

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST LEONARD'S, HEATH AND REACH,  
VOLUNTARY AIDED LOWER SCHOOL**

Leighton Buzzard

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109618

Headteacher: Mrs A Price

Reporting inspector: Mrs R Andrew  
21460

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 197794

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 9

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Thrift Road  
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Leighton Buzzard  
Bedfordshire

Postcode: LU7 OAX

Telephone number: 01525 237253

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. David Ridgeway

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Rachael Andrew 21460	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education	Results and achievements Equal opportunities Teaching and learning Leadership and management
Christopher Farris 19426	Lay inspector		Support, guidance and welfare Partnership with parents
Heather Toynbee 11976	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs Under fives	Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development and attendance The curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Leonard's is a voluntary aided first school. It draws its pupils from the immediate rural area and from further afield as a result of parent choice. It is smaller than most schools. There are currently 88 pupils on roll, boys and girls, of whom 23 are under five in the reception class. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Eligibility for free school meals is, at seven per cent, below the national average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and none of them speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs register (11 per cent) is below the national average and no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The pupils' attainment on entry is average overall, although there is a very wide range. At the time of the last inspection the headteacher's teaching commitment was small. She now teaches almost full time.

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

This is an effective school. There is good leadership and sound management. The quality of teaching is good and results in productive learning. Standards are high and pupils' achievements are good, except in spelling and handwriting. Expenditure per pupil is high, largely because of the school's small size, but the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils' achievements are good in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Children in the reception class have a good start to their school lives.
- The pupils are keen to come to school, interested in all the school provides and co-operate well with each other.
- The headteacher has built a strong staff team that has been successful in moving the school forward.

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

- Standards of handwriting, punctuation and spelling and the pupils' presentation of their work.
- The identification of how pupils could do better in subjects other than in mathematics and English.
- The amount of release time provided for the headteacher to carry out her management responsibilities and move forward on important developments.

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

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

The school was last inspected in September 1997. Since that time there have been good improvements in the school's overall performance and on most of the key issues identified in the last report. The quality of teaching and learning has improved overall. High standards have been maintained over four years in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. There has been insufficient improvement in the standard of pupils' writing. The pupils' good attitudes and standards of behaviour have been maintained. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved substantially and standards have risen to average levels. Planning for all the subjects of the curriculum has improved but further work is still required in ensuring quality and coverage throughout the school. The ways in which the school checks on pupils' progress and the information it provides about how pupils are getting on, although improved, still does not indicate clearly enough how pupils could do better.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	E*	A	A
Writing	A	E	C	D
Mathematics	A	E	A	B

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

The high standards achieved by seven year olds in 2000 in reading and mathematics are the result of good teaching. Standards in writing, although broadly average, are much lower and not as good as in other similar schools. Inspection findings reflect these results. Pupils' achievements are generally good, but inaccurate spelling and untidy handwriting spoil pupils' writing. Not all pupils use punctuation to show sentence structure. Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' writing are not high enough. In 1999, half of the pupils taking the national tests in this small year group had special educational needs and this shows itself in the well below average results. The E\* indicates that the results for reading were in the lowest five per cent nationally. These pupils are now the oldest in the school and their standards in mathematics, reading and writing remain below average. Their achievements over time are satisfactory although progress in writing is slower than in reading or mathematics. Standards in science at both key stages are good and pupils make good progress. Standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now similar to those found in most schools. Standards in all other subjects inspected are similar to those found in most schools but there are some weaknesses within subjects, for example pupils' recording of science, design drawings and use of sketchbooks at Key Stage 2.

Results fluctuate from year to year. This can be expected where, in the smallest year group, one pupil represents almost eight per cent of the total. Over four years, the school has maintained high standards in mathematics and reading but writing standards remain much the same and could be higher. The school sets appropriately challenging yearly targets based on pupils' attainment when they start school and provides work that enables pupils of different attainment to make good progress except in writing. Achievement at the Foundation Stage is good overall but the children's progress in writing is slower than in the other areas of learning.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to school, show interest in all the school provides and work hard. They take care of school property. Children in the reception class settle quickly into school routines. Pupils with special educational needs have a confident approach to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons and at play. They co-operate well when they work in groups or pairs. They are polite and courteous. They are trustworthy and show a respect for property.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond well to the warmth and respect shown to them by all adults who work in the school. They learn to treat each other in a similar way. There are too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection all the teaching was satisfactory or better. Half of this was good and almost a quarter very good. Teachers regularly involve pupils in discussions and question them closely. This develops high standards of speaking and listening and extends pupils' understanding well. Reading is taught well and so pupils quickly become fluent and this enables them to gain information from books in other subjects and to read independently for pleasure. In English, pupils are taught well to record their ideas in many different ways. They use words well but teachers are not sufficiently demanding about neat handwriting and accurate spelling and punctuation and this is not picked up with sufficient rigour in their marking. As a result, pupils take insufficient care and the work is often not the best they can do. There is good teaching of mathematics, particularly numeracy skills. As a result many pupils calculate quickly and accurately. Higher attaining pupils occasionally complete written calculations that are too easy for them. Science, particularly investigative work, is taught well and this leads to pupils who think for themselves and have a good understanding of the work undertaken. Teachers are careful to consider pupils' different needs when they work with them in groups or explain new work to the class.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant to the pupils' needs and interests. There is an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. Better links could be made between subjects to make the most of the time available. Time for science is low for older pupils and restricts the development of recording skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Individual education plans help teachers to focus on pupils' particular difficulties and help them to overcome them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	This is good overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is the stronger element. The school's personal and social education programme promotes moral and social issues well. The residential visit encourages older pupils to become independent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school knows individual pupils well and provides good personal support and guidance for them, relevant to their varied needs. Arrangements made for their welfare are satisfactory. There are too few checks made on the quality of pupils' work and their progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.

The school works well with parents to benefit pupils' learning. The school arranges many activities out of school time that extend pupils skills, provide enjoyment and promote good relationships.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has developed a successful teaching team with a strong commitment to moving the school forwards. Appropriate areas for improvement are identified and the headteacher and key staff have taken effective action on those they consider most important. Management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher's ability to manage the school is undermined by the small amount of release time available to her and this is hindering further improvements to standards of work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They have become better informed about the work of the school, its strengths and areas for improvement. They support the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring of teaching has been successful in identifying where improvements can be made and in taking effective action. It is limited to English and mathematics and does not yet provide an overview of strengths and weaknesses in other subjects. The analysis of results is at an early stage but is already providing useful information about the progress pupils make.
The strategic use of resources	Staff, learning resources and funds are used well to support pupils' learning. The school is efficient in considering how to obtain best value when making spending decisions.

There is a good balance of expertise, experience and new ideas on the staff. The accommodation and learning resources are adequate for the demands of the curriculum.

## 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>• Children like school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents would like more information about how pupils are getting on.</li> <li>• A few parents would like out of school clubs to be open to pupils in the youngest classes.</li> <li>• A few parents are unhappy about the progress their children make.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Although information to parents has improved since the last inspection, there is still room for further information about how individual pupils could do better. There is too little guidance, about how pupils could improve, provided for parents through reading diaries, the homework book and annual reports. Younger pupils than in many other schools attend extra-curricular activities. Progress is at least sound and often good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The results of National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in 2000 show that standards were:-
  - well above the national average in reading and mathematics and in line with the national average in writing;
  - well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and below average in writing in comparison with similar schools.
2. Girls did better than boys but with only seven boys in the year group comparisons are unreliable. Standards show some variation from year to year. In 1999 for example, when a year group including a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs took the test, results fell sharply. Results show that high standards have been maintained in reading and mathematics over the last three years but there has been no overall improvement in the relatively low standards in writing.
3. The findings of the inspection indicate that standards for seven year olds are high in reading and speaking and listening, above average in mathematics and broadly average in writing. Results in national tests are likely to be slightly, but not significantly, lower than last year. The school's predictions for these pupils, based on their attainment on entry to the reception class, support this judgement. Pupils' achievements at Key Stage 1, and the progress that they have made since they started school, are good. Most pupils are capable readers and this allows them to use information books to advantage from an early age. High standards in speaking and listening allow teachers to extend pupils' understanding through discussion and questioning. There are good examples of demanding work of this kind throughout the key stage. Pupils write well enough to record their thoughts and ideas in simple sentences. Higher attaining pupils write at greater length and with a wider vocabulary but, for most pupils, spelling and punctuation could be better and handwriting is often untidy. Standards of presentation, including handwriting and spelling, are low and detract from the quality of the learning in the classroom. Pupils show a good grasp of different ways of calculating and use this effectively to find answers quickly. The few very able pupils are provided with challenging work in mathematics that keeps up the rate of their progress.
4. The school is likely to meet the current year's targets because these are based on a sound knowledge of pupils' capabilities and a careful check has been kept of their progress towards the targets.
5. Standards at the end of Year 4 are below average. This is the same year group whose results were low at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999. Although standards are low most pupils have made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics since that time. The teachers at Key Stage 2 provide different groups of pupils with work pitched at a level where all can move on. Speaking and listening skills are good and most pupils are able to talk in some detail about their work. About half the pupils read accurately, fluently and expressively. They enjoy reading and their skills are such that they are able to use a range of non-fiction books to find information easily. Lower attaining pupils read mostly accurately, but hesitantly and with little expression. Their skills are good enough to read material provided in the classroom. Higher attaining pupils show a wealth of ideas and adventurous vocabulary in their writing. Most other pupils write rather laboriously. All but a few pupils make frequent spelling errors and use only basic punctuation, and their handwriting is untidy. In mathematics all pupils are making good progress in mental work and show growing confidence when calculating. Their work on shape shows good levels of achievement but about half the pupils are working at a low level in

mathematics. The work is occasionally undemanding in mathematics for the higher attaining pupils. When they complete similar tasks to average pupils before going on to extension work their progress is slower than it might be.

6. Pupils in Year 3 are split by age between two classes. Their progress in each subject is much the same as other pupils in the class, although there are a few occasions where work in mathematics could be more demanding. For example, higher attaining pupils in the Year 2/3 class are capable of working with bigger numbers.
7. Over half the pupils in Year 4 have special educational needs. The percentage is much smaller in other classes throughout the school. Teachers use a variety of methods to boost their confidence and raise their achievements, particularly in the core subjects. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout the school and achieve in line with their capabilities. Their progress is good when they are the focus of adult support.
8. Standards in science are good for seven year olds but below average for the oldest pupils. Again, most pupils make good gains in learning over time. The work is demanding and attention is paid to the needs of the least able and the few talented pupils. There are good opportunities for investigative work and pupils' skills and knowledge are developed well. At Key Stage 2, pupils' recording of their work is not often completed with sufficient care.
9. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now broadly average throughout the school. ICT has been a focus in the school's development since the last inspection when standards were reported to be low. The use of the co-ordinator to teach throughout the school has had a marked impact on the improvement in pupils' skills, as have the new computers and software. Standards of word processing show particular improvement. Those pupils who have computers at home have passed on their confidence to others so that pupils are no longer afraid to save, retrieve and print their work.
10. Standards in all other subjects inspected are broadly average. An exception to this is the high standard achieved in art by pupils in Year 1. Although no teaching of art was seen, a good range of quality work is displayed in the classroom and elsewhere. It can be safely assumed that good teaching contributes to these standards. Pupils could record their work to a higher standard, for example in history and geography, use sketchbooks more productively in art and produce more carefully considered design drawings in preparation for making in design and technology. As this is a voluntary aided Church of England School, religious education was inspected by a person appointed by the St. Albans' diocese.
11. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of attainments but standards are average overall. By the end of the Foundation Stage, attainment is good in all areas of learning and most pupils have begun aspects of the National Curriculum. Children's attainments in reading, speaking and listening are particularly good. The school has maintained the good provision seen in the last inspection. In the last inspection the children had poor computer skills but these are now good for this age group. Children make progress through the stepping stones in most early learning goals. As the children approach the end of the school year, there are insufficient opportunities to prepare them for the more formal structure of the numeracy and literacy strategies in Year 1. For example, there is too little teacher-led group work, especially in writing, to build on new learning in whole-class sessions. This results in slower progress in writing than in reading, as there are too few occasions when writing is the teacher's focus for small group work.

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

12. All pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to come to school. This has a very positive impact on their achievement. Children in the reception class settle quickly into school routines and happily leave their parents or carers at the start of each day. They are enthusiastic about their work and soon begin to develop some independence and initiative. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are interested and motivated in lessons, make sensible contributions to discussions, listen well to each other and confidently share ideas. They all enjoy reading and many are keen to stay behind after school to take part in extra-curricular activities. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive self-image and a confident approach to their work, due to the fact that they are fully integrated into the life of the school.
13. Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of class, is good. Pupils in all classes respond readily to the requests and instructions of teachers, support assistants and mid-day supervisors. They are usually polite and courteous to each other and always to teachers, other staff and visitors. They are trustworthy and show respect for property, treating the resources they use with care. The school places a great emphasis on rewarding good behaviour and does not use sanctions, such as withdrawal of privileges, lightly. Inspection findings confirm the view of virtually all parents that behaviour in and around the school is good. No oppressive behaviour, such as bullying or name-calling, was observed during the inspection.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good. The pupils are treated in a positive and mature manner by the staff and they respond in a similar vein. Most have very good relationships with their schoolmates and adults, built on tolerance and respect for the work, ideas, beliefs and values of others. The pupils work well individually and co-operatively in pairs or small groups. From reception onwards they learn to take turns, be kind and help one another. Pupils support charities through fund-raising activities and sponsorship and run a stall at the school fete. In a Year 1 personal and social education session, pupils' knowledge of their own worth was very well supported by written work about their good points. The residential trip to Wales in Year 4 is the first time that many of the oldest pupils experience being away from their parents or carers and leads to a growing independence. There are good opportunities provided for pupils to take responsibility as monitors and helpers in their classrooms and around the school, but fewer for them to use their own initiative in their work. This limits their ability to make choices and decisions and to organise their own work.

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

15. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. In the lessons observed, all the teaching was satisfactory or better. Half of these lessons were good and almost a quarter very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when one in ten lessons was reported to be unsatisfactory. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the school's monitoring of English and mathematics have contributed to improvements in teaching in these subjects. Teaching by music and ICT co-ordinators, in their own specialisms, has improved the teaching and learning in these subjects. The school's focus on improving standards in ICT, including the effective use of National Grid for Learning funds for upgrading resources and training, has improved the skill and confidence of all teachers.
16. Basic skills of reading are taught well and pupils make good progress. They learn letter sounds thoroughly and how to build words. Punctuation is studied carefully to identify where the natural breaks come in the text, where people are speaking and where there are questions or exclamations. Teachers emphasise the importance of expression to bring the text alive and set good examples themselves. As a result, pupils read with enthusiasm and understanding. Their skills in reading allow them to benefit from using information books from an early age. Teachers skilfully develop pupils' ideas and vocabulary for writing and the content of their work reflects their knowledge of books. The school has adopted new ways of teaching spelling in response to concerns about standards. Pupils work from lists of common

words and those they spell inaccurately in their own writing. This now occupies a regular place in the literacy hour and pupils try hard. Joined handwriting is taught from an early age and pupils soon develop a fluent style. However, teachers accept work that is not as neat as pupils are capable of and work is often untidy and spelt inaccurately. Pupils do not routinely check their work or identify for themselves how they could improve. Teachers' expectations of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and careful handwriting are not high enough. This is hampering progress in writing.

17. Numeracy skills are taught well. Pupils learn to look for different methods to calculate and to choose the quickest. They are taught multiplication tables and number pairs that make ten and 20. They learn to look for number patterns, for example by repeatedly adding ten or five, and use what they know about number facts from tables and from pairs of numbers that make ten. They develop a range of useful skills and make good progress in mental work. Occasionally the starting point of tasks set for higher attaining pupils is too easy. Although the work then becomes more difficult, pupils have already spent time going over work they already know.
18. Teachers ask searching questions that develop pupils' thinking skills. They pitch these at appropriate levels for pupils of different attainment to ensure the right level of challenge. They generally adapt tasks well so that they are not too difficult for lower attaining pupils or too easy for higher attaining pupils. They provide many valuable opportunities for pupils to talk about their work and to ask questions of their own; consequently many pupils become confident and articulate speakers.
19. Pupils are rapidly developing their capabilities on the computer as a result of the sharp focus on the teaching of skills. Each class has a weekly lesson with the co-ordinator and regular opportunities during work in many subjects to put their skills into practice. The music specialist is helping pupils to become more proficient performers by concentrating on listening skills. Pupils are developing a good sense of rhythm, pitch and tone in their singing.
20. Science is well taught. All teachers have a good, working knowledge of the subject and teach investigative skills well so that pupils learn to observe carefully, to predict what might happen and to describe and explain their findings. They make good gains in knowledge from thorough discussions, questions and answers and from information books. Insufficient attention is given to the need to record the work accurately and older pupils' written reports are of a poor standard.
21. Teaching in other subjects is satisfactory overall with examples of geography being taught well in the two older classes during the inspection and evidence from completed work that art is taught well in Year 1. In many subjects the quality of pupils' learning observed in lessons is not evident in their written records of work done in class, as insufficient care and attention is given to this task. Work is often done on sheets of paper and stored in a way that does not help pupils to look back and learn from earlier work. It is difficult for them, and for teachers and parents, to identify areas for improvement or to see progress.
22. Teachers explain new work well to pupils and make it clear at the start of each lesson what pupils are to learn. They use resources well and provide interesting and varied activities. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and try hard to succeed. A good example of this was observed in geography in the Year 3/4 class. A good range of maps, aerial photographs and computer mapping programs was used to develop pupils' understanding of routes. Pupils worked enthusiastically to draw routes of their own because they were clear about what was expected and were prepared well for the task through looking at a range of maps.
23. Teachers manage pupils well, treat pupils fairly and make their expectations for behaviour clear. This leads to open and trusting relationships in classrooms, co-operative pupils and lessons uninterrupted by the need to keep order. It results in pupils who concentrate and generally complete the tasks in hand.

24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In almost all lessons there is a good match of follow-up work or recording strategies to their individual needs. When pupils are given individual or small group help in class and when they are withdrawn for specific skills teaching they make good progress. Teachers deploy the help of students well and often use them to draw out ideas and thoughts from groups of lower attaining pupils and help them to record these in appropriate ways. Teachers use praise well to build all pupils' self-esteem. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson in which they were controlling objects through simple computer instructions, pupils with special educational needs were given much encouragement and this led to good progress being made. The pupils' confidence allows them to join in class discussions and answer questions and this enables them to take a full part in class activities. Targeted support, as in one Year 2/3 mathematics lesson on place value, ensures that they have a secure grasp of one operation before moving on to the next.
25. Homework is used well especially in English and mathematics. It gives pupils valuable opportunities to practise new skills and extends the work done in lessons. It contributes effectively to pupils' progress. Both teachers and parents miss opportunities to comment, in homework books and reading diaries, on how pupils could improve or to note particular achievements.
26. The teaching of pupils at the Foundation Stage in the reception class is good in all six areas of learning. A significant amount of very good teaching was observed during the inspection. There is particularly good teamwork between the teacher and nursery nurse, which contributes strongly to children's learning. Work placement students are deployed well to give children effective extra support. However, there is insufficient follow up work in teacher-led groups after the whole-class literacy and numeracy sessions. This results in pupils writing skills developing slowly. The children are encouraged to write over the teacher's own writing rather than having a go for themselves.

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

27. The school provides a satisfactorily broad range of activities for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2. This covers all subjects and is relevant to the age and interest of the pupils. National guidelines that provide a step-by-step approach to pupils' learning are now in place for all subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Statutory requirements with regard to the National Curriculum are fully met. However, the lack of a whole-school plan, giving a clear overview of what is being taught to each year group over a two-year period, makes it difficult for the school to be confident that all areas are covered adequately in mixed-age classes. It hinders the identification of cross-curricular links to prevent the relatively short amount of time available for subjects other than English and mathematics from being eroded further. For example, when pupils practised giving instructions to a robotic toy, their work was slowed when time was given to consolidating their understanding of left and right and moving through different degrees of turn. This could more easily have been accomplished in a physical education lesson.
28. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The literacy strategy has been satisfactorily introduced and more time than the national average is spent on literacy lessons. Opportunities are often missed to incorporate writing in support of other subjects into the literacy hour. For example, in a history lesson the oldest pupils wrote a formal letter to the headteacher at Eyam asking for information about the village. The school has recognised the need to improve spelling, handwriting and presentation, in order to raise standards in written work. Numeracy strategies have been implemented well. Pupils are articulate and have a good grasp of the language of mathematics. This helps them to explain and develop their mathematical strategies clearly.

29. The good quality and range of the curriculum for children under five have been maintained since the last inspection. The teacher and nursery nurse provide children with a very caring environment and daily routines have been firmly established. Good induction procedures are organised at the beginning of the year so that parents are confident about leaving their children and children settle well. Both teacher and nursery nurse are involved in home and school visits. A wide-ranging curriculum is planned to meet the recommended early learning goals for children of this age, with good opportunities for children's intellectual, social, physical and creative development. High quality role-play areas are provided and these stimulate and extend the children's early language, imaginative and social skills. However, for this time in the academic year, the provision has not been sufficiently developed to allow for more focused work to take place with groups of children, especially with writing, after initial whole-class sessions. As a result children's progress in writing is slower than it might be and the children are not being fully prepared for the more formal structure of the literacy and numeracy lessons in Year 1.
30. Some parents feel that the provision for extra-curricular activities could be improved, but the inspection team's findings are that the provision for extra-curricular activities is good for a school of this size and age group. There is a good range of after-school clubs, including chess, choir, computers and country dancing and the opportunity for all pupils in Year 4 to experience a residential trip to Wales. With the support of a peripatetic teacher, a few children are learning to play the violin. The curriculum is also enhanced by visits to local and other sites of special interest, including St. Albans' cathedral and Woburn Abbey. There are regular visits by a history expert who brings different periods to life by dressing up as a Viking or Roman.
31. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the opportunity to take part in all lessons, whatever their ability. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is sound. The school's arrangements meet the requirements of the current special educational needs Code of Practice. Procedures for identifying and reviewing pupils' needs are thorough and secure. Pupils' individual education plans specify clear, manageable targets that are carefully matched to identified needs. The planning in most lessons makes sure that follow-up or group work is pitched at the correct level for each set of pupils. A classroom assistant is deployed well giving extra help in classrooms and working with a few individual pupils on a withdrawal basis.
32. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and suitable policies for sex education and drug misuse. These aspects are mainly taught through science and personal, social and health education. Teachers discuss, with the children in their classes, issues such as friendship, keeping safe and fairness. The warm and constructive relationships that prevail in all areas of the school make a strong contribution to this aspect of the pupils' education.
33. The school has established good links with the local community, particularly the church. The children take part in village events, running in the local pancake race and country dancing at the church fair. The pupils serve tea to senior citizens, who are invited to the school on a regular basis. They have planted seeds in the churchyard and talk to older inhabitants about their memories of life in the village and their days in the original school. The school has constructive links with the middle school, to which most of the pupils transfer when they are nine, and these procedures are helpful in smoothing their transition. In their final term, Year 4 pupils spend a whole day in the school they will be attending in the following September, getting to know their new teachers and routines. Useful discussion takes place, and agreement is reached, with staff from other local lower schools and the middle school about coverage of areas of the curriculum. This ensures, for example, that the study of a period in history is not repeated. The school applies to different local and national organisations for support in its various initiatives and makes good use of the funds raised in this way.

34. Overall, the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As befits a church school there is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and gain a knowledge and understanding of those of others in religious education. Opportunities for pupils to develop a feeling of awe and wonder about the world around them are provided in science, art, geography and history. Pupils experience a sense of shared enjoyment when they sing and dance together.
35. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development. All the members of staff provide very good role models and show consistent care, kindness and courtesy to the pupils and each other. The pupils' responses, and their good behaviour around the school, shows that the great majority have a clear sense of right and wrong. The school provides a strong moral code, which permeates everything it does. For example, the pupils write their own class rules and these are prominently displayed. This encourages pupils to take responsibility and to develop an understanding of living in a community. The very good relationships in the school are a crucial factor in forming pupils' attitudes. Issues are discussed sensitively in personal and social education sessions as well as with individual children. The pupils are aware of environmental issues and keep the school grounds litter free. Pupils relate comfortably to each other and often work well in pairs and small groups. Most pupils are able to work responsibly and without direct supervision in lessons, such as those for literacy and numeracy, when the teacher is working with another group. There are some opportunities for pupils, particularly those in Year 4, to show initiative both within classrooms and around the school, but this aspect is currently underdeveloped. It limits the pupils' ability to organise their own work and to make choices and decisions about their learning, where this is appropriate.
36. The provision for cultural development is sound. The school is good at promoting pupils' awareness of their own rich heritage and cultural traditions through visits and visitors. A good example of this, is the study of the local village by Year 3 and 4 pupils. Christian religious festivals are strongly emphasised, as one would expect in a church school. There is some recognition of those celebrated by other faiths, supported by a good range of artefacts. The pupils learn about, and can recognise, the work and style of a range of artists and composers, but these are mainly from the western world. Their knowledge and understanding of non-European cultures and, in particular, less economically developed countries are more limited and the school could do more to raise pupils' awareness especially through geography.

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

37. Overall, the school cares for the pupils well and there are appropriate procedures in place to ensure their safety and well-being. There are several strengths but also a few weaknesses. At a practical level, the school is a warm and friendly place in which pupils are happy and secure and able to learn without fear in a caring environment. The care provided by all staff is good and they know pupils well. They provide appropriate support for their various needs. Pupils are able to talk to staff about any worries they may have and the relationship between adults and pupils is relaxed. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection.
38. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. The school follows the local area procedures but has no written policy of its own to link into this. The person with responsibility for child protection has had appropriate training, which is then shared with other teachers. Staff are briefed on any concerns.
39. The management of health and safety, on a practical basis, is satisfactory but there are a few shortcomings. A governor has responsibility for health and safety that will lighten the load on the headteacher. The school's policy for health and safety is out of date and needs to be reviewed. Safety issues are dealt with as they arise but formal safety inspections have not taken place frequently and the recording of concerns has slipped during the last two years. Some risk assessment has been carried out and action taken. Fire drills are held regularly

and fire appliances are serviced, with the next service now slightly overdue. The fire alarm is tested regularly and this is logged, but the frequency of this is less than is recommended. Testing of portable electrical appliances is up to date and appliances are marked accordingly. First aid procedures are good. All accidents are recorded and parents receive a confirmatory note.

40. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. Unexplained absences are followed up. The school uses incentives to encourage good attendance, with individual and class rewards for good attendance and punctuality. This motivates the pupils well. The importance of regular attendance is emphasised to parents and the range of activities offered by the school makes the pupils keen to attend.
41. The school's management of behaviour is good and this results in the high standard of pupils' behaviour both in and out of lessons. There are few formal rules but these, together with the excellent role models provided by all staff and their high expectations, lead to an environment that is conducive to effective learning. Pupils know what is expected of them and for most it is second nature to conform. Pupils of all ages mix together well and oppressive or aggressive behaviour rarely takes place and when it does is dealt with effectively.
42. Overall, the school's procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' attainment and progress are sound. In the reception class, there are good assessment procedures. Staff build on information gained from parents and carers about what their children can do when they start school. Together with formal testing soon after entry, they are able to track individual children's development in all six areas of learning and gauge their progress in these over time. Each small step is noted and both the teacher and nursery nurse have a good knowledge of what every child can do.
43. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress is monitored well in aspects of English and mathematics and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Reading ability is gauged using a published test. The end of Year 2 national test results are looked at carefully to see where improvements to the curriculum can be made and followed by further published tests in the juniors. Information thus gathered has led to the present strong emphasis on improving spelling throughout the school. Assessment in the other subjects is not so well developed and is slowing improvements in standards. Apart from giving valuable factual information about pupils at the school, the present usefulness of pupils' record folders is doubtful. Some of the pupils' work in these is undated, or has not been added to recently. The school has recognised the need to improve procedures for gathering assessment data and the compilation of useful tracking spreadsheets has begun. These provide good visual information, both hand-written and computerised, from which quick deductions about pupils' progress can be made. They have begun to be used to identify underachievement and to take action to improve progress.
44. Good use is made of assessment to identify pupils with special educational needs at an early stage and to provide appropriate work for them. Individual education plans for these pupils identify specific learning targets and pupils' work is generally well matched to these. Good records are kept of the steps each pupil takes towards successfully meeting their targets. The procedures for monitoring and supporting the personal development of pupils with special education needs are good. Whenever necessary, external help and advice is sought and given, for instance by the school psychologist or the speech therapist.
45. The school's support for the pupils' personal development is good. Teachers know the pupils well and any concern over a pupil's development is quickly recognised and followed up, with parents involved at an early stage. Such concerns are recorded. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education, which helps to develop pupils' self-knowledge and social awareness. This, together with the constant encouragement and support from all staff, helps to build pupils' independence and self-confidence. This is recognised by parents as a strong feature of the school.

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

46. The school has established good relationships with the parents and works closely with them to benefit the education of their children. The views of parents, in the questionnaires and during interviews in the inspection week, are strongly supportive of the school. Parents see the school as being well led, easy to approach and having a positive work ethic. They see their children liking school, being well looked after and affectionately guided as they grow and develop. A third of those who responded to the questionnaire were not happy about the range of activities offered outside lesson times and a fifth felt that the information provided on their child's progress is insufficient. The inspection findings support parents' positive views. It is the view of the inspection team that the range of extra-curricular activities offered, including the residential visit, is good overall for children of this age group.
47. The school provides parents with a good level of information about their child's progress and about general matters. There are newsletters giving general information and the headteacher sends an end of year summary as well as regular letters on specific topics. Such information is also displayed on the parents' noticeboard. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are alerted early, share problems and information and attend review meetings. There is an open-door policy at the school, so parents often speak to class teachers first about any concerns.
48. The prospectus and governors' annual report for parents are both informative but omit a few minor items of statutory information. The headteacher has been made aware of these. Pupils' annual reports give generally good information about attainment and progress although some do not include targets for improvement. There are parents' consultation meetings each term and in addition there is an open afternoon each term for parents to come into class and see their child working in specific curriculum areas.
49. A few parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed some anxieties about the headteacher having responsibility for a class in addition to managing the school, about pupils' progress and about the number of teachers taking the oldest class. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils' progress is at least sound and often good. Some changes of teacher are a result of effective specialist teaching and parents were unaware of this. It is not possible to comment on other arrangements as no other changes occurred during the inspection week. The team shares the parents' concern about the headteacher's workload.
50. Parents make a good contribution to the learning of their children and to the life of the school. A few parents help in the classroom and on outside visits and provide valuable help that the school itself could not afford. Parents provide significant help to pupils at home with their reading and other homework. Reading and homework diaries are used to keep track of work done but provide little information about how pupils could improve. The school's homework policy provides a structured and progressive programme that consolidates work learnt in class and helps pupils develop good learning habits. The school provides helpful information to new parents and staff make home visits. Regular meetings take place with parents of pupils with special needs to review their child's progress. The parent/teacher association is active and well supported and raises remarkable funds for a school of this size. These are put to good use, making improvements and purchasing resources for the school.

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

51. The picture painted in the last report of effective leadership has been maintained. The school provides a learning environment where pupils can flourish and grow in confidence and maturity. The school's aims, which emphasise the individual, are realised through teachers who make allowances for pupils' different backgrounds and experiences and make it clear to the class that everyone matters.

52. The headteacher has continued to build up the strengths of the teaching team. They all work together very well for the good of the pupils. National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been successfully introduced and training for these has improved teachers' skills. Teachers have worked together well to implement the new subject guidelines. Teachers and the nursery nurse give freely of their time to provide interesting activities out of lesson time. A good start has been made to the monitoring of English and mathematics to evaluate the changes made and to monitor the quality of teaching. Music and ICT co-ordinators are now used productively to teach their specialisms. All these developments have contributed to improvements in teaching and learning and have maintained standards where they were already high and improved others, such as ICT. There is the potential for extending the monitoring of teaching to other subjects of the curriculum and to focus more sharply on pupils' learning as well as the quality of teaching. For example, weaknesses in the quality of pupils' recording of their work in different subjects are not being picked up. Areas for improvement within subject areas are not being identified. For example, weaknesses in the drawing of designs in design and technology, the use of sketchbooks in art, the quality of pupils' recording of their work in history, and the study of a less economically developed country in geography are hindering improvements in standards. However, release time for such work is in short supply.
53. Management by the headteacher and key staff is sound overall. The headteacher is doing a good job in maintaining high standards in difficult circumstances. At the time of the last inspection the headteacher had only a small teaching commitment. She now has overall responsibility for a class and teaches for most of the week. There are many calls on her time when she is not teaching. There is a shared commitment amongst all the staff to improve further but the capacity to do so is in jeopardy because of the headteacher's workload. As a result, there are several initiatives, for example recording pupils' progress through the school, extending the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and the introduction of checking and recording skills in science and ICT, that have had promising beginnings but where further development is slow. This is holding back further improvements in standards and in pupils' progress.
54. English and mathematics co-ordinators have played an effective role in overseeing developments in their subjects and continue to do so. The monitoring of the curriculum in other subjects is informal. Teachers discuss planning, give support to each other and advice when required. They note good work when it is displayed. There is a good level of expertise in individual subjects but no system for curriculum leaders to extend their influence further by monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and checking the quality of pupils' work throughout the school.
55. Special educational needs are managed well by the headteacher/co-ordinator. There are good school policy documents and the Code of Practice is firmly in place. Daily lesson planning takes into account the needs of lower attaining pupils and how they can be given extra support. Records of progress towards pupils' targets are meticulously kept. A very knowledgeable governor provides advice and support as necessary. Special resources are provided from the school's main budget.
56. The successful completion of the Investors in People Award and the pursuit of the Quality Mark in Basic Skills have contributed to the quality of in-service training and the school's procedures for assessing pupils' work in English and mathematics. The school successfully identifies appropriate areas for improvement, for example ICT and pupils' writing, and takes effective action to achieve its targets. There are rather too many initiatives identified in the school improvement plan, however. As a result a number have had to be deferred and others only partially completed. The school is unrealistic when planning what it can achieve and as a result not all initiatives are thoroughly evaluated or sufficiently secure.
57. The school has introduced a good system for analysing results. It is in its infancy but is already producing useful information about the value the school adds over time. It is also used

for making realistic predictions about what pupils should achieve and setting challenging targets for classes to underpin progress.

58. There is sufficient collective expertise on the governing body to enable it to carry out its duties properly. The chair of governors has a good insight into the school's strengths and areas for improvement and realistic expectations of what can be achieved whilst the headteacher has responsibility for a class. The governing body as a whole is concerned about the current situation and is anxious to achieve sufficient growth in numbers to enable more release time to be securely funded. Governors, individually and collectively, support the school well, have a growing understanding of what is taught and the standards achieved and how they can contribute to the school's success. They are not as confident or as involved as they could be in evaluating the work of the school but are in a stronger position to do so through the workings of the various committees than at the time of the last inspection.
59. The school's finances are satisfactorily managed and educational developments are supported through careful planning. The amount received per pupil in the last financial year was above average. The school had a deficit of around four per cent in the last year but has managed its finances well enough to be able to carry forward a similarly sized surplus into the current year. The school recognises that it needs more pupils in order to be financially viable for the long term. To this end the governors have considered a draft five-year plan that aims to increase pupil numbers. The plan is in its early stages but pupil numbers are already rising, which will help to secure the future. The budget for the next financial year is in the early stages of planning but first indications show that it should be possible to reduce the headteacher's classroom commitment.
60. Management of the school's finances was a concern at the previous inspection and although improvements have been made, the school is still dependent on outside assistance in the short term. The finance committee meets two or three times each term and has been active and thorough in its support of the school. Meetings are properly minuted. The chair of finance has been providing effective support in monitoring the budget and this has enabled the school to recover from its deficit quickly and to plan for the future. There was also a change in personnel in the school office that caused some instability during the last financial year. The new school administration officer has already got to grips with her role and is rapidly gaining familiarity with the financial systems such that the school should be self-sufficient before long.
61. Day-to-day administration is good. Purchase procedures ensure that value for money is obtained and the school benefits from contracts for services negotiated by the local authority. There is a proper hierarchy of signatories for order, receipt and invoice. The school has been recently audited and has received a generally satisfactory report on its financial procedures, with some reservations. There were a number of recommendations made, some of which stem from the period of instability within the office. Some have already been addressed but a number are more fundamental and need urgent attention by the governors, for example the reconciliation of local education authority and school financial statements, annual insurance reviews and the administration of the school fund.
62. The school has received grants under the standards fund, the National Opportunities Fund and the National Grid for Learning. Such grants are administered and monitored by the headteacher and properly used for the purposes intended. The school is developing its range of new technology and makes satisfactory use of this. Several computers are linked to the Internet, but as yet, there is no e-mail facility for the pupils. This is planned for installation in the near future.
63. There are effective procedures for the induction of new staff and the newly qualified teacher has benefited from statutory release time, the opportunity to take part in training organised by the local authority and good support from her mentor in school. Teaching practice and work placement students are also supported well and used effectively to benefit their own and the

pupils' learning. The school has successfully introduced performance management procedures to improve, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching staff.

64. The number of teachers and support staff is adequate for the demands of the curriculum. There is a good balance of experience, expertise and new ideas. Teachers and support staff are deployed well. However, the use of the newly qualified teacher to provide some release time for the headteacher, by teaching the oldest pupils for science and art and design, is placing heavy demands on her in her first year of teaching.
65. The accommodation provides adequate space in classrooms for teaching the full curriculum and the hall is spacious and well equipped for gymnastics. The school site includes hard and soft play surfaces, and outdoor climbing and adventurous play equipment. There is also a field for games, a delightful spinney and a wildlife area to which the pupils have free access in good weather. There are no shortcomings other than the absence of cloakrooms, which results in coats and bags hanging in corridors. This leads to a somewhat untidy appearance. The school is on one floor and equipped with a disabled toilet, but would need a low ramp to allow access into the building for wheelchair users. The school is maintained well and kept clean. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements to the outdoor environment that have benefited the reception children in particular.
66. Learning resources are satisfactory overall and good for English, mathematics and history. They contribute to the quality of pupils' learning in these subjects.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to underpin existing high standards and ensure further improvements the governors, headteacher and staff should:-

(1) improve the standards of pupils' writing by:-

- raising teachers' and pupils' expectations of accuracy in spelling and punctuation, care and neatness in handwriting and quality in the presentation of pupils' work; see paragraphs 16,86,87,88.
- indicating in the marking of work how pupils can improve; see paragraphs 25,85,88,100,106.
- encouraging pupils to check their own work and identify areas for improvement; see paragraphs 16 and 85.
- ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to record their work to a high standard in all subjects; see paragraphs 20,21,105,119,123.
- providing more opportunities for children at the Foundation Stage to practise their writing skills; see paragraphs 11,29,74.

(2) ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in subjects other than English and mathematics by:-

- producing a plan of the whole curriculum for the intended two-year cycle so that cross-curricular links can be identified to make the best use of time; see paragraphs 27, 28, 124.
- identifying areas for improvement through the monitoring of teaching and checking pupils' work; see paragraphs 43, 52,53,54,106,112,119,124,128.

(3) enable the headteacher to carry out her duties more effectively and move forward more quickly on priorities in the school development plan, especially those that focus on raising standards further, by:-

- providing more release time; see paragraphs 53,54,56.

68. The following less important issues should be considered by governors when formulating their action plan.

- There are a few occasions in mathematics lessons where the work for older and higher attaining pupils in mixed-age classes is undemanding; see paragraphs 17 and 96.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative; see paragraphs 14,35,114,135.
- There are a few omissions from the prospectus and Governors' Annual report, and there is outstanding work to be done on audit recommendations, policy documents and the checking of equipment; see paragraphs 48,61,39.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

23
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

16
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### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	50	27	0	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	88
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	4
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	7	11	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	17	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (50)	89 (57)	100 (64)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	16	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (57)	89 (71)	100 (79)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

\* Where the number of either boys or girls in the cohort is fewer than 10, as in this case, only the total number of pupils at NC level 2 or above is given.

### ***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	64
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	22

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	169072
Total expenditure	158851
Expenditure per pupil	1962
Balance brought forward from previous year	-7048
Balance carried forward to next year	3173

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	88
Number of questionnaires returned	31

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	16	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	39	10	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	39	3	0	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	45	6	6	3
The teaching is good.	58	26	10	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	61	19	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	13	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	29	3	6	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	55	13	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	35	3	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	42	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	32	32	3	13

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents are concerned about the arrangements made to release the headteacher from her classroom for management tasks. This results in several different teachers teaching the pupils in the top class. Parents feel that the school is particularly good at developing the confidence of shy children.

## **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**

69. The 23 children in the Foundation Stage are taught in one classroom. The accommodation has recently been much improved and is enhanced by a large, secure outside play area. There is particularly good teamwork between the teacher and the nursery nurse that contributes strongly to the quality of the children's learning. Good liaison between this class and the rest of the school, especially Year 1, ensures that children get to know other teachers and routines, and smoothes transition from one class to another. Students are well deployed and give children effective extra support in carrying out their various activities. The school has maintained the good quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage observed at the time of the last report.
70. All children are admitted into the reception class in the September when they are four. The older children commence full-time education, whilst the younger ones attend half-time until Christmas. When they enter the school their attainment is very varied but, overall, average. Most have already benefited from attendance at a range of pre-school playgroups and nurseries but a minority still have poor social skills. Testing shortly after entering the school provides good benchmarks upon which the staff can plan appropriate work. Good assessment procedures allow staff to record and track individual children's development and gauge progress over the year. Children with special educational needs receive good quality support in the classroom and take small steps towards success. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, most children have begun aspects of the National Curriculum. In speaking and listening, reading and mathematics, they make good progress and their attainment is above the nationally expected levels. In writing their progress, although satisfactory overall, is slower than in reading and their attainment is average.
71. Many very interesting activities are planned and organised. Teaching and learning are good overall in all areas of learning and most things work well. Nevertheless, there are too few opportunities as children approach the transition to Year 1 to help them to prepare for the more structured approach in this class. For example, when writing skills are the focus of a whole-class session, follow-up activities are not always provided for children to develop these further in small groups. As a result, the provision of good stepping stones between Foundation Stage activities in writing and the National Curriculum are not firmly in place.

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

72. Teaching and learning are good and the children achieve above average standards. The school places a strong emphasis on building positive relationships with parents before their children start school and has developed a good induction programme. This results in parents feeling confident about placing children in the school and children settle well. The teacher and nursery nurse are effective in creating a very caring and stimulating learning environment in which children develop good attitudes to learning and quickly understand routines and the structure of the day. The children are eager to share their work and talk confidently about what they are doing. All are willing to have a try and usually succeed well.
73. There are good opportunities for children to work and play independently and, when appropriate, they gladly share and take turns in using equipment. A particularly good example of this, was the level of co-operation shown in their Noah's Ark play area and this resulted in a happy experience for all concerned. When getting ready for a physical education lesson, most were able to dress and undress themselves without losing too much time, although a few still needed some help. Behaviour is very good and this results in teaching and learning taking place in a happy, sensible atmosphere. The adults work together well and provide the children with good role models on which to base their relationships with each other.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

74. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are above those found nationally by the end of the Foundation Stage. Nearly all the children are confident speakers and listeners and take turns in conversation. Many can talk fluently in well-informed sentences, putting their ideas forward clearly and sensibly. For example, one child was keen to tell an inspector the advantages of staying at different hotels and about how some places where you eat give children a free gift. The children enjoy listening to stories read to them by adults and most know that authors write the books and illustrators draw the pictures. Almost three-quarters of the children are actually reading sentences, breaking down the words into letter sounds to help them with this. Standards in writing are average. The great majority of children can write their name with varying degrees of legibility and about half can write a phrase or sentence unaided. Early emergent writing skills are sometimes insufficiently developed, with children drawing over words written for them by an adult rather than 'having a go' for themselves. Whilst a role-play office in the classroom is designed to promote and encourage writing, other opportunities to practise this skill are rather limited. This means that some children, the brighter ones in particular, do not make the rapid progress in writing that they could. However, in one very good lesson seen, the teacher first talked to all the class about rhyming words. The teacher, and the nursery nurse, then followed this initial input with work matched to the ability of different groups of children. In this way they consolidated and built on the children's previous learning so that they could suggest the spelling of the rhyming words.

## **Mathematical development**

75. Standards are above those found nationally. Mathematics is taught well and counting is made fun through number songs and rhymes. Effective use is made of good quality equipment that interests children and encourages sorting, classifying and pattern making. Good teaching ensures that children learn a mathematical vocabulary and so, when filling a range of containers with coloured water, children talk confidently and accurately about these being full or empty, bigger or smaller. Good introductory sessions by the teacher are not always sufficiently extended with individuals and groups and limited use is made of formal ways of recording children's findings either pictorially or in written form.
76. Most children know their numbers to ten and over half can count on to 20 or beyond. The majority can add single digit numbers together. The brighter children do simple subtraction sums and are secure in their use of related words such as 'fewer' and 'less'. A stimulating role-play shop gives the pupils opportunities to practise their knowledge of coins. It provides an opportunity to get to know the value of these and how much change they might expect. Past work shows that the correct names for shapes are introduced and children link the properties of everyday objects to these, for instance ball to sphere.

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

77. Many children enter the school with a good, basic general knowledge. Teaching is good and builds well on this. For example, pupils explore how they have changed since they were babies and learn the correct names for parts of a plant. They learn about what happens at different times of the day and use an appropriate vocabulary, such as morning, afternoon and evening. The children enjoy playing with construction kits and are keen to talk to an adult about what they have made. Several are able to use a simple computer program unaided but others need more help. They confidently use the mouse to move the cursor and 'click on' to achieve a correct selection of items on the screen. Having carefully drawn a colourful picture of a rainy day, they print this off for all to see. In the spring they sow seeds in tubs standing in the outside play area and watch how these grow into flowering plants. Through their role-play in the exciting Noah's Ark area they strengthen their knowledge of this Bible story and make

masks to wear when being one of the animals. In the children's past work there is evidence of their growing knowledge and understanding of the Christmas and Creation stories.

### **Physical and creative development**

78. Teaching and learning in physical and creative development are good. In one very good physical education lesson led by the nursery nurse, the teacher utilised this time well, observing and recording individual children's progress in this area of the curriculum. The children showed a good awareness of space and moved in a controlled way round the hall avoiding bumping into each other. The nursery nurse carefully highlighted the links between this practice and being polite to each other in other areas of the school. All the children took great pains to carry out instructions as well as they could and some showed particular expertise in being a 'wibbly wobbly jelly on a plate'. They moved rhythmically to a tambourine and worked in useful unison with a partner. Good examples were shared with the rest of the class. In this way the children learned from each other and made improvements to their own movements. The nursery nurse made sure that children were thoroughly warmed up for energetic activity. From feeling their hearts beating, the children were made aware of the effect exercise on their bodies. At the end of the lesson, a slow exercise ensured that they were ready to return to their classroom quietly. In the classroom many children are developing an appropriate pencil control, but some still find it difficult to produce neat and well-formed letters. There are good opportunities to use simple tools, such as scissors and a stapler, and to play on wheeled equipment in the outside play area.
79. The children's skills in art are developed satisfactorily. Work on the walls of the classroom shows that children have opportunities to mix paint to achieve different shades and in past work there are examples of simple printing, the use of chalk and some collage work. During the inspection the children's development was constrained by the provision of a set range of paint colours and the small and uniform size of a clay tile. An adult had cut out large umbrella and butterfly shapes for them to paint and there was little evidence of children being encouraged to explore freely the use of a wider range of media and materials. However, the development of children's imagination is very good, with stimulating role-play areas encouraging high quality improvisation. No music sessions were seen during the inspection but the children have opportunities to experiment on musical instruments such as a cimbala. They enjoy making up their own tunes on a row of milk bottles containing different levels of water. The children sing tunefully and have a good recollection of the words of well-known and loved songs.

### **ENGLISH**

80. Overall, the standards attained by seven year old pupils are above the expected levels for their age and the school has maintained the good standards observed during the last inspection. In the year 2000 national tests for seven year olds, pupils achieved results that were well above the national average in reading and close to the national average in writing. When compared to schools of a similar background, their results were above average in reading but below average in writing. The size of the year group taking the national tests is relatively small and this means that there is considerable year-to-year variation in results. However, over the three years 1998 to 2000 the results show that the performance of all pupils slightly exceeded the national average for their age group in both reading and writing. Over the same time span, the performance of girls was much better than that of boys, but again the small number of pupils involved makes this data unreliable.
81. The standards attained by the pupils in Year 4 are below average. Only half the children are in the average or above average ability range and this has affected standards. In the 1999 national tests, the results of this group of pupils were well below average in both reading and writing, mainly due to the fact that 50 per cent had been identified as having special educational needs. Over the years the school has monitored this year group carefully and

taken several steps to raise standards, including buying fiction books that will appeal particularly to boys. The achievements of these pupils are satisfactory in terms of their progress over time. They are better in reading than in writing.

82. Lower attaining pupils are given quiet encouragement in whole-class sessions and carefully focused instruction in their group work. Recording sheets and follow-up activities are often tailored to their particular needs. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in these circumstances. They are encouraged to take a full part in all lessons and only very occasionally are they withdrawn for extra support. Their individual education plans are clear and place an appropriate emphasis on the improvement of literacy skills. When support is given on a one-to-one basis the pupils concerned make good progress towards their targets.
83. Standards of speaking and listening are very good for seven year olds and satisfactory for the oldest pupils. Across the school the pupils listen carefully to their teachers and follow spoken instructions accurately. In most lessons a good balance between teacher and pupil talk gives pupils time to share their thoughts and teachers to consider their answers. Pupils politely listen to the ideas and suggestions of other children both in class lessons and in group work. In all classes, the pupils enjoy talking about their work. Year 4 pupils interviewed were very articulate and full of enthusiasm about what they had learned over the years. Most pupils are confident in speaking and keen to contribute their ideas in class discussion. This is due to the good questioning skills of all the teachers and the warmth with which they accept pupils' answers. Many pupils have a wide vocabulary and, for example, in one Year 3 lesson about plants, were knowledgeably using words such as 'extinct', 'adapt' and 'conditions' in their discussion. Progress is good at both key stages.
84. Standards in reading are high in all but Year 4. The school has maintained the high standards seen during the last inspection. The pupils make greater gains in reading than in writing. Children of all ages and abilities enjoy reading and are keen to talk about their books. As in the last report, the pupils use good strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Many read accurately and fluently, in some cases with great expression. Since the last inspection, pupils across the school have a much-improved knowledge of famous and favourite authors and, in addition, now know about illustrators and publishers. This is almost entirely due to the effectiveness of literacy lessons in which teachers share a text with their class. In one good Year 2 lesson, pupils were provided with a range of books written by a particular author and were able to discuss their different merits and say what they particularly liked or disliked. In another good literacy lesson with the oldest juniors, the pupils were sensitive to some of the finer points of the text, which was taken from 'Jason and the School Bully'. There were good links with social and moral issues in their discussion on the feelings and motives of the main characters. Older pupils have a good understanding about how to use an index and contents page and where to look for particular non-fiction books in the library. Most parents and carers give good support to the reading process by encouraging regular practice at home. The reading diaries are a good link between home and school in the reception year. In Year 1, these are kept up to date and there are the beginnings of a dialogue with parents, although at present this is underdeveloped. In Years 2 to 4, the reading diaries are little more than a list of dates indicating when books are started or when adults hear pupils read. They give little indication of how pupils could improve.
85. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in writing is sound in relation to the national average and progress is satisfactory. Pupils write in simple phrases and sentences and sequence their ideas logically. Where appropriate, average and higher attaining children are beginning to use full stops and capital letters on a regular basis. Lower attaining pupils rarely use punctuation with any accuracy. Most pupils write in a reasonably legible joined script but, for a few pupils, handwriting is still inaccurate in shape, size and spacing. Pupils can often spell words correctly when given them to learn in a list. However, they spell these same words incorrectly when using them within a written piece of work and these are not often picked up

in the marking. Teachers do not give pupils' sufficient encouragement to check their own work and identify how it could be improved.

86. By the end of Year 4, most pupils write a suitably fluent joined script, but it is often untidy and still shows irregularities in size and form. Handwriting practice is not sufficiently focused on making these necessary corrections. Most pupils use full stops and capital letters correctly in their sentences, but only the most able consistently use other types of punctuation such as commas and speech marks. Higher attaining pupils rarely structure their work into paragraphs. The pupils' ability to spell correctly is poor, with many persistent inaccuracies, particularly in pupils' independent writing. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of writing for different purposes and compose limericks and couplets, make notes and write advertisements. There is good use of imaginative and inventive ideas in their writing. The brighter pupils use some really good descriptive words and phrases, such as 'tepid', 'amazing' and 'humid' and "I was devastated". Overall pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
87. Throughout both key stages the presentation of pupils' work lacks quality and many children seem reluctant to record their work, showing little confidence in the written form.
88. The overall standard of teaching across the school is good and this shows an improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are consistently well planned. Teachers have a very good understanding of the strengths of the National Literacy Strategy and use its framework effectively to give pace and variety to their lessons. They make good use of large texts. For instance, in one Year 2 lesson a 'Big Book' extract from 'Rosie's Babies' encouraged pupils to think about her situation. They were able to discuss this little girl's thoughts and feelings and to explore why people are sometimes jealous. Teachers always set a good example, for instance by writing carefully on the board or reading with appropriate expression. They know the pupils in their class well and, after the initial whole-class session, they divide them into appropriate groups. In this way, teachers keep the interest of all pupils and the work builds on what they have learned before. This often leads to good progress in reading. Teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils writing are not high enough, especially in terms of accuracy of spelling, use of punctuation and care in handwriting. This slows improvement in writing. Teachers ensure that good resources are available for the pupils to use and that activities are well matched to different abilities. They deploy other adult help in the classroom well and use this particularly effectively with lower attaining pupils. Teachers' marking is consistently positive and encouraging in tone but does not always show what action pupils should take to improve.
89. The experienced subject co-ordinator provides a good example of successful practice in her own teaching. Her good leadership means that the National Literacy Strategy is now securely in place in the school. Through monitoring procedures and good systems of assessment, she has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. Together with other teaching staff she has made a careful analysis of the school's performance in the various aspects of English and has come to decisions about where improvements should be made. They have recognised the need to improve pupils' spelling and have started several new strategies to bring this about. These include the introduction of a published scheme and pupils learning from a long list of words apportioned to each year group. There is a great emphasis in the reception class and Year 1 on children becoming familiar with phonics. In addition to goals set by their class teacher, pupils now set their own literacy targets and because they have ownership of these are working well to achieve them. It is too early to see any measurable improvement resulting from these initiatives.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. The results of seven year old pupils in the 2000 national tests indicate that standards are high in comparison with the national average and well above other schools in similar circumstances. All the pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 2 and more than quarter

achieved the higher Level 3. Results over four years have been high except in 1999 when there was a sharp drop. This was because approximately half the group taking the test had special educational needs. In 1997 the school's results were in the top 5 per cent of school's nationally. It is not unusual for a school's results to fluctuate in this way when year groups are small.

91. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the standards of the oldest pupils are below average. These are the same pupils who took the test in 1999 and gained poor results then. However, most of these pupils are making satisfactory progress. The school's own information of their progress, based on optional tests and teachers' assessments confirms this judgement.
92. When they work without pencils and paper, about half the pupils in Year 4 use what they know about number facts to 20 to add three-digit numbers such as 114 and 276. They use formal written methods accurately for more complicated calculations of addition and subtraction. They show a thorough understanding of fractions when they order them by size. This work provides a good level of challenge. Pupils are only just beginning to learn written methods of multiplication and division but use their thorough knowledge of tables to solve straightforward multiplication and division problems. Lower attaining pupils know number facts to ten and add two-digit numbers together accurately in their heads, but rather slowly and tentatively. They are beginning to use their knowledge of doubles to help them and know how to add ten and subtract one when adding nine. They find problem solving difficult. Most pupils have a sound grasp of graphs and frequency tables and know how to interpret them. They have covered a lot of ground in shape work. A good range of demanding work, for example classifying triangles, finding area and perimeter and recognising symmetry, has been undertaken successfully. There is little evidence of work with decimal numbers or numbers over 1000, which might be expected of higher attaining pupils of this age.
93. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress and this year's seven year olds are reaching above average standards. Almost all of the pupils in Year 2 are working at the expected Level 2 and a few are working at the higher Level 3. Evidence of their attainment on entry to the reception class and the school's checking of progress indicate that results for seven year olds will not be quite as high this year. This reflects inspection findings. Seven year old pupils in Year 2 add and subtract two-digit numbers by written methods and work out simple multiplication and division problems. They know that subtraction is the opposite of addition and multiplication the opposite of division and use this knowledge to check the accuracy of their answers. Progress in number work is good. Higher attaining pupils order numbers to 100 and have a secure grasp of place value. They apply their knowledge when working out problems. There is not so much evidence of strength in shape work or data handling.
94. Inspection findings indicate that the teaching of mathematics is good at both key stages and has improved since the last inspection, when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The skill of the teachers in developing the pupils' mental skills is particularly strong. The mental starter and whole-class work was the most effective part of the lessons observed. Teachers use resources well. When they use individual number fans or white boards, for example, all pupils need to respond. There are no 'passengers' in this part of the lesson. The work challenges pupils of all abilities; they work hard.
95. Teachers ask questions that require pupils to find the best method for calculating and expect pupils to explain their thinking. They use mathematical language well, explaining new words carefully. These strategies result in pupils who calculate confidently from an early age. For example, most pupils in Year 1 accurately add ten to a single-digit number and higher attaining pupils add ten to any two-digit number. The teacher in the Year 1 class uses her assessment of what pupils can do particularly effectively to pitch the work at the right level for different groups. Planning for the week shows a very careful sequence of skills. This ensures all pupils make the best possible progress. Very able pupils have individual work set for them. This leads to high achievement number work at a similar level to higher attaining pupils in

Year 2. Pupils in Year 2 and above use a range of methods to calculate, such as using their knowledge of doubles, rounding numbers to the nearest 10, making the necessary adjustments, and using their knowledge of tables. Pupils show a growing competence in explaining their thinking as they get older, so that Year 3 pupils, for example, explain how they order three-digit numbers by thinking about the value of the hundreds digit first. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 know their tables well and this contributes to their competency. The National Numeracy Strategy has contributed to the strength in number work and is helping younger pupils, who have been taught by these methods from the outset, to be particularly confident when working mentally.

96. Teachers provide work that helps pupils to consolidate new learning. While this takes place they concentrate on a group to move the learning forward. They provide good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to make sure they have thoroughly understood the new work. This enables them to take secure steps forward. The pupils who work independently do not always tackle work that is difficult enough to challenge them and this results in part of the lesson being slow in comparison with the brisk pace set for the mental starter. This is particularly true when higher attaining pupils work alone or in small groups away from the teacher. Year 3 pupils in the Year 2 and 3 class could have worked with higher numbers when ordering, for example, and pupils in Year 4 only tackled more demanding extension work after completing relatively easy activities. At these times their progress is slower than it might be.
97. Computers are used well to support mathematics in all classes. This improves pupils' learning of basic skills and develops an understanding of angles.
98. The end of the lesson is used well in all classes to draw the work together, to go over what has been learnt and to point out links with what pupils already know. This was identified through the school's own monitoring process as an area for improvement and effective action has been taken.
99. The marking of work, although indicating correct and incorrect answers, provides pupils with too few indications of how they might improve or what they need to learn next. Teachers' expectations of standards of recording are not high enough. The presentation of work is often poor, especially for older pupils. Writing of numbers and setting out are often untidy and can lead to unnecessary mistakes in calculation. Key words such as 'data', 'match', 'subtract' and 'triangle' are spelt incorrectly, rulers are rarely used for shape work and the careless drawing of graphs often makes them difficult to interpret with any accuracy. This is not picked up with sufficient rigour in teachers' marking. The presentation of work does not do justice to the quality of pupils' learning. Much of the work is undated, some in books and some on loose sheets of paper. It is not helpful to parents or the pupils themselves in showing the progress made over time.
100. Homework is set regularly. It is clearly linked to the work done in the classroom and supports pupils' understanding well, providing opportunities to practise or apply new learning. The homework books make clear what pupils need to do but are not used as well as they might be either by parents or by teachers to indicate how pupils could improve, or to praise achievements.

## **SCIENCE**

101. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. The achievements of the oldest pupils are sound when consideration is given to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 4. In comparison with other schools, however, standards in this year group are low.

102. The teaching of science is good at both key stages. Teachers are knowledgeable about science and teach scientific skills well. This enables pupils to learn from first hand observation and develop a thorough understanding of the work in hand. After testing materials with magnets, pupils in Year 1 come to the conclusion that metal is attracted to a magnet but that this is not the case for all metals. Most pupils in Year 2 describe the conditions needed for the growth of seedlings after experimenting with germinating seeds. Pupils in Year 3 keep careful records of the growth of a bean over a period of weeks and explain what part the roots play in keeping the plant healthy. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 explain how to distinguish solids from liquids and realise that while sand and water both flow, water will find its own level but sand will not. Most other pupils know about the changes that take place when materials are heated and that some are permanent. Lower attaining pupils are still uncertain about how to keep a test fair and require help to record their work. The teachers' helpful marking indicates that although they can describe what they have found out, they need to explain why things happened as they did. This helps them to attempt an explanation in later work. Their achievements are good, especially where teachers' comments indicate that extra help has been given.
103. Teachers use scientific language to explain new learning and question pupils skilfully to extend their thinking. They use their knowledge of individual pupils to pitch work at an appropriate level so that all can achieve their best. They make demands on higher attaining pupils so that, in Year 2 for example, pupils respond to the challenge and ask searching questions of their own, such as whether any plants have adapted to living in the dark. Similarly in Year 4 pupils attempt to explain about solids and liquids in terms of the movement of molecules.
104. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is transmitted to pupils. As a result they are keen to learn, concentrate well on the task in hand and make good progress in lessons. The teachers' high expectations of pupils' levels of independence lead to pupils co-operating well; for example, pupils in Year 2 are able to extract information from books and report their findings. Their accomplishments in reading contribute to this success.
105. The weekly time allocation for science is low, particularly for older pupils. This gives little time for older pupils to write about what they have been doing and to develop the range of recording techniques they will need as they get older. It makes progress over time satisfactory rather than reflecting the good progress in understanding developed in lessons.
106. Recent national guidelines are now in place to provide a logical sequence to pupils' learning and good support for teachers' planning. This is the most likely reason for the improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers and pupils are clear about what is to be learnt in each lesson and the work builds successfully on previous learning. The single most important weakness is the generally low standard of pupils' written records of their work in Year 2 and upwards. Although there are a few notable exceptions, such as the high standards achieved by pupils in Year 3 when they keep drawn records of plant growth, handwriting is often untidy, presentation careless and spelling of key scientific words inaccurate. This is not being picked up by teachers and therefore does not improve over time, as it should. Pupils' written work gives a false impression of the standards of their learning and does little to provide pupils, teachers or parents with an accurate record of what has been achieved.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. Standards in art at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school are broadly similar to those found in most schools, as at the time of the last inspection. There were no opportunities to observe art lessons during the inspection so it is not possible to make judgements about the overall standards of teaching and learning.

108. Work on display shows that pupils draw from observation, mix their own colours, explore patterns and texture and use pastels and paint to express their ideas. The work on display in Year 1 is of a good standard and indicates that pupils are taught well. It shows close observation of natural objects and developing skills in shading with pencils of different quality. The pupils have used pastels to draw daffodils and investigated how computer graphics programs can be used to represent the same thing in a different way. Pupils are developing a good eye for colour. Careful colour mixing, adding increasing amounts of blue to yellow, has resulted in experiments with a range of different greens. The work has been developed further when pupils investigated colours in patterned fabric samples, mixing and matching paint and extending the design. Work in Year 2 on a similar theme shows how pupils have recorded different textures and patterns, such as wood grain, discovered in the building.
109. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have studied the work of famous artists and painted still life pictures in a similar style. A few pupils have achieved a sense of depth by successfully recording how the light falls on a bottle. Older pupils in the school have sketchbooks in which they record landscapes undertaken outside, observational drawings and ideas for later work. This is a useful means of building up a bank of ideas and experimenting with different pencils, crayons and paints but the potential for this is not well realised and the work shows little development of specific skills and is rarely of a high standard.
110. No three-dimensional work has been retained but pupils talked with interest about using clay to make Viking artefacts and jewellery, copying designs studied in history.
111. New national guidelines have been successfully introduced. These provide effective support for teachers' planning and a logical development of skills as pupils move through the school. This is already having an impact in the Year 1 class but will take some time to show in improved standards further up the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 1 and for the oldest pupils are broadly similar to those found in other schools, although pupils in Key Stage 2 have little experience of drawing designs before they begin making. This aspect is weak. It was not possible to observe lessons or to make judgements about standards of teaching and learning.
113. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have investigated woven fabrics and used different types of fabric and thread to weave mats. They have worked carefully and alternated colours to produce a pleasing effect. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 have designed and made vehicles, testing different arrangements of wheels and axles and deciding which work best. Their models show that a range of different construction methods have been used and materials, including balsa and other woods, card and reclaimed materials used for different parts. The models are well made and have been painted to produce a good finish.
114. The vehicles made by pupils in Years 3 and 4 show good links with science. They have used folded card, wooden or cardboard wheels and wooden dowel axles, securing joints with tape or glue. They have attached plastic drinking straws and a balloon to the super-structure so that they can demonstrate how energy can cause vehicles to move. It has strengthened their understanding of forces. The vehicles have been made carefully but they are all very similar. Opportunities have been missed to try different ideas and materials and to evaluate the results.
115. National guidelines have been successfully introduced and these will provide a structure for the logical development of skills throughout the school. It is too early to see the impact of these in terms of higher standards at the top of the school but it is helping teachers to plan more effectively and confidently; an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils say they now have more opportunities for designing and making and enjoy the work. They described with enthusiasm what they had been doing.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. Seven year olds are reaching standards that are in line with those found in most schools. These are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Through their work on the imaginary island of Struay, these pupils are gaining a good knowledge and understanding of how an island is different to a mainland. They are beginning to recognise similarities and differences between two localities and communicate these in discussion and written work. Their subject vocabulary has been suitably increased and they understand about land use and changes in the environment. In one good lesson observed, they built on this previous work and looked at differences between their own village and a seaside location, coming up with interesting suggestions about which things would be different and which would remain the same. Whilst their geographical understanding is sound, their spelling in this subject is poor with words such as school (scool), trains (trins) and guards (gerds) spelt incorrectly.
117. It is difficult to assess standards in Year 4 from earlier work, as much of it had been taken home at the end of the previous term. Year 4 pupils interviewed talked about studying atlases and globes and drawing treasure maps with grid references. They talked knowledgeably about places in England and Wales and others further afield in Spain, America and Australia they had visited on holiday. They could not remember recently studying any country in depth, although they had some memories of learning about China in Year 3. In one good lesson observed, the oldest juniors were looking at a great range of maps and plans of the local area, including aerial photographs of the school and its surroundings. This led on to a detailed discussion about the village and the pupils carefully drawing their own routes to school. Good use was made of two map programs, one a game and the other a place locator, to support this work.
118. In both the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The teachers explained the objective of the lessons carefully and pupils had a clear understanding of what they were expected to learn in the time. Especially good resources were made available in the younger junior class and the teacher took a good deal of trouble to prepare these herself. Group activities were carefully matched to pupils' different abilities. All this, together with effective ongoing support from the teacher and student, helped pupils complete their tasks successfully. In both lessons, pupils with special educational needs were well supported and made appropriate progress in their use of geographical skills. In Year 1, the teacher uses Sleepy Bear to stimulate pupils' interest in locating places they have visited on a map. This bear has amazing adventures with individual children and has even been photographed with Mickey Mouse at Disneyland. Sleepy's friend has his own passport, which New Zealand customs officials stamped on arrival and departure!
119. The school has recently adopted the national scheme of work for geography and the units to be covered are now incorporated in the year's long-term plan for each class. It is not clear from this how the two-year rolling programme will work in mixed-age classes and whether there is appropriate coverage over this longer period. For instance, there is no indication that the study of village life in a less economically developed country, such as India, will be covered although this is suggested for Year 4. There are few records of earlier work and what is recorded is in a topic book covering a range of subjects. As a result, pupils have no quick reference to what they have learned in order to build on and extend their geographical skills, knowledge and understanding.

## **HISTORY**

120. Seven year old pupils and those at the end of Year 4 reach standards in history that are in line with the expected level for their age. It was only possible to observe one history lesson during

the inspection, partly due to the emphasis on geography at this time. Judgements are based on evidence in planning, pupils' past work and a discussion with a group of pupils from Year 4.

121. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils make satisfactory gains in learning the skills needed for historical research, as well as in their knowledge and understanding of famous people and past events. Starting in Year 1, the children contrast and compare old teddy bears with new ones. Using good resources supplied by the teacher, they are able to put a group of household irons in date order according to when they were made. Past work in Years 2 and 3 is based on the Fire of London and this shows a good knowledge about how and where the fire was started. It records the names of some famous people who lived in London at that time, such as Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn. Year 4 pupils interviewed could remember learning, when they were younger, about a great range of other well-known people, including Florence Nightingale, Marie Curie and Francis Drake.
122. By the time they leave school, pupils in Year 4 have a wide knowledge of different times and people in history. They can recount facts about Henry VIII and his six wives and know about Queen Elizabeth 1. They seem particularly impressed by the fact that she had people beheaded. Visitors and educational trips enrich the history curriculum. A whole-school outing had been made to Hampton Court in connection with the pupils' study of Tudor times and on a trip to St Alban's Abbey they had dressed up in old clothes and much enjoyed the experience. They talk with great enthusiasm about the visits made by Steve the Roman, who at other times comes to the school as Steve the Viking. In connection with their work on the Vikings, Year 4 pupils make necklaces, swords, helmets and models of boats, gaining information about appropriate designs from books. Presently, the oldest juniors are studying the village and the changes that have occurred there over the years. A wide range of photographs has been taken of existing buildings and, together with old photographs of the village in the past, these support pupils in their work. The headteacher owns many interesting artefacts, such as a china hot water bottle, and these are usefully on display for pupils to handle and research.
123. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in history. The three Year 4 pupils interviewed were enthusiastic about the subject, which they thought was "really exciting". They were especially keen to tell the inspector about the difficulties experienced by villagers in the past when they had to use the local water pump. Good use is made of the local library service, which provides a wide range of books on the subject being studied. This improves the pupils' research skills. Several timelines in classrooms show that pupils are being taught about chronology and that they are able to put historical events in an appropriate order. It was not possible to see a great deal of the pupils' past work in the oldest class. Much of this had been carried out on pieces of paper and had either been taken home or used as part of the display on the classroom walls. This is not a satisfactory situation. It is not only difficult to assess attainment and progress in the subject but, additionally, the pupils are not able to use a visual record of their work as a starting point for new learning and to see how the work links together.
124. As in geography, the national scheme of work has been adopted and the suggested study units are now incorporated into the school's long-term planning. However, there is no over-arching curriculum plan that clearly shows what is being taught over a two-year cycle. Opportunities are missed to incorporate writing in support of history, for example a formal letter to the headteacher at Eyam asking for information about that village, into the literacy hour. This leads to even more time being spent on literacy and less time being spent on subject specific skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

125. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and for the oldest pupils are broadly in line with standards in other schools. This is a big improvement since the last inspection when

standards were low and there was little evidence of skills being taught. Pupils throughout the school show confident use of word-processing skills. The oldest pupils can draft and edit their work, and modify font and lay out for presentation purposes. They locate programs, retrieve saved work and use the printer. Pupils who have access to computers at home share their skills well. This too has contributed to higher standards. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 use the keyboard to write poems, stories and instructions. They record information, in the form of a database, about choice of crisps and show results on graphs. They successfully program a robotic toy to follow a planned route. They experiment with a graphics program to draw flowers.

126. The most important factor in bringing about the improvement in standards is the introduction of specialist teaching in all classes. This is an efficient use of the co-ordinator's expertise and provides good opportunities for learning new skills. The teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. They work with concentration and pick up new skills quickly. The teacher ensures they can put their new skills into practice by providing interesting activities. Pupils respond to the teacher's enthusiasm. They are keen to learn and co-operate well in pairs on the computers and in small groups away from the computer, for example when working out programming instructions in control work. They persist when they encounter difficulties and usually work out solutions themselves by modifying their plans. The teacher ensures that all pupils play a full part. She is particularly encouraging when pupils with special educational needs make a breakthrough, for example when they recall their work on angles in mathematics and use this to calculate degrees of turn.
127. All strands of the work are covered by the new national guidelines that have been introduced recently. The work now builds logically and the development of skills is secure. Older pupils still have some catching up to do, especially in their use of simulations, and the school is still waiting for an e-mail connection which will enable pupils to correspond with other schools. The New Opportunities Fund has been spent wisely to ensure that all teachers are now confident computer users. This enables them to choose and run programs that support other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils use mapping programs in geography, graphics programs in art and programs in English and mathematics that provide good opportunities to practise basic skills.
128. The teacher knows pupils' strengths well and is quick to target individuals who need to improve particular skills. However, there is currently no formal system for checking pupils' progress so that this can be built on and information shared with other teachers. A format is under consideration.
129. An after-school computer club meets regularly and interested pupils are benefiting from the opportunities to extend their skills beyond the level achieved in the class situation. Pupils attending the after-school chess club use computer programs to improve their chess playing.

## **MUSIC**

130. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and for the oldest pupils are broadly in line with those found in other schools. Pupils throughout the school enjoy singing. They sing well in class and in morning worship.
131. The co-ordinator teaches music in all classes. This is a good use of her expertise and ensures that pupils make good progress in lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are planned well so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn. The teacher provides interesting activities for pupils to put their skills into practice. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making a collection of action songs. They choose from those they know from cubs and rainbow groups, those they use in the playground for skipping and those they have learnt in music lessons. Groups of pupils are beginning to compose their own action songs to perform to the class. They consider whether the actions can be used as

an ostinato rhythm to accompany the song. They sing familiar songs that use this device and show good listening skills and the ability to hold a part.

132. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 also make good progress in rhythm work and singing because of the teacher's skill in devising activities to promote careful listening. They recognise the sound of a wide range of percussion instruments without being able to see them. Almost all pupils use instruments to play a rhythm for a nursery rhyme accurately enough for others to recognise.
133. The introduction of new national guidelines ensures that skills are taught in a logical sequence and built on as pupils move through the school. This has strengthened the curriculum. Together with expert teaching this provides an improving picture of music provision in the school. These changes are relatively recent but they are already beginning to produce higher standards of listening and singing. A few pupils benefit from weekly violin tuition with the peripatetic string teacher, provided by the local education authority, and an after-school choir meets regularly.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. Standards in games skills and dance at the end of Key Stage 1 and for the oldest pupils are broadly in line with those found in most schools. It was not possible to make judgements about the standard of gymnastics as no lessons were observed. Records indicate that at least half the pupils have achieved the 25 metres expected by the age of nine and some pupils swim much further. Pupils describe practising different strokes and learning about water safety.
135. The teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers make it clear what pupils are to learn and activities are chosen well to improve skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 improve their control of a range of different balls and quoits when they practise rolling, aiming and receiving. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 improve their kicking skills and learn to control the ball by trapping it under the foot before returning it to their partner. They practise using the inside of their foot to keep the ball low. The teachers give clear instructions that help pupils to improve and pupils listen carefully and put the advice into practice, working hard. High performing pupils are chosen to demonstrate skills and techniques and other pupils learn from this. However, opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to evaluate the performance of others and to judge for themselves what they do well. Although the gender balance of two classes is very one sided, there is no sense of boys or girls dominating in lessons. Teachers make sure all have opportunities to show what they can do and choose activities that interest both boys and girls.
136. In the dance lesson pupils were refining their performance for a country dance festival. They reached a good standard, moving freely and easily, showing good control, an awareness of others and keeping good time to the music. Boys and girls worked sensibly together and co-operated with the teacher to ensure their performance reached the high standard she expects and would bear the scrutiny of others.
137. Teachers make sure that pupils are thoroughly warmed up before energetic activity begins. Pupils know the importance of this and how exercise affects heartbeat, circulation and breathing. A good level of sustained energetic activity is maintained in most lessons.
138. National guidelines are used to support teachers' planning. This ensures that the full range of activities described in the National Curriculum for this age group is provided. Pupils at Key Stage 1 take part in dance, gymnastics and games activities. In addition pupils at Key Stage 2 swim during the summer term and older pupils take part in adventurous outdoor activities. In addition large groups of pupils benefit from after-school country dancing and skipping games. The pupils are keen to take part in competitive games. Both boys and girls show an

enthusiasm for football and practise assiduously at lunch times. The school is investigating the possibility of setting up an after-school football club in response to pupils' interest.