

INSPECTION REPORT

**Whitminster Endowed Church of England Primary
School**

Whitminster

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115660

Headteacher: Mrs P Keevil

Reporting inspector: Kathryn Taylor
22424

Dates of inspection: 13th - 15th March 2000

Inspection number: 197897

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior and infant
School category:	Church of England Endowed
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address	School Lane Whitminster Gloucs
Postcode:	GL2 7PJ
Telephone number:	01452 740406
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Etheridge
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Kathryn Taylor	Registered inspector	English Religious education Geography History Music Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities Under-fives English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Quality and range of opportunities for learning Key issues for action
Margaret Morrisey	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Philip Mann	Team inspector	Science Mathematics Information technology Art Design and technology	Leadership and management Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 PART B: COMMENTARY	
 HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	 10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
 HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	 13
 HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	 14
 HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	 17
 HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	 18
 HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	 18
 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	 21
 PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	 22
 PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	 26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitminster Church of England Endowed Primary is a small village school with 93 pupils aged between four and eleven on roll. Pupils start school in the September after their fourth birthday. At the time of inspection only two children attending the school were under the age of five. Although the standard number for entry to the school is fifteen, the actual number of pupils in each year group varies considerably, and pupil numbers are subject to constant fluctuation. This occurs partly because the school has a long established tradition of providing school places for the children of Traveller families, currently one third of all pupils, and these children may not always be staying within the locality, nor be present at school. Additionally there is also high population movement locally, affecting numbers coming into and out of the area and the school. Pupil turnover during the last academic year was fifty per cent of all pupils and in the year prior to this, fifty nine per cent.

Pupils at the school are currently arranged into three mixed aged classes. From September of this year, after completion of building expansion work, the school is to expand to four classes, two in each key stage. The school does not have its own nursery. The proportion of pupils entering the school who have some nursery or pre-school provision varies from one year to the next. Of the current group of pupils in the reception class around three quarters have had some nursery experience or pre-school provision before starting school. The school has very close links with the local nursery. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from one year to the next and is below average overall. Some pupils start school with good early learning skills while some have very weak language and physical skills. Pupils joining Whitminster after attending other schools come with wide variations in prior attainment. Some pupils also enter the school between Year 1 and Year 6 with no prior experience of school.

Currently eleven pupils in the school are identified as having special educational needs, none of whom currently has a statement of special educational need. The proportion on the special needs register is lower than that found in many other schools. All pupils at the school are white; however, a third of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, none of whom speak English as an additional language. Eleven per cent of all pupils are currently entitled to free school meals, which is below average when compared with schools nationally. The cultural, social and economic background of pupils attending the school is very diverse.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Whitminster is an effective school. Although not all pupils attain the expected levels by the time they leave the school, the majority do, and a good proportion of pupils attain at the higher levels. Overall standards are good when compared with similar schools and schools nationally. Pupils make good gains in learning, especially in literacy. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils' behaviour is very good and their attitudes to school and learning are good. The curriculum is broad and well balanced with very good provision of extra curricular activities. Staff have established very good and productive links with many of its parents. The school is well led and managed and provides a warm welcome for pupils. The headteacher, staff and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well and have established very good systems to constantly review, update and extend the school's provision. The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- The school is well led and managed and has a very good ethos.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and for Traveller pupils is good.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced and there is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- Pupils behave very well and have good attitudes to learning.

- The school cares well for its pupils and has developed very good links with parents.

**Ethos is the climate for learning*

What could be improved

- Resources for information technology are not good enough.
- The good curricular provision needs to be extended to help pupils have a better understanding of the diverse cultural traditions and backgrounds of British society.
- The accommodation is too small; however, building work is due to start soon.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the time of the last inspection the school was identified as having serious weaknesses. Since that time the headteacher, staff and governors have given very good attention to addressing these weaknesses and the school has made very good progress. Pupils' standards of work have improved.

