general understanding of the age group is good. Baseline assessments take place on entry to the reception classes and support planning of work to meet children's specific learning needs. However, the procedures for assessing children on a daily basis are inconsistent and do not support the match of task to children's level of functioning and skills. Homework in the form of borrowing books is used particularly well to enhance pupils' reading skills.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

67. Most children settle down quickly and feel both happy and secure. By the time they leave the reception classes, children are often reaching the national expectations in this area. This attainment reflects skilful teaching of this area of learning. Teachers act as good role models for children and explain clearly what is expected of them. Simple classroom rules are shared and discussed clearly with all children to ensure their understanding of what it means to behave sensibly in a classroom situation. Consequently, they make good progress as they learn to co-operate, share and take turns. They are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they

can achieve in a variety of learning situations. For example, they share refreshments daily in the nursery, learn to take turns, when sitting in a circle at the start of sessions and play number or phonic games. Children concentrate and listen quietly. A good example was observed in the nursery class, where children sat in a circle and shared their experience of holidays. They listened to others and waited patiently to describe their own. Children are effectively taught differences between right and wrong and guided to behave sensibly at all times. They show consideration and respect for property and each other. Children are helped to form good relationships with others. Most are attentive and eager to learn and enjoy sharing their work with any available adult. They are keen to participate in activities that are led by the teacher, or that they choose themselves. Children are purposefully occupied, skilfully managed and sensitively supported.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

68. The teaching of language skills is satisfactory. On entry to the nursery, many children are reluctant to speak and much of their communication is in single words. Teachers focus well on developing children's talk and new vocabulary. They constantly encourage them to talk about what they are doing through, for example, role-play and dressing up in the home corner or working with malleable plastic dough. The reception-aged children were observed acting out the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, with increased confidence in speaking and developing understanding of the sequence of events. Appropriate opportunities for children to listen and respond to stories, songs and rhymes are evident in both nursery and reception classes. Children in the reception classes start to link sounds with letters through language games. They learn and consolidate new sounds through daily practice. Teachers show that they value children's efforts at communicating. While most children willingly talk freely about their work, several communicate briefly, seldom using full sentences. Reception children begin to talk interestingly about their experiences and teachers use these opportunities to encourage new vocabulary. For example, they acted out the roles involved in the *Travel Agents* in one class. Regular practice of making letter-shapes is provided and some children write their own names. Good progress is made when teachers work in small groups or give children individual attention. Elements of the literacy strategy are making a significant impact. Children develop new vocabulary as they discuss pictures in big books and storybooks. Adults model reading of print well and thereby enhance children's love for books. Children enjoy stories read collectively, listen attentively and join in the repetitive phrases with a lot of pleasure.

### **Mathematical development**

69. Children's mathematical development is often low when they join the nursery. They start to learn numbers in rhymes and songs, such as *1-2-3-4-5, once I caught a fish alive* and start to count numbers up to ten. In the reception classes, they learn to sequence and order numbers, and some count reliably to ten. Most children are unlikely to attain all the early learning goals by the end of foundation stage. However, they make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time. They are effectively supported to match, sort and count everyday objects. Teaching of this area is satisfactory overall. Planning shows that children in the reception classes are effectively taught to count up to ten forwards and backwards, in the oral sessions. However, teachers' expectations are sometimes low for the more capable children. For example, although these children count to ten and beyond and recognise the number symbols, they have not yet been taught to understand one less or one more. Opportunities for practical activities are generally well planned, for example, *Hook a Duck* at the water tray involves matching with numerals. A few younger children are beginning to recognise basic shapes and gain some knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. Some older children describe objects by position, shape, size, colour and quantity. However, most children demonstrate limited knowledge of how to solve simple problems involving language such as "...three more than" or "...five less" by the end of the reception year. Teacher involvement in children's activities is good, but teachers do not consistently record useful assessments and then use these to plan the next activities.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

70. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes give children many suitable opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, for example, learning about families in the home corner or planting beans and watching them grow. Children investigate the properties of objects, observing how they look and feel. They work with sand and water and freely explore properties of malleable materials. They compare properties such as hardness and softness and make good use



of senses. In the nursery, children learn about the weather by observing conditions, such as “rainy and wet”, “sunny” or “windy”, carefully each day and talking about it. They learn about the wind through simple experiments, such as blowing lengths of streamers in front of an electric fan. Teachers support children’s understanding and encourage learning the names of different parts of the body. Children also enjoyed seeing how they had grown since they were babies. Opportunities to build with construction materials and to find out how things work are provided. Effective adult intervention in activities and encouragement to explore new ideas is sometimes limited due to lack of adult support. For this reason, consolidation and learning of new words is not always as secure as it might otherwise be. Nevertheless, progress is satisfactory, although, by the time they begin the National Curriculum, overall attainment is still a little below what is usually found. Children have opportunities to develop computer skills. They show increasing control in the use of the mouse, understanding how to point at and move items on the screen.

### **Physical development**

71. Many children are on course to meet most of the early learning goals in their physical development. The outdoor provision to enhance children’s physical skills is satisfactory for both nursery and reception classes. A suitable range of large and small outdoor resources, such as tricycles and scooters, permits pupils to acquire skills of co-ordination and balance as they ride and steer. In the main school hall, both nursery and reception children learn to be aware of space and develop control of movement. Reception classes regularly attend gymnastic and movement lessons. Most children can follow simple instructions but have difficulty in following more complex and longer instructions. In their use of construction toys, a significant number of pupils demonstrate reasonable hand and eye co-ordination. They are developing confidence in the use of different tools such as scissors and brushes and joining materials such as glue and sellotape. Teaching of this area is often good. A sensitive awareness of children’s safety is evident in planning and a calm and sensitive approach supports learning well. Teachers show good understanding of how young children learn.

### **Creative development**

72. Most children are on course to meet the early learning goals in this area by the end of the foundation stage. They experiment with mixing paint and use their observations and imagination to create pleasing results. They are given opportunities to explore colour and texture, and work with a range of materials. Some examples of three-dimensional collage related to the story of *The very hungry caterpillar* and work on paper plates, entitled *Suns* is particularly effective. In music lessons, children sing and clap nursery rhymes and express enjoyment of rhythms. Reception children learn to name and use different percussion instruments. They too have a repertoire of songs that they enjoy singing.

## **ENGLISH**

73. Standards in English have risen in line with national trends since the last inspection so that the “satisfactory standards” for seven and 11-year-olds that were reported in 1997 have been maintained. The attainment of seven-year-olds in reading is now above average. Standards of speaking and listening throughout the school are currently above average at the ages of seven and 11 and it is evident that pupils volunteer ideas and opinions willingly. Other weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have also been positively addressed. Pupils now use the library and find reference books confidently. Research skills are developing well and pupils’ use of computers for word processing and research in English is sound. When last inspected, pupils with special educational needs made satisfactory progress, but strategies in place to support the learning of these pupils now ensure that progress is good, and their learning, although below the levels of other pupils, keeps pace well.
74. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, pupils’ performance in both reading and writing was average when compared with all schools nationally. However, a smaller number of pupils than average achieved the higher Level 3 in writing. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading were above what is usually found and in writing well above. Results have fluctuated since 1996, but when averaged out over the last three years, both reading and writing standards have slightly exceeded what is normally found at this age. Although girls’ results are slightly better than boys, they are not markedly so. The school has begun to address the issue of

lower than average numbers attaining higher levels. For example, it has introduced a new scheme for learning spellings, given additional support in classrooms and provided small classes in Year 1. Pupils have also been taught in classes that match their prior attainments from the start of the spring term in Year 2. Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in the 2000 English tests show slightly more pupils scoring the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 than is found nationally, although, compared with the national average, these results are broadly in line when taken together. In comparison with similar schools, they are well above average. Improvements that are in line with improvement found nationally have occurred over the last four years. Attainment in different year groups through the school varies and is influenced by the high numbers of pupils, particularly boys, with special educational needs.

75. The school's exceptionally good programme for personal and social development promotes confidence extremely well. This aspect has had a positive impact on raising standards in speaking and listening, as it provides many opportunities for discussion and taking turns to state personal views and opinions. As a result, speaking and listening skills are generally above expected levels through the school. From the age of five up to seven, skilled teaching ensures that pupils are very attentive, concentrating for long periods without losing interest, and many pupils talk about their work with assurance. Six-year-olds discussing openings for traditional fairy stories and answering questions on *Stranger Danger* used considerable expression when giving their views. Seven-year-olds, discussing cyclical diagrams representing the life cycle of a butterfly, explained clearly and confidently those lines of a poem linked to stages of the diagram. In all subjects, pupils join in discussions and answer questions confidently. Higher attaining seven-year-olds use imaginative language well. For example, in an appraisal of *Sinfonia Antarctica*, they commented, "...It made me think that two polar bears were fighting when the people started to sing." Teachers foster this confidence very positively by adapting their questions sensitively to the needs of individuals. They invariably give warm encouragement and plenty of praise for accurate and acceptable answers.
76. The confidence shown by seven-year-olds is built upon positively as pupils move on through the school. Seven- to 11-year-olds enjoy appropriate and sometimes good opportunities to discuss text and extend their vocabulary during the literacy hour. Relationships between pupils, teachers and support staff are warm and very supportive, helping to increase confidence further. Pupils are strongly encouraged to express their views on a wide range of issues and use these opportunities well. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 were particularly involved in discussions about Betjeman's *Summoned by Bells*. Stimulated by good teaching, pupils were able to identify and explain clues, such as 'cornflakes' and 'bike sheds' that placed the text clearly in the twentieth century. This contrasted with Early English words, which were identified and often correctly explained from context, in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Very good listening skills were evident when pupils heard a tape of John Betjeman reading his own work, contributing very positively to pupils' cultural development. Lower attaining pupils in Year 3 were similarly very well stimulated when collecting adjectives related to characters in fairy tales. Skilful questioning and reminders, together with the teacher's extremely expressive delivery and warm congratulations encouraged pupils to search their memories. As a result, they recalled and used good vocabulary, such as 'vicious' and 'fierce' for the dragon, and extended their efforts successfully, using whiteboards "...to change adjectives for a better one". In another group, higher attaining pupils were very enthusiastic and exuberant, volunteering ideas very eagerly, recognising and explaining that words like 'paper' can be used as nouns and adjectives, and using both correctly.
77. Currently, the attainment of seven-year-olds in reading is around average. Bearing the range of pupils' starting points in mind, this achievement is good. It is due in no small degree to teachers' close and regular monitoring of what pupils are reading and how they get on, which produces good understanding of learning needs. Regular practice from a wide range of texts during literacy hours, together with discussions about how to build words from sounds, ensures that pupils develop fluency well. Pupils understand what they can learn from the covers of books and higher attaining pupils understand the terms "fiction" and "information", and can identify the author and illustrator. Teachers strongly encourage pupils to sound out unknown words and more confident readers use the strategy automatically, as well as thinking about the intention and meaning of sentences. Less confident readers have a basic reading vocabulary and use skills well to unravel unfamiliar words. A programme entitled *Reading Recovery* provides extremely good support, with a clear focus on learning and reinforcing the basic skills of reading and spelling. Pupils are taught carefully and tasks are very finely matched to learning requirements. As a result, skills that are taught are individually tuned to pupils' weaknesses in reading. Pupils take books home regularly and the vast

majority of parents give good support by listening to their children and helping them to choose books. Records of what pupils have read are brought up to date regularly and encouraging comments are made.

78. Current attainment in Year 6 is average. A few higher attaining pupils read confidently and clearly, and make inferences well from complex texts. Average and lower attaining pupils read at appropriate levels, but lack confidence when discussing books. Several of them demonstrate less enthusiasm when talking about favourite authors and the types of books they enjoy, than is normally expected at this age. Both fiction and non-fiction texts are, however, used well in English lessons, providing opportunities to study a wide range of texts. The majority of seven- to 11 year-olds concentrate well during literacy hours, reading steadily and carefully. Occasionally, reading matter is not accurately matched to pupils' prior learning. For example, in lower attaining classes in Years 4 and 5, some pupils found the text very difficult. As a result, although understanding was supported well by discussion, reading skills themselves were not so well served, and progress was slower than it might otherwise have been. Pupils are expected to record how much they read each week. Nearly all of them accept this responsibility with relish, whereas a few are not as meticulous. Nevertheless, teachers' comments are encouraging and useful dialogue about the content of what has been read was evident.
79. The school is taking positive steps to improve standards in writing. These are currently average in Year 2. A commercial scheme has been introduced to improve spelling among the younger pupils and the quality of writing in Year 1 shows that steady improvement since the beginning of the year has occurred. Middle and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 form letters carefully and accurately and handwriting is nearly all of an even size. They usually use capital letters and full stops appropriately and simple words are often spelt accurately. Imaginative writing is developing well and final drafts are neatly written and accurately spelt. For example, when writing a horror story, a pupil whose attainment in other respects was average produced ideas that showed clear understanding of how to heighten tension with the use of implication. Several good examples of this skill, such as, "I will make some soup and you will be the ingredients..." were found in what was written. The range of written work is appropriate for pupils' age, and the work of higher attaining pupils appropriately includes spelling rules, like making opposites by adding prefixes. These pupils invariably punctuate sentences accurately, using full stops and capital letters. Punctuation like quotation marks and exclamation marks to enhance work are also evident. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to join their handwriting, but this is not yet consistently done and, although spellings are written as they sound, some elementary rules of spelling are not routinely used.
80. Since the last inspection, the school has ensured that a full range of writing activities is studied in classes for seven- to 11-year-olds. The overall attainment of 11-year-olds is average. Pupils write for a range of purposes at expected levels for their age. They use the computer confidently, using word processing skills to write for different purposes, and with appropriate impact. Years 5 and 6 pupils have word-processed poetry of good quality, basing their ideas on a display given by birds of prey. Good teaching develops their awareness of adjectives and descriptive phrases well. For example, phrases such as, "...silent and swooping", "unseen by furry prey..." and similar were commonly employed to good effect. Further evidence of this type of good teaching leading pupils to put in a good intellectual effort was found in Year 5. Pupils prepared covers for videos and were encouraged to use "clever" and "attention grabbing" slogans. As a result, examples like *DO NOT WATCH THIS VIDEO – IT IS HIGHLY TOP SECRET* were produced. During literacy hours, pupils use a range of writing techniques and styles that includes lists, writing poetry, taking notes, factual exercises and stories. Achievement is generally good because they follow teachers' advice well, using grammar and parts of speech, such as adjectives, similes, direct speech and punctuation soundly to enhance what they produce. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 consistently punctuate their work accurately and use dictionaries to find the derivation of words like 'posh'. All pupils are taught a rich diet of literature and teaching ensures very good stimulation for writing. This good provision includes pupils with identified special educational needs. Teachers and classroom assistants support them well and they make good progress. Simple sentences are joined with connectives and these pupils sequence stories so that meaning is clear. Handwriting is usually neat and pupils usually take care with presentation. However, several middle and lower attaining pupils are less tidy, using uneven letters and inconsistently joined handwriting. This weakness reduces the standard of handwriting to below average. The school is aware of it and the deficiency is reflected in plans to introduce a new scheme as a matter of urgency.

81. Overall, teaching is good across the school. It is slightly stronger in classes for five- to seven-year-olds and in Year 6 than in other year groups. Nevertheless, in a quarter of lessons, teaching is very good. Teachers have a clear understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and most have adapted its use well to suit the needs of their pupils. Teachers are confident about what they are teaching and in very good whole class sessions, particularly in Year 6, teachers clearly enjoy imparting a love of words and literature. Pupils are usually very focused during lessons, due to good questions and a lively, enthusiastic style. This style suits pupils' learning requirements well and a good use of time results, which ensures that pupils' pace of working is good. Planning is supported strongly by good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. However, it was less detailed planning in identifying what pupils should be learning in group-work that separated otherwise satisfactory lessons from those that were good or very good. Teachers know their pupils well and adapt questions successfully to learning needs. In this way, pupils' ideas and vocabulary are extended. A very good partnership between teachers, support staff and pupils results in a very effective contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Classroom assistants are very effective when supporting pupils with a specific programme, such as *Reading Recovery* or additional work supporting literacy tasks. Whiteboards and other resources are effectively used in classes and in group-work for spelling practice or when recording, for example, nouns and adjectives. As a result, all pupils have an opportunity to respond to questions, jotting down what they think with an acetate pen. Pupils with special needs are warmly encouraged to discuss their work and to ask for help and relationships between support staff and pupils invariably foster a positive attitude towards learning.
82. The co-ordinator works very hard to improve provision and standards in English. She is knowledgeable about the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and understands how different elements of literacy hours contribute to overall learning. Having analysed the results of national tests and the areas of learning that need development, a programme for improvement has been set in place and the co-ordinator has begun to monitor its effects on standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in mathematics was in line with national expectations. Pupils were numerate for their ages and used mathematics in several other areas of the curriculum. Teaching was satisfactory, although a commercially prepared scheme was not consistently used well and some unsatisfactory teaching occurred, which slowed learning. Currently, attainment remains average. However, it should be born in mind that the national standards against which performance is now judged are considerably higher than a few years ago. Teaching has improved and no unsatisfactory lessons were found. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has replaced the school's dependence on the commercial materials that were referred to.
84. The attainment of 11-year-olds in the 2000 National Curriculum tests was broadly in line with national averages when compared with all schools nationally and was above those of similar schools. However, this judgement hides a significant fact. The number of pupils who gained the expected Level 4 was above the national average, but the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was similar to the national average. From a high point in 1997, standards dropped sharply in 1998 but have since improved at a rate greater than the national average and standards in 2000 were broadly in line with national expectations. Current inspection findings are that 11-year-olds remain broadly in line with national expectations for Level 4, but below expectations for Level 5, owing to the lack of emphasis on the development of investigative and problem-solving skills. Between 1999 and 2000, some variation occurred between the performances of boys and girls. However, the inspection team found nothing that was significantly different in the treatment of the genders or in attainment or responses within either group. Given the overall strength of teaching and the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the school is well placed to meet its targets for 2001. Standards attained by seven-year-olds in the 2000 tests were below the average of all schools in the country, but above those of similar schools. The percentage of pupils who gained the expected Level 2 was in line with national expectations. However, the percentage gaining the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. This inevitably reduced the school's overall average. Wide fluctuations in standards have occurred in different years over the past five years. In 1996, standards were well above average, dipped to broadly in line in 1997, rose to above in 1998 and dipped to average in 1999. Since then, standards have risen steadily but at a rate slower than the national trend.

85. Currently, standards of attainment at the age of seven are broadly in line with national expectations, owing to the quality of teaching, good behaviour and pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils in Year 2 sequence numbers up to 100 accurately and understand the concept of place value to the expected level for their age. Even lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, through excellent teaching, are able to recognise numbers missing from sequences. Nearly all pupils understand shape and space, naming relevant two- and three-dimensional shapes and recognising right angles. They measure accurately, using a range of standard and non-standard units. Currently, pupils in Year 6 also match expected levels for their age, with a few attaining at levels above and below what is normally expected. Overall attainment is, therefore, average. Pupils use place value successfully to record and compute numbers. Higher attainers employ long methods of multiplication and division and use up to two places of decimals. Nearly all pupils understand simple percentages and fractions. In work on shape and space, they identify reflex, acute, obtuse and right angles and name their characteristics. More able pupils can identify opposite angles and other aspects of shape and direction. For example, they confidently contributed to a discussion about lines that intersect. Many lower-attaining pupils have a satisfactory understanding of square numbers and their roots. Pupils use graphs, charts and tables to record and display information. During the inspection, insufficient evidence of investigative and practical mathematics was found. This weakness restricts the progress of pupils' skills in applying the mathematics that they learn to real situations.
86. Pupils' numeracy is developing well. Progress in the use of mental strategies is evident and they recognise the relative sizes of numbers accurately for their ages. Most pupils recognise shapes in their environment and read and interpret information from simple graphs, which are employed in, for example, science and geography lessons.
87. The link between teaching, pupils' attitudes and learning was very clear during the inspection. Thirteen lessons were observed. Two were satisfactory, seven were good, and three were very good. One example of excellent teaching occurred in a Year 2 class. All teachers used the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy and clearly understood its pattern well. The oral part of lessons developed mathematical thinking particularly well and pupils responded with attention, interest and enjoyment. In Year 4, a very good lesson on function machines employed open and closed questions thoughtfully, first to challenge pupils' thinking and then to focus and correct misconceptions. This skilful technique encouraged pupils to articulate their thinking, which they did enthusiastically. It tested their own theories for doubling two-digit numbers and for applying their new learning to money problems. In a lesson in Year 5, good questioning led pupils to offer explanations excitedly. While higher attainers carried out a number investigation independently, less able pupils checked their results on a calculator and demonstrated strong willingness to share findings. The pace and energy of lessons were a key factor in engaging and motivating pupils, so that they applied themselves and learnt well. In lessons that were satisfactory, rather than good or better, it was often lack of attention to detail that reduced the quality of the teaching. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on the identification and measurement of angles, the overhead projector was badly sited, so that pupils' full attention could not be engaged. As a result, they experienced a teacher-dominated discussion that undervalued the possibility of their own contributions. Nevertheless, they still learnt securely about the properties of the Tangram. Lessons are carefully planned and sequenced so that they build on previous learning, resulting in good gains in knowledge and understanding. This feature was very evident in classes in Years 1 and 2, where the theory and practice of partitioning two-digit numbers were successfully built upon during the week. Many well-planned lessons were very focused and aims behind the lessons were shared and explained to pupils. As a result, they knew what they were to do and what they should learn. Such methods were well supported with a range of resources such as the use of dice and number paddles to develop the understanding of, for example, 'odd' and 'even' in Year 1. The deployment of support staff to work with groups of pupils is good throughout the school. They are well prepared for what they do and their contributions to the assessments of pupils' progress aids the class teacher to set work that matches pupils' previous learning as the starting point for the next lesson. The management of pupils is generally good. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils. These relationships are warm and trusting. The importance of this was exemplified when two pupils in Year 2 trusted both their fellow pupils and teachers enough to admit that they were confused and needed further help. The intervention that followed then enabled them to make good progress.
88. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Effective monitoring by both the co-ordinator and the attached governor has looked at teachers' planning, pupils at work and teachers' teaching. The co-ordinator

is a good leader. She appreciates the importance of the role in helping to raise standards and has led staff meetings and school-based training on the application of the numeracy strategy. Assessment procedures are good. The school uses non-statutory test materials in Years 3, 4 and 5 and the results are used to track pupils' progress from year to year and to set individual targets. These procedures help to raise attainment directly. Challenge for more able pupils has been identified as inconsistent through the school. The less able, including those pupils with special educational needs, have specific support. Mathematical needs are beginning to be reflected in individual education plans, although this aspect is inconsistent. Both number and shape are strengths of the curriculum and are taught well. Teachers do not, however, provide enough opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to develop their mathematical thinking, especially in areas such as data-handling.

## SCIENCE

89. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was judged as “broadly sound”. Good questioning by teachers enabled pupils to make sound progress in their understanding. Teaching was always sound with well planned work. Currently, standards remain broadly average, although much higher numbers are now reaching expected levels than in 1997. The overall quality of teaching remains satisfactory, although it is now good in classes for seven- to 11-year-olds, which is an improvement.
90. The percentage of seven-year-olds attaining expected levels in the 2000 statutory teachers’ assessments was well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests of 11-year-olds were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. These results of 11-year-olds were an improvement over those in 1999 and were better than those in the last inspection. However, few 11-year-olds achieved higher than expected levels. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils’ attainment is currently below, rather than well below, the national average at the age of seven, and remains close to the national average by the time pupils leave the school at 11. Although most pupils make good progress, as a result of generally good teaching in classes for seven to 11-year-olds, work is not consistently adapted to the needs of pupils with different levels of prior knowledge. As a result, opportunities for pupils to reach higher than expected levels of attainment are limited.
91. Most seven-year-olds show a basic understanding of a range of scientific skills and knowledge. For example, in their study of living things, younger pupils accurately named facial features and the external parts of the human body. However, while pupils explore various objects and materials, the vocabulary that they acquire to describe the properties of these materials rarely goes beyond everyday English such as “hard”, “soft”, “rough” and “smooth”. Pupils begin to use their senses to group objects according to criteria suggested to them. Year 2 pupils demonstrate knowledge of sounds that they hear around them and learn about parts of the ear. Most reach expected levels of understanding for their age. However, what is taught is not consistently adapted to differing levels of understanding, which restricts the possibility of high attainment. Most pupils successfully learn that ‘pushes’ and ‘pulls’ are examples of simple forces. They receive suitable opportunities to use firsthand experiences and develop skills of observation in asking and answering questions. Nearly all of them understand ideas such as ‘waterproof’ or ‘not waterproof’. However, few pupils take ideas about prediction and fair testing further than the basic expectations for their age.
92. By 11, most pupils gain an insight into the living world and accurately name the major organs of the human body. When an emphasis is placed on practical investigations, it is providing pupils with valuable first-hand knowledge and understanding and this is having a direct impact on their achievement. For example, in a very good lesson, Year 3 pupils constructed simple circuits incorporating batteries, bulbs, buzzers and motors. They carefully used symbols to record and confidently explain how their circuits worked. Year 4 pupils extended their ideas by testing forces of attraction and repulsion between magnetic objects. Year 6 pupils investigate dissolving of different solids and show increased knowledge of the properties of various substances, such as sugar, sand, salt, cornflour and others. They confidently describe methods used to separate mixtures and develop awareness of the effects of changes to materials through careful observations, gaining insights into reversible and irreversible changes. Year 6 pupils participate in experiments, carrying out fair tests on substances and using simple equipment. They show developing reasoning skills as a result of the teacher’s good probing questioning. However, a weakness of this experimental work is that a lot of it is guided too much. This guidance does not allow higher attaining pupils sufficient opportunities to develop skills of planning experimental and observational work. Some examples of completed work indicated that pupils do not always make predictions, or understand the distinction between “cause” and “effect”. The recording of observations is inconsistent from class to class. In some classes, independent recording skills of some pupils are weak because they are too dependent on labelled sketches alone. In other classes, pupils demonstrate confidence in representing findings with drawings, graphs, charts, tables and factual written conclusions that are firmly based on observed evidence. The use of science dictionaries across the school enhances pupils’ progress. However, pupils’ ability to seek patterns and evaluate results of investigations for themselves is underdeveloped, partly because it is not built up systematically as pupils move through the school.
93. While most pupils make good progress from the age of seven to 11, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough to make progress towards higher levels of knowledge and skill. Insufficient use

is made of information and communication technology to present data in a more interesting way or to record results of experiments. Good use is made of numeracy skills, when pupils record and analyse data in experiments, for example, when investigating forces and using force-metres and scales. Pupils' literacy skills in science are not sufficiently developed, however, particularly from five up to seven years old. Pupils make limited progress in developing and using scientific vocabulary. From the age of seven to 11, pupils' findings are generally well written, but opportunities for pupils to develop research skills and to be involved in independent scientific enquiry of their own are rather limited.

94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in classes for seven- to 11-year-olds and satisfactory in classes for younger pupils. One unsatisfactory lesson occurred in Year 2. When teaching is good, teachers make good uses of probing and open-ended questions that elicit extended answers from pupils. Such responses prompt further enquiry. However, in some lessons, teachers do not ensure that pupils use and understand scientific terminology. Conversely, in classes for older pupils, teachers take care to teach and use scientific words and to ensure pupils' understanding. The unsatisfactory lesson occurred because its content was not sufficiently linked to pupils' previous work and skills, leading to inappropriate expectations of what could be achieved. Opportunities for practical investigations are not well planned and organised. There is often a lack of challenge in the tasks provided and low expectations of pupils with higher abilities. In most lessons, teachers employ effective strategies for dealing successfully with pupils and gaining positive responses from them. In most lessons, teachers use the plenary session effectively to consolidate learning and provide pupils with opportunities to explain and share their findings. Information and communication technology is not effectively used to stimulate pupils' curiosity and encourage enquiry. The organisation and use of time and resources to support learning are generally satisfactory.
95. Pupils' have good attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic and well motivated in lessons with opportunities to hypothesise, investigate and discuss their own work and findings. Pupils behave appropriately, engage in activities with interest, listen and respond well to questions. In general, pupils work safely and co-operatively, share equipment and take initiative to help each other.
96. The co-ordinator has clear direction for the subject and clear plans to raise standards further. The recent changes to the curriculum include a school scheme which is supplemented by the curricular guidance of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Arrangements for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory. The quality of marking is variable. Not all teachers provide useful comments for pupils to improve. Record keeping tracks pupils' progress effectively. Some monitoring of the quality of teaching and standards is usefully undertaken by the co-ordinator. Resources are sufficient and organised centrally for ease of access. The school effectively uses opportunities such as 'Science Week' to enhance and celebrate pupils' achievements.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

97. At the time of the last inspection, standards in art were below those expected nationally at the ages of both seven and 11. Skills and techniques were limited and, although pupils were provided with sketchbooks, what was presented in them was at a very basic level and their observational drawings or preliminary sketches were rarely incorporated into their main work. Standards have improved considerably and the work of seven- and 11-year-olds is now generally in line with expected levels for their age. For example, techniques to create textured pictures of snowmen in Year 2, using chalk on sugar paper, demonstrated that pupils are taking care to use skills that they have been shown. Pupils' observational drawing is also developing well, with more uses of shading and accurate line in later work than that carried out earlier in the year. In Year 6, pupils' work in the style of Kenyan artefacts is meeting expectations for their age. Their attention to detail, attempting to capture variation in shades of colours, is effective and has a strong sense of the vibrancy of the original works.
98. Work on display around the school employed a variety of different styles and good uses of skills and techniques that built steadily as pupils moved on through the school. For example, information and communication technology has been used to create abstract work, combining and superimposing shapes and blocks of colour, reminiscent of the work of Mondrian. Work in Year 3, based on the style of Ancient Greece, included coiled-clay pots and demonstrated that pupils have looked carefully at pictures and/or original artefacts and attempted to use similar skills and ideas to



produce works of their own. An innovative cross-curricular link is that made with personal, social and health education. In a bright, colourful presentation, artwork was used to exemplify *Junk Foods*.

99. Attitudes to the subject are good, with pupils clearly taking more care with their work than at the time of the last inspection. What is on display in classrooms and around the building is neat and suggests that pupils of all ages take pride in the appearance of what they paint and draw. In two lessons that were inspected, behaviour was good in one and excellent in the other. This high quality of behaviour is ensuring that time is spent well and that pupils work at a good pace.
100. Insufficient evidence is available to make an overall judgement of teaching, but the quality was good in one lesson and very good in another. Very good teaching in Year 3 required a lot of concentration of pupils. Pupils were required to use small Greek coins as models for observational drawing. The teacher emphasised the need for great care in looking closely at what was on the faces of the coins. Pupils sketched using techniques, such as line drawing, hatching and shading, and accepted the challenge well. The quality of pupils' learning was, therefore, good, and several very good drawings resulted. In Year 1, a good session with the whole class at the end of a lesson focused well on what was hard and what was easy in drawing *Primulas in a Pot*. Most pupils agreed that the curve of the pot was the biggest challenge.
101. Co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator established targets for improvements based on the findings of the last inspection report. These targets set about improving teachers' confidence and matters related to the curriculum (a key issue in the last report) by focusing more closely on the development of pupils' skills. Part of the strategy has been the introduction of better and more wide-ranging resources. As these resources were introduced, ideas and training are given to staff about how to use them. A recent example has been the introduction of a range of pencils of different softness of leads. These will be used to encourage and improve the quality of shading in observational and other drawing.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. During the inspection period, only two lessons in design and technology were timetabled. Very few samples of work were available for scrutiny. Judgements about pupils' standards of work and progress across the school have been made from what was available and by talking to pupils and members of staff.
103. Standards of work seen are broadly similar to national expectations at the age of seven. The school has maintained this standard from the time of the last inspection. However, standards remain below expectations at 11, as they were in the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in making models, especially during special projects. However, insufficient emphasis on planning and designing models and products prevents pupils from making enough progress from seven years old onwards. Pupils' skills in generating ideas and looking at systems of construction and how real products are joined are not systematically planned and taught as they move through the school.
104. Pupils in Year 2 work with different materials and successfully acquire skills such as cutting, shaping and joining, for example, when they made cars and carts from reclaimable and recycled materials as part of a project on transport. Most pupils of this age use simple cutting tools with increasing skill and use glue and sticky tapes to join materials effectively. Most pupils prepared designs for their vehicles by drawing sketches and investigated the uses of wheels and axles. Younger pupils learn to use scissors with growing accuracy to cut and shape paper and cardboard. For example, they made a clown with moving eyes. Opportunities exist for pupils to work with a range of commercial construction kits made of wood or plastic, following instructions and developing early skills of modelling and making products. Pupils pay appropriate attention to neatness and detail in their finished products. However, the skills of planning and designing are not built sufficiently rigorously on what has been taught before.
105. Most pupils in Year 5 have used accuracy and detail in their designs of video covers. They are developing skills such as measuring and marking out accurately. Some of the photographic evidence indicates that, as part of science topics, pupils have worked with pneumatics and produced structures to build bridges. However, in making these models pupils are not sufficiently

engaged in using and understanding the process of design. Pupils' skills of measuring and marking out and independently choosing from a range and variety of building and joining materials that they have already planned are insufficiently developed. Opportunities for evaluating products to consider appropriateness of size, power and strength are limited. No examples of using computers in the design process were found.

106. The attitude and response of pupils towards learning is generally good. They enjoy design and technology and work well collaboratively in pairs and small groups. They bring their own ideas and skills to the task. They co-operate with other pupils and work with commitment and enthusiasm. The group of pupils making clowns with moving eyes clearly demonstrated enjoyment of the task.
107. An overall judgement of the quality of teaching is not possible. However, the observation of two lessons, the examination of what was on display and discussions with staff and pupils suggest that time is used well to teach skills and appropriate vocabulary. In a good lesson, Year 4 pupils were guided effectively in their choice of materials and techniques when making models of Tudor houses. The teacher used demonstration to good effect and careful descriptions to teach pupils the correct way to use bench hooks, vices and saws. As a result, they made good progress in skills of making products.
108. The co-ordinator is committed to raising the subject's profile. Teachers' planning is currently based on the curricular guidance of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The aim of developing a scheme of work that includes clear assessment criteria as a means to improving planning of the subject (a key issue in the last report), has not yet been realised. Resources are adequate in range and quality and are organised centrally to ensure accessibility.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. When the school was last inspected, standards in geography were below national expectations and teaching was unsatisfactory. The provision of a suitable allocation of time for teaching geography and the formulating of a very thorough policy and a clear plan for learning, although only recently introduced, are having a positive impact on raising standards. The work of pupils in Year 2 now matches the levels expected for their age and, in respect to the levels of pupils' knowledge, exceeds the average. Although no geography lessons were seen in Year 6, an analysis of work and discussion with pupils indicates that standards of knowledge, skills and understanding are average for 11-year-olds.
110. Young pupils entering Year 1 are already aware of the significant differences between life in towns and life in the country and their work shows busy roads, cars and buses in town and trees, flowers and cows in the countryside. Good teaching in classes for pupils up to seven was characterised by very secure subject knowledge and fine attention to detail in planning. This detail was particularly evident in Year 2, ensuring that skills, knowledge and understanding were developed well. In Year 1, pupils consider the differences in the locality brought about by seasonal changes and over time. Local studies of Gatwick Airport give appropriate opportunities to find different countries on the globe and to locate capital cities. Together with simple plans of the airport runways, these features give a suitable introduction to map-work. Work in geography is closely linked with other areas of the curriculum. In Year 2, pupils study a contrasting area of the world and are able to explain and discuss many differences between their own lives and those of people who live in colder regions of the world. All know the location of the Arctic and the Antarctic and can explain why a polar bear cannot eat a penguin! Extremely good teaching in Year 2, with detailed explanations and careful questioning ensures that pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and their enthusiasm ensures that they learn well. A very visual description of climbing into a kayak ensured that pupils were left in no doubt about restrictions encountered by Inuit because of the smallness of their craft and the bulkiness of their clothing. Descriptions and explanations use pupils' skills in speaking and listening very well. Encouraging and imaginative teaching develops pupils' confidence very positively. Pupils clearly understand some of the changes that have been forced upon the people of the Arctic and know how climate affects what people wear, eat and do. They can identify transport, clothing and methods of hunting used by peoples in the Arctic and recognise how these have changed over time. They are confident in selecting equivalents used by people in the Arctic today and know why they prefer to be called Inuit.

111. By the age of 11, pupils have reached the standard expected for their age. Often their work is linked with other subjects and supports the development of basic skills well. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' own knowledge is secure and time is appropriately allocated to geography, but is sometimes not used in a focused way. Planning the teaching of specific skills, such as map reading, for example, is not uniformly rigorous. Year 4 pupils recognise the countries of the European Union and have a reasonable knowledge of the life styles of people in the different countries. An assembly presenting this information for other pupils and parents clearly showed that appropriate factual knowledge had been absorbed. Pupils used Encarta and a range of books to research their information. Their resultant understanding of the lives of European peoples was sound. However, opportunities to use direct teaching about the geographical features of countries, such as their major rivers or mountain ranges, are sometimes missed. As a result, pupils' geographical knowledge is not consistently extended as far as it might be. Year 5 pupils, studying their own village and locality, have good opportunities to study maps and develop their skills by understanding how time has changed the area. They noted that the smithy, standing in 1896, no longer exists and a pupil now lives where once a forest stretched out. This work leads to good understanding of how areas change and develop as people settle. Study of the contrasting world location of Kenya successfully introduces pupils to a very different modern country and suitably recognises the effects of the environment on lifestyle.
112. Year 6 pupils enjoy geography and teaching clearly identifies challenges for pupils at different levels of attainment, developing knowledge and skills. Pupils have secure knowledge of how people can cause damage and improvement to their surroundings and have studied the revitalisation of the River Thames, identifying types of pollution and measures taken to clean the river. Pupils use globes and world maps to identify areas at risk from pollution and to locate the holes known to be in the ozone layer. Resources like CD-roms, atlases and a modest range of visits including a visit to London and the residential visit to Carroty Wood appropriately support learning.
113. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good in classes for five- to seven-year-olds and satisfactory in classes for older pupils. No unsatisfactory teaching was found. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and involve themselves positively in discussion. The management of classroom behaviour is good and teachers give praise and encouragement, but, in marking work, the quality of information and skills mastered are seldom evaluated. Homework is well used to support and extend learning and is undertaken regularly. Pupils use their research skills and many use the Internet and information books, finding out, for example, names of major cities in the European Union.
114. The plan for the development in the subject is good and has improved planning since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator's own background in different countries strongly supports a high level of enthusiasm and knowledge of what should be taught. The school recognises areas for development and the co-ordinator is exploring setting up a contact with a school in a contrasting part of the United Kingdom.

## **HISTORY**

115. At the time of the last inspection, standards in history were "satisfactory" at the ages of seven and 11 and pupils showed clear enjoyment of the subject. Teaching was also satisfactory, although a few shortcomings were identified. During the inspection, it was not possible to see much direct teaching so evidence of achievement has largely been drawn from scrutiny of work in topic books, in displays around the school and from conversations with pupils. Overall standards achieved by seven-year-olds are in line with national expectations. Pupils use simple time-lines and explain how the lives of different generations of a family might differ. In Year 2, the pupils know some of the changes of life style brought about by changes in technology since the start of the last century. Pupils' recall of historical facts is sound and more than half of them produce good individual work of their own, demonstrating the use of good historical research skills. Overall standards are, therefore, above expectations and have improved since the last report.
116. Pupils are attentive and are interested in history. They work well together and discuss their ideas. As they move through the school, progress is at least sound. It gradually accelerates and is good in older age groups. As was the case at the time of the previous inspection, history is still taught through cross-curricular topics. However, lesson planning has improved since then. Plans now contain good statements about what pupils are expected to know at the end of lessons. Although

these are not always directly related to National Curriculum statements of attainment, teachers prepare work well and use a variety of methods to keep pupils interested. This feature was clear from the way in which pupils in Year 3 engaged in a debate after learning about the Ancient Greeks. They clearly enjoyed the experience, deepening their understanding of the democratic process and, at the same time, organising their ideas logically for an audience.

117. Pupils' written work is well presented in topic books. Often there are two books for each topic. One of these is produced as homework, often set as a holiday project. In many cases the resulting work is good. It clearly indicates that teachers present good guidance as to what should be researched and where the necessary information might be found. Marking is often restricted to short comments, however, as was reported previously. Nevertheless, teachers clearly value their pupils' work.
118. A comprehensive scheme of work that follows Curriculum 2000 closely is well set out. It gives good guidance to teachers and provides well for continuity and progression, both within year groups and from year to year. Very good links with other parts of the curriculum are carefully planned. In several respects, the quality of the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. There is now good balance of imparting knowledge and giving the pupils first hand experience. Pupils are now taught to use historical evidence and to carry out their own research using old photographs, documents, books and computer based information including the Internet. The taught curriculum is also enhanced by outside visits, both local and further afield. For example, younger pupils visit Reigate as part of their local studies. Older pupils are taken to the *White Cliffs Experience* as part of their topic, " Britain Since the 1930s". Visitors are also invited to talk to pupils about changes in everyday life within living memory.
119. Resources, which were reported to be only adequate at the time of the previous inspection, are now good. They include some very good materials for local studies produced by the subject co-ordinator. She has collected artefacts and other illustrative materials into topic sets for each year group. The school also makes extensive use of suitable computer programs and the Internet.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology failed to meet national requirements and in some respects were low. Considerable improvement has occurred. The school's provision for information and communication technology through the school is satisfactory and meets the statutory requirements of the national curriculum. Standards of attainment are average in all year groups. In some parts of the curriculum standards are good. Seven-year-olds log on to and close down programs correctly and confidently. Almost all pupils develop good mouse control and are able to access programs and select functions as appropriate to their age and stage of development. By the age of 11, pupils are familiar with a good number of programs and techniques. The majority can use a computer confidently for communicating information, for organising and analysing data and as a research tool. Many of the pupils in Year 6 can demonstrate and explain their work well and achieve good standards in some of the aspects of information and communication technology. For example, they can use a spreadsheet to process data taken from written text and use functions to calculate averages. They select suitable fonts, sizes and orientation in relation to the print-job, add headings and evaluate the printed results. However, standards in monitoring and control techniques are less secure.
121. General achievement and learning throughout the school are sound. In the reception classes, pupils begin to learn mouse control. They use a limited number of functions to achieve simple targets, they start to use the space bar and they learn to select characters from the keyboard. From the age of five up to seven, they add to their knowledge gradually until, by the end of Year 2, pupils confidently select pictures from an information program and transfer them to a personal file. They can then add text, change the font, the size and the colour and move text round the screen before saving and printing their work. Steady progress continues in classes for older pupils. By Year 6, pupils begin to use spreadsheets for data analysis and they display their results on graphs. They use CD-ROM and the Internet to research information for topics in other parts of the curriculum and they can select and display work in a variety of formats. However, progress in control and monitoring remains limited because the pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise.

122. All the teachers are taking part in a course of in service training and the impact of this is clear in the overall quality of teaching which is good in both key stages. In half the lessons seen during the inspection, the teaching was very good. Lessons are well planned and teachers are clear about what they want pupils to know at the end of lessons. Teachers make very good use of the time available. Whenever it is practicable, they revise procedures and introduce the lesson activities in the classroom before going into the computer suite. Although there is no whole school assessment scheme, they have good knowledge of the subject matter of the lessons and good understanding of the needs of their pupils.
123. The curriculum covers every aspect of the national curriculum, although control and monitoring have less time than other areas. The overall planning is well thought out to ensure that there is good continuity and progression within each part of the curriculum and from year to year. Information and communication technology lessons are carefully planned in each year group to address the requirements of the National Curriculum, as well as being relevant to and enhancing work in other subjects. This policy is successful. It gives the pupils a real sense of purpose in carrying out the activities and stimulates their interest. An example of this was seen in Year 5. The pupils were creating tables showing population levels in the Horley area in the nineteenth century. They were very interested to discover that there were fluctuations and to discuss possible reasons for sudden growth or decline in numbers of people living in the various villages.
124. At present, the whole school scheme of work is being re-written in the light of the new Curriculum 2000. The co-ordinator plans to evaluate and amend the units already in use with the staff at the end of the academic year when adjustments to the policy will also be made. The resources for teaching the subject are now good. The new computer suite is a real asset that enables skills to be taught and practised effectively. However, the school knows that some subjects, such as mathematics, need new software, some new equipment for teaching control techniques and more computers are needed in classrooms. At present, there is a rolling programme to provide extra machines in the classrooms as the budget allows.
125. Resources and provision within information and communication technology have improved considerably since the previous inspection. All year groups now have lessons in the computer suite. Lesson planning and the quality of teaching are much better. All areas of the national curriculum are covered, although the balance between the various parts is not yet even. As not all classes have full access to computers in their own rooms, some pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise the skills they learn in the suite, in lessons across the curriculum.

### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (French and German)**

126. Pupils have an early introduction to language learning when they are taught French in Year 5 and German in Year 6. The additional introduction of German Studies in Year 6 also encourages the development of an awareness of German culture and links with other curricular areas, such as speaking and listening and geography.
127. The quality of teaching is good in German and very good in French. The focus of the lessons in both languages is on the development of basic skills, particularly speaking and listening. Teachers use the relevant foreign language for most of the lessons and switch smoothly into English to check for understanding and to support the less confident. In French, the contribution of a parent helper who is a native speaker is very effective and also provides extension opportunities for the more able. In German however, extra support of this kind is not available.
128. In both languages, most pupils are able to use simple phrases learnt by heart and show reasonable confidence in speaking. They respond well to the lively presentation of their lessons which are effectively planned to include a range of activities, including games and songs, as well as work for whole class, small groups and pairs. These different methods enable teachers to address pupils' different learning requirements well.
129. Co-ordination is good and ensures that best practice is used in the teaching and curriculum of both languages. However, pupils' general knowledge of how language is structured, gained in literacy hours, is not used to advantage in lessons in these foreign languages. For example, well-known terminology such as 'nouns', 'verbs' and the like was not used to support understanding of how sentences and phrases are constructed.

## MUSIC

130. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was below national expectations at the ages of seven and 11. Basic skills were not sufficiently developed to sustain progress through the school. Attainment in Year 6 was at only a very basic level. The teaching of music was unsatisfactory and, in the weakest lessons, little opportunity was planned for practical activities. Since then, improvements have been put into place. The quality of teaching has improved considerably. Standards of seven- and 11-year-olds are now in line with what is expected nationally. For example, seven-year-olds listened very well to an extract from Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia Antarctica*, and afterwards explained what it had made them think. Pupils' ideas were relevant and showed that they had understood the link between the music and the landscape and climate of the Antarctic. This very good lesson included strongly reflective moments and made an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual development. It was clear in this lesson that seven-year-olds know ways of recording their musical ideas on paper. For example, their teacher asked them to "splash sounds on to paper with a pencil". This activity addressed early ideas of using non-standard notation to write music down. All pupils understood the task and higher attainers included different types of marks to mean different sounds. Pupils also know that 'p' is a musical sign for "soft", whereas 'f' means "loud".
131. Attainment also met expected levels for the age group, when pupils in Year 6 used Aaron Copland's *Quiet City* as a starting point, appraising its structure and elements of the composer's intentions, before composing their own pieces. A tape of their emerging work demonstrates the use of both tuned and untuned percussion instruments, recorders and other instruments. The inclusion of woodwind that a pupil is learning in instrumental lessons is a strong feature, enhancing the texture of the composition. Pupils' singing is also reaching levels expected in the National Curriculum. Its use in assemblies enhances the occasion and is accurate in pitch and rhythm. Examples of singing across the curriculum were found in modern language lessons. Pupils in Year 5, for example, sang *Frere Jacques* tunefully and confidently.
132. Pupils enjoy music and join in well with discussion and activities in lessons. For example, behaviour was never less than good and was excellent in a lesson in Year 2. A pupil who was being taught to play the flute in an instrumental lesson demonstrated a mature approach and had made good progress with this instrument, playing her pieces confidently. Such good attitudes towards the subject and behaviour in lessons have contributed to the improvement since the last inspection. It has permitted good uses of time and produced a strong pace of learning.
133. Teaching of music has clearly improved since the last inspection. The use of a specialist to teach most classes a musical idea or theme once a fortnight ensures that skills are introduced at the right levels for pupils. In the weeks in between, class teachers continue to consolidate what has been taught, using a relevant task. This method is also raising awareness of the requirements of the National Curriculum and serving to increase confidence. Teaching was never less than satisfactory in the inspected lessons – another improvement since the last inspection. Planning was good and good management of pupils was helping to ensure sound learning. For example, good teaching in Year 5 used Steve Wright's *Journey from New York City* and employed several good methods, including discussion, brainstorming and questioning. Pupils acquired skills well from this, and produced ideas of their own, based on prior knowledge of the bustle of London stations during the 1940s.
134. The subject is well co-ordinated. A lot of thinking, leading to appropriate action, about how to raise standards has clearly gone on since the last inspection. The introduction of related commercial schemes for infant and junior age groups is another way in which non-specialist teachers' confidence has been successfully raised, improving knowledge of what should be taught (a key issue). Resources have also improved and include a composer-program in the computer suite. Pupils are well served by a range of activities outside lessons. These include recorder, choir, orchestra and keyboard groups. Good links with other institutions include visits from musicians and music students featuring various instruments.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Overall standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and 11. In some lessons, standards were above expectations and many 11-year-olds demonstrate high levels

of ball control, including the skills of throwing, catching, passing, kicking and dribbling. Five to seven-year-olds develop good awareness of how to use spaces. They understand the importance of watching each other carefully to dodge and move about and are aware of the safety measures needed when they use the apparatus with others. They travel in a wide variety of ways and jump and land safely. Older pupils play games fairly, employing appropriate strategies in attacking and defending within the rules. They play together well in teams. In all year groups, pupils understand how to warm up and cool down and know the importance of keeping fit. As a result, pupils in all year groups are able to sustain vigorous effort at times, during each session.

136. The quality of teaching is good overall, with instances of very good teaching in some classes. Teachers plan their lessons, including good information about what pupils are expected to learn that is shared with them. Lessons are well structured with a good variety of activities, including opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work. The teachers then allow time for pupils to practise and improve their techniques. Skills are taught progressively throughout the school. For example, in Key Stage 1 pupils learn different ways of jumping and how to change direction. By Year 4 they combine jumping with other ways of travelling. They devise sequences to music, changing direction, level and tempo.
137. Teachers choose the content of lessons well and, where it is practicable, they make good links with other subjects. There was an example of this in a Year 2 lesson where there was good revision of mathematical vocabulary, such as "clockwise" and "diagonal" in relation to movement and direction. Teachers organise their lessons thoughtfully. They have a good understanding of the subject and of the needs of their pupils. They group the pupils well, giving them opportunities to use initiative, to work independently at times and in pairs, small groups and teams as appropriate.
138. The scheme of work gives good guidance to teachers. The curriculum is wide-ranging and well balanced. It covers all areas of the National Curriculum for physical education. Fitness, safety and a healthy lifestyle are a constant focus for lessons. Every class has a short lesson each week dedicated to fitness. Pupils in all year groups have athletics and swimming lessons in the summer. Assessment of pupil performance and progress in these aspects of the curriculum is very detailed. In the other areas, assessment is informal and lacks a whole school structure. However, the teachers know the capabilities of their pupils well and plan lesson activities at an appropriate level.
139. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. All Key Stage 2 pupils have opportunities to take part in team games. Outdoor games lessons continue except in very bad weather. The co-ordinator works hard and transmits his enthusiasm to the pupils very well. He has drawn up an effective action plan and manages the subject well. He organises the annual district school sports, which the school hosts. All Key Stage 2 pupils also have the opportunity to go on a residential visit each year where they take part in outdoor adventurous pursuits. There is a "trim trail" in the grounds, which the co-ordinator helped to design. Unfortunately, it was unfit for use during the period of the inspection owing to long periods of wet weather.
140. Resources for physical education are good. They are of good quality, are well stored, well managed and readily accessible. The outdoor facilities are very good. There is a small field adjacent to the school and a good hard court for netball. The school also has its own outdoor heated swimming pool. Nearby there is a big field for football and athletics, although this is not well enough drained so it can not be used in very wet weather.
141. Since the previous inspection, overall standards of attainment have been maintained, although evidence points to better levels of skill in the use and control of balls, including throwing, catching, dribbling and passing. The physical education programme continues to be good and to concentrate on health and fitness. There is still a good range of extra-curricular and sporting activities and facilities remain good, although the shower room has had to be removed in order to provide an extra classroom.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

142. At the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment and progress in religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This level of attainment represents considerable improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below expectations. Seven-year-olds explain the circumstances in which Jesus chose his disciples by the Sea of Galilee. Pupils know

that Jesus fed the five thousand with loaves and fishes, drawing out the basic understanding of sharing. Through handling a very good range of artefacts, including a copy of the Qur'an, pupils in Year 2 have good knowledge and understanding of the Islamic faith and draw many comparisons with Christian practice. By the age of 11, pupils have developed a very good knowledge of other beliefs and cultures. For example, they have studied stories of creation from around the world, from Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. Pupils have compared them with the Christian and scientific views of creation.

143. Three lessons of religious education were seen in classes for younger pupils; two were satisfactory and one very good. Another two lessons were seen in classes for pupils over seven; one was satisfactory and the other was very good. The quality of teaching reflected in the scrutiny of pupils' previous work confirms the judgment that teaching of religious education is generally good through the school. In a class-based discussion, pupils gained in their knowledge and understanding of Islam by relating it directly to their own experiences, of going to church on Sunday rather than on the Muslim holy day of Friday, and of greeting each other with the words 'Peace be with you', compared to the Muslim greeting 'Salaam Alaikum'. Teachers plan in accordance with the guidance of the Locally Agreed syllabus. There is a good range of resources, including artefacts, to support the guidelines.
144. The subject is well planned and integrated into the life of the school to give the pupils a range of experiences and to build on their skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, the assembly on 'Shrove Tuesday' made a good link with the temptations of Jesus, while relating it to the Christian time of fasting and the season of Lent. The school's moral values are, therefore, well supported by assemblies and the teaching of religious education. The charitable fund-raising undertaken by pupils and their families supports the social values of the school very well.
145. The subject is not formally assessed, neither is its teaching monitored regularly by the co-ordinator. However, he is aware of the need to develop local visits to, and visitors from, places of worship and the celebration of various faiths, thus supplementing with first hand experience the good resources that otherwise support pupils' learning.