The curriculum has been improved and extended, although more work still needs to be done in relation to information technology. Regular and rigorous systems for assessing pupils' progress have been developed and are now in place and these are used effectively to set targets for pupils and to plan future work. The quality of teaching is much improved and is now good. The leadership and management of the school are improved; teaching is regularly monitored by the headteacher and is supported well, subjects are well led and the role of governors is strengthened and extended. The provision for children under five is improved and good attention is now given to planning work, which meets the government recommendations.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			*Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	B	A	A	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	A	E	B	B	average C below average D
Science	A	E	B	A	well below average E

**similar schools refers to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals*

In the National Curriculum tests in 1999 at age eleven, overall standards in mathematics are above average when compared with similar schools and schools nationally. Standards in English and science are well above the national average and that found in similar schools. Standards of work achieved by the current very small Year 6 age group are not as high as those achieved in the last two years. However, work seen throughout the inspection shows that these pupils are nevertheless making good progress and attaining standards which reflect their current capabilities. Standards in work seen throughout the school are at least average across the full range

of subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in class, in the playground and around the school. A very small minority has specific behavioural needs and the school works well to support these pupils through its special needs provision.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils of different ages and backgrounds relate to each other very well and to the staff. All staff provide good role models for pupils.
Attendance	Attendance levels are satisfactory overall. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school and are keen to attend.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in all lessons seen is never less than satisfactory and is good in three lessons out of four which is a high proportion of good teaching. In one lesson in twelve teaching is very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a broad curriculum, which covers most subjects well. Some aspects of the information technology curriculum need improving. Good attention is given to the development of pupils' skills in English and mathematics. The provision of extracurricular activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils needs are identified promptly and class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator provide good support for pupils and plan work which is well matched to pupils' individual needs.
Provision for Traveller pupils	Good. Pupils are welcomed and valued and class teachers support pupils well in lessons. Support and teaching for specific pupils with greater need is very effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school has a very strong moral code and pupils' social development is given very high priority. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. Provision for pupils' cultural and spiritual development is good. More could be done to help pupils to appreciate the ethnic diversity of British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a caring place. Procedures for Child Protection and ensuring pupils welfare are very good. Pupils' progress and personal development are monitored well.

The school has very effective links with parents. There is very good parental involvement in pupils' learning through links with the school and this has a significant impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Parents are very satisfied with both the school's academic achievements and standards of care.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and works well with staff and governors. Subjects are well managed by co-ordinators and they monitor work in their subjects and pupils' progress well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The role of governors has been extended and strengthened since the last inspection and is now good. Governors uphold the principles of best value. They are keen to develop and extend their work further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has developed good and rigorous systems to evaluate all aspects of its work.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available money, accommodation and resources. Grants given for specific purposes are used well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents say their children enjoy school. • Their children are encouraged to work hard and they make good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school is well managed. • Parents feel the school helps their children to become mature and responsible and most parents think the school achieves good standards of behaviour. • Parents like the way their children's individuality is valued. • Parents feel welcome at the school and that staff are approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority of parents feel behaviour is not good enough. • Some parents do not feel well informed about their children's progress.

Inspectors support parents' positive views. They judged that the quality of information for parents is good. Inspectors agree that a very small minority of pupils have difficulties with behaviour. The school is very successful in helping these pupils to improve their behaviour.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children start school their levels of attainment vary considerably from one year to the next and are below average overall. During their time in the reception classes, the children who are under the age of five make good progress in all areas of learning. By age five, average and higher-attaining pupils achieve standards similar to those achieved by children of a similar age.
2. When analysing pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of each key stage, it is important to take account of not only the school's very small and changing cohort size, but also its very high pupil mobility: around fifty per cent each year. Additionally, the test results of Traveller pupils, currently a third of all pupils attending the school, may or may not be included in test results each year, depending on whether they are in school at the time. These factors make statistical analysis and comparison of results of cohorts of pupils not only problematic but also potentially unreliable.
3. In 1999 in the National Curriculum tests at the age of seven, the percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected level 2 in reading, 67 per cent, is well below the national average. However, the percentage attaining the higher level 3 at 33 per cent is well above the national average. In writing and mathematics all pupils taking the tests attained at least the expected level 2, which is very high. The proportion gaining the higher level 3, 33 per cent in mathematics and 17 per cent in writing, is also well above the national average. In science, on the basis of teacher assessment, the proportion gaining level 2 or above, 83 per cent, is below the national average. However, the proportion gaining level 3, a third of all pupils, is well above average.
4. When the school's results overall at age seven are compared with those of similar schools, pupils' attainment in reading is well below average, and in writing and mathematics it is well above average. Boys did better than girls in the tests in 1999.
5. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 2, 80 per cent of pupils achieved or exceeded the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. When compared with national figures, this is above average in English and mathematics and close to the national average in science. The percentages attaining the higher level 5, in English at 40 per cent and science 47 per cent, are both well above average. In mathematics, the proportion attaining Level 5, 27 per cent, is above the national average percentage. At this key stage, girls did better than boys in mathematics and science. When pupils' results at age eleven are compared with those in similar schools, standards in English are well above average and in science and mathematics are above average.
6. At both key stages, comparison of results over time indicates that in most instances overall attainment is at least average by age eleven except for a dip in attainment in 1998. There is clear evidence of a good proportion of pupils achieving the higher attainment levels at the end of each key stage. However, the statistics are limited in their usefulness in providing information both about the school's progress and that of groups of pupils over time because of the school's context: its intake and very high pupil turnover. Test results also mask the fact that a proportion of pupils has poor skills in basic literacy. These pupils are, in general, not in school at the time the tests take place, and therefore do not necessarily feature in the statistical data available. While statistical analysis indicates marked differences in boys' and girls' attainment in the tests at the end of each key stage, neither the school's own monitoring systems, nor inspection evidence supports this. Analysis of information regarding size of age groups and the proportion of boys to girls, however, does show marked variation in the ratio for

boys to girls in different cohorts and this may distort the figures.

7. The school's targets for the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level 4 in English and mathematics by the age eleven in the year 2000, 67 per cent, is lower than that achieved by pupils in 1999. However, there are only six pupils in this cohort compared with fifteen in 1999, making comparison inappropriate. Inspection evidence indicates that the school is set to at least meet these relatively challenging targets.
8. Inspection findings are that overall standards in English, mathematics and science in the current Year 2 class are at least average and in the current Year 6 group of pupils are slightly below average overall. In other year groups across the school, although pupils' standards overall are above average, there are nevertheless very wide differences in the standards which individual pupils achieve. A good proportion of pupils in each year group is attaining the expected level in English, mathematics and science and in general a higher than average proportion achieves the higher attainment levels. Conversely, there are some pupils in each year group whose standards in the basic skills of reading and writing are very low in relation to their age and ability.
9. Pupils' skills in reading and writing are at least satisfactory and a good proportion read and write well for their age. Pupils are attentive listeners and confident speakers. Pupils' numerical skills and their instant recall of number facts, including multiplication tables, is developing well. Pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills well in other subjects, for example when presenting data or compiling charts, and to measure accurately. Pupils' scientific skills are at least satisfactory. Pupils are able to make sensible predictions about the outcomes of scientific experimentation and they develop a secure understanding of fair testing. Pupils' skills in information communication technology are below average overall because, as yet, pupils have not developed satisfactory skills in all strands of the subject.
10. Throughout the school, the overall progress which pupils of all prior attainment levels make during their time at the school is good. Pupils on the register of special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets in their individual educational plans, and attain standards which reflect their capabilities and sometimes match nationally expected levels. The progress of Traveller children in class lessons and of those who have additional support in withdrawal sessions is equally good. Those Traveller children who attend regularly attain standards similar to those which other pupils achieve.
11. Pupils make good gains in learning in all aspects of English and this is given high priority in the school. Pupils learn how to write for a range of purposes and across a range of subjects with increasing attention to using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. They develop good speaking and listening skills and gain in confidence, using a growing vocabulary to discuss their ideas and work. They make good progress in reading with expression and understanding and in their ability to use reference materials to extract information on a range of topics.
12. In mathematics, pupils are making good gains in learning and in developing a secure understanding of place value, number facts, calculations and measures. As they progress through the school they learn to increasingly apply these skills to their learning in other subjects and to problem-solving activities. In science, at both key stages, pupils make good progress both in their knowledge and understanding and carrying out experiments and investigations under fair testing conditions. Their skills in predicting the possible outcomes of investigation develop well.
13. Pupils' progress in the development of information technology skills is a current school priority and is now developing well. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus and progress is satisfactory. In the remaining foundation subjects, in the lessons and work seen during the inspection, standards are average overall, except in dance and singing, where standards are good. In the majority of the lessons pupils make good gains in learning.

14. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in raising standards. Weaknesses in art, music and pupils' listening and problem-solving skills at Key Stage 1, and in music, design and technology and art at Key Stage 2, have all been improved. Throughout the school pupils skills in investigations, in both mathematics and science, are also improved.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the time of the last inspection. Children make a happy and confident start to school when they join the reception and Year 1 class. The children establish effective relationships with adults and with each other. Throughout the school pupils are very co-operative with school routines, keen to participate and are frequently absorbed in their work. The Traveller children and children with special educational needs are accepted and valued by other pupils within the welcoming atmosphere of the school. They help to provide the ethos of harmony and calm that exists within the school. All children co-operate well with each other, especially in lessons where they take turns, help one another and share equipment. Pupils follow instructions and carry out responsibilities with confidence. They behave very well in and around the school.
16. All pupils have good attitudes to school. Older pupils who were interviewed spoke enthusiastically about the subjects they were studying and the other activities they took part in. They were keen to explain the school's system of Golden Time and the reward system for neatness. Others in class were happy to explain what they were doing and pleased to show work they had previously done. Pupils throughout the school are keen to learn, interested in what their teachers tell them and prepared to apply themselves to their work. Children in the reception year showed motivation and enthusiasm in their mathematics lesson, for example, while at the other end of the school, pupils in the class of Year 4, 5 and 6 displayed similar qualities in their art lesson where they were discussing a picture by Monet. Pupils' concentration wavers occasionally towards the end of introductions to lessons, but revives with a change of activity. The classroom assistants and Traveller support staff provide very good support for pupils, which helps them to maintain interest. Pupils with special educational needs have equally good attitudes towards their learning.
17. The pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils are obedient and do as they are asked quickly, so that teachers do not have to waste time establishing order. Pupils move from introductory parts of lessons to the practical part sensibly and enthusiastically. Behaviour around the school building is very good. Pupils move around in an orderly way and with an awareness of others. They show a respect for their surroundings. In the playground, pupils behave very well. Their supportive and considerate attitudes towards one another are a real strength. Pupils from all the classes and from different social and cultural backgrounds mingle and play together well. The youngest children are confident and unafraid to use all the space available, while the older pupils are tolerant of the smaller ones and attentive to their needs. Exclusions are rare: only two in the last year. There is no evidence of any oppressive or intimidating behaviour.
18. Pupils respond well to the opportunities they are given for personal development. In class, pupils get out and put away resources for their groups, and they do this quickly and without fuss. During lunch times the older pupils have responsibility for looking after groups of younger children. Pupils' relationships with one another and with adults are good. They are polite and courteous in their dealings with staff and visitors and get on well with one another. Pupils from all year-groups are able to understand the feelings of others and the effect of their actions on others. They share well, take turns and listen to one another, and expect others to do the same. Pupils respond well when required to take initiative.
19. Attendance levels are satisfactory overall. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school and are

keen to attend.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching in lessons seen during inspection was always at least satisfactory, was good in seventy per cent of lessons and very good in eight per cent. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when teaching was identified as an area with considerable shortcomings.
21. The school has worked hard to extend teacher's expertise in teaching the full range of subjects. When making appointments the school has been able to attract teachers with additional skills. Some teachers are now employed on a part-time basis to teach some of the work in particular subjects to all classes, in for example design and technology, dance and physical education. This also provides a very effective system for improving class teachers' expertise, as they support teaching in these lessons and learn how to improve their own skills from seeing the subjects taught well. Teachers now have good knowledge and understanding of most subjects. This enables them to teach confidently and to maintain a good pace to lessons.
22. Teachers have high expectations about pupils' behaviour and work, and lessons provide good levels of challenge. A particular strength of the teaching is that teachers know pupils very well, despite the very high pupil turnover. This means teachers set appropriate work for pupils of different ages and abilities within their class, enabling children to learn well. Teachers monitor pupils' progress very effectively in lessons and over time and are quick to identify when an individual pupil or groups of pupils would benefit from additional support or more challenging extension activities.
23. Class teachers give good attention to the needs of Traveller pupils and pupils with special educational needs when planning work and in lessons. They are aware of individual pupils' specific needs and choose activities to support and extend their learning. Support assistants are deployed well and they provide good support for pupils. When Traveller pupils or pupils with special educational needs are taught in small groups or individually in withdrawal sessions, the quality of teaching is good with tightly focused activities and well-planned sessions. Pupils are well managed. Teachers are firm when they need to be, but they also treat pupils with kindness and respect. This contributes to the very good relationships between teachers and pupils and encourages children to do their best. Teachers are well prepared for lessons and often provide a range of interesting learning resources to motivate and interest pupils. Learning objectives for lessons are clearly identified and these are shared with pupils, which helps them to understand the purpose of the work they are to do and the tasks set. The teaching methods used are appropriate to the age and experience of pupils.
24. Despite the fact that some pupils stay in the same class for at least two, and sometimes three years, they are exposed to a variety of teaching styles. This is achieved as some classes are taught by two teachers sharing the job and because a number of other teachers are employed to teach each class for some lessons. In addition existing staff often perform two or three roles in the school. For example, one teacher teaches the older pupils part time and works part time as the special educational needs co-ordinator. She also teaches additional hours when the need arises, as do other part-time teachers. All of this provides variety and continuity for pupils as well as enabling all teachers to get to know all of the pupils. Teachers work well as a team to ensure that when tasks are shared there is good continuity in pupils' learning and also that they teach to their own strengths
25. The marking of pupils' work is good. Targets are set and very clear guidance is given to pupils about how they can improve. A good example of this is the very clear and thorough guidance given to pupils in the Year 6 group about how to plan and improve their writing. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils throughout the school are expected to read at home each night

and to learn spellings each week. One piece of written work, usually in science or mathematics, is also set each week. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are also expected to research and compile their own projects, often with a history focus. Parents at the meeting prior to inspection spoke highly of this practice, noting how skilfully the task and expectations for pupils of different ages are made clear, and about the high quality marking of this work. Inspection evidence confirms this.

26. The teaching of English is good throughout the school. The basic skills of phonics and grammar are taught well and good attention is given to developing and extending pupils' writing. Teachers also make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' reading and writing skills through the range of subjects. Pupils' progress in reading is monitored well.
27. The school has worked well to develop the teaching of mathematics. During the inspection teaching in all lessons seen was good, except in one lesson where teaching was very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, explain concepts well and build on pupils' previous learning. Work is challenging and good use is made of ongoing assessment in lessons and when planning work for pupils of different ages and abilities.
28. The teaching of science is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge which allows them to give clear descriptions and explanations of scientific concepts. They take care in explaining scientific terms and give pupils opportunities to ask questions. In information technology the teaching seen is good, although further training is planned in the use of new equipment which is to be bought.
29. In all other lessons seen, in religious education and the foundation subjects, the quality of teaching is good overall and there is some very good teaching in design and technology. Lessons are well planned and taught and good use is made of demonstrations. Pupils' own work provides a vehicle for identifying progress and pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on their work and that of others, famous artists for example.

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

30. The last inspection report identified significant weaknesses in the curriculum: lack of breadth and depth, too much repetition of topics and an unsatisfactory curriculum for the children under the age of five. The school has made very good progress since that time and the curriculum is now good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has also been extended and improved since the time of the last inspection.
31. The curriculum for children under the age of five in the mixed age class of reception and Year 1 pupils now follows the recommendations in the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The teacher and classroom assistant work hard to organise and provide a curriculum well matched to the needs of different attainment and age groups and to provide suitable experiences for the youngest pupils in the class. Children are introduced to the National Curriculum programmes of study as and when it is appropriate to their individual needs and abilities. Good attention is now given to children's physical and creative development. Children do not as yet have access to a separate outdoor play space, although they are provided with supervised play sessions. The planned improvements to the building will extend children's access to outdoor play.
32. In Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils of all attainment levels now have access to a good curriculum which is broad and balanced and covers all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, sex education and drugs awareness and includes personal health and social education. Good and well-focused attention is given to English and mathematics, which is having a positive impact on improving pupils' standards. The school's implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies is satisfactory.

33. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Staff work very hard to provide a suitable curriculum which builds on pupils' previous learning. This poses a constant challenge in the context of mixed age-group class, which sometimes span three age groups. In addition annual changes to class groupings, which are dependent on pupil numbers in each year group, pose further difficulties. The school responds well to the challenges. Much discussion and adjusting of the school's curriculum plans take place on an annual basis.
34. Teachers use the schemes of work effectively as a basis for their half-termly, weekly and daily planning. They make good links between the different subjects which makes work more meaningful, and pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well through other subjects. For example, pupils have many opportunities to develop extended writing skills across the curriculum and to practise reading and comprehension skills. A particular strength of the school is the way in which, when basic skills development is identified as a school priority, staff find ways of extending these through a broad and balanced curriculum. The development of information technology across the curriculum is a current whole-school focus, which requires some improvement.
35. The curriculum for pupils on the register of special educational needs follows the requirements of the code of practice and the provision is good. Pupils are consistently well supported by class teachers and support staff. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) also supports some pupils in withdrawal sessions, either individually or in groups, some on a regular basis, others for specific periods of time, depending on need. There is very good use of targeted support to groups of pupils for specific periods of time, in reading for example. Pupils with behavioural needs are very effectively helped through the establishment of behaviour contracts and behaviour modification programmes, and this is very successful in improving behaviour and in enabling pupils to learn alternative strategies for dealing with problems and frustrations. Traveller pupils are well supported by class teachers. Some pupils with greater needs receive additional support from the Traveller support service. This provision is of good quality. Inspection evidence shows that when individuals or groups of pupils are withdrawn from lessons, the same type of work is covered in both sessions, which means pupils do not miss out work which they will later find hard to make up.
36. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of visits to places of interest and by visitors to the school. For example, teachers and pupils make good use of the locality in their history and geography work. They visit Flambards Museum as part of their work on World War 11 and have visited the Black Country Museum. Visitors to the school include the local vicar and representatives from different churches who attend regularly to take assemblies. Dance groups, including a group of African dancers, come periodically to perform for the pupils, and children have also benefited from visits from artists and storytellers.
37. The provision of extracurricular activities is very good. Activities are very varied and include recorder groups, handbells, choir, cricket, football, netball, rounders, mathematics games, gardening, drama and French. The number and range is particularly impressive in view of the very small number of staff at the school. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection expressed praise for the amount of time and effort staff put in to provide these activities before and after school and at lunchtime.
38. The curriculum is relevant to the needs and experiences of its pupils. It provides good opportunities for pupil's spiritual and cultural development and makes very good provision for their personal, moral and social development.
39. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Subjects such as English, dance, art and music provide good opportunities for pupils to respond imaginatively and creatively and to reflect on

their feelings. For example, all pupils were seen taking part in a Millennium dance in which they expressed their feelings creatively and imaginatively. In music and art, pupils have opportunities to reflect upon and to develop an appreciation of the work of others. Religious education lessons and assemblies also make a good contribution, providing opportunities for pupils to pray and to reflect on their own experiences. The statutory requirements for a daily collective act of worship are met.

40. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school has a strong moral code, which enables pupils to develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and the effect of one's behaviour on others. An important feature is the way in which pupils' good behaviour and acts of kindness and helpfulness are recognised, appreciated and celebrated. There were many examples during the inspection period where the headteacher and staff were prompt to praise and to thank pupils for behaving well. This serves to constantly encourage and reinforce good behaviour as well as raising pupils' self-esteem. Pupils' efforts are also rewarded in Friday assemblies and through the use and sometimes the loss of "Golden Time." Perhaps the most important feature of the school's successful behaviour policy is that pupils feel valued by all the staff who work at the school and they respect and value them in turn. This makes them want to behave and to co-operate with the staff.
41. Pupils' personal and social development is fostered very well. There are very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. In all classes pupils are encouraged to co-operate with each other, to perform jobs in the classroom and around the school and to take initiative and be responsible. As pupils move up the school and get older they take on more responsibility and often take a leading role. For example, older pupils set out the hall for assemblies and operate the overhead projector during assembly. In lessons they may take a leading role in scribing for the teacher or in leading the music in a dance lesson as was seen during the inspection. Pupils regularly contribute to charities of their choice. Pupils in Year 5 decide at the end of each year which charity will be the school's focus for the following year. Pupils' choices are sometimes based around issues pertinent to individual pupils at the school. For example, in the recent past, following the serious illness of one pupil, pupils chose to support a charity which helps children with meningitis. Extracurricular provision, including a residential trip for the oldest pupils, makes an excellent contribution to pupils' social development. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to take part in a very wide range of activities in which they work with pupils from different classes and of different ages. They also take part in sporting events with other schools and musical events within the locality. Pupils throughout the school have good opportunities to take part in decision-making through the school council and in the general day-to-day life of the school, in which pupils' views are regularly taken into account.
42. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development through the school's broad and balanced curriculum. In religious education for example, pupils learn about different religions. In music they listen to music from different genres and cultures. Topics in history, such as 'The Romans' and 'The Vikings', support pupils' cultural development and in art pupils study the work of different artists, for example Breugel and Monet. While the curriculum does offer some good opportunities for pupils to learn about and appreciate different cultural traditions, more could be done to challenge existing stereotypes and to promote positive views about the achievements of peoples from ethnic minority backgrounds, both in this country and elsewhere. During the inspection period when pupils in Key Stage 2 were making comparisons between life in Chembakoli, an Indian village, and life within their own village, it is clear from some of pupils' responses that already pupils have rather stereotyped views. While they are able to identify the disadvantages of life in an Indian Village, they have limited appreciation of the positive aspects. Similarly, the curriculum could be enriched by inclusion of work which explores the history and cultural traditions of Traveller families, so that those pupils who are not Travellers would develop an informed view about the lifestyles of a significant proportion of the school community and local population.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the caring and supportive environment in which pupils feel valued. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is very good and is effective in raising pupils' achievement.
44. The school cares very effectively for its pupils' welfare and safety. Child protection arrangements are very good and comply with locally agreed procedures. Procedures for monitoring good behaviour and for ensuring that oppressive behaviour is eliminated are very good. The school's 'open-door' policy takes into account the wishes and feelings of parents and carers and sensitively encourages them to play a full part in the education and welfare of their children.
45. The health and safety provision is comprehensive, well used and is monitored by the governing body. Risk assessment in all the relevant areas is up to date and all equipment is well maintained with recorded checks. The headteacher, working effectively with the governors, keeps a regular check on the building and the site. During the inspection no health and safety concerns were noted. High quality school meals are served; the classroom used is well prepared at the end of lessons to ensure all surfaces are clean for the consumption of food. Overall, the school and the grounds are a safe place for pupils and staff. There are clear notices in classrooms to support procedures and to promote health, safety and first aid. All staff have had some first aid training and the headteacher is the designated first-aider. The school successfully promotes healthy and safe living through a comprehensive programme for personal, health and social education. Suitable emphasis is also placed on hygiene and safety across the curriculum. For example, pupils exercise good procedures especially in inclement weather having to cope with outside lavatories and steps to demountable classrooms.
46. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and strictly adhered to. Registers are correctly completed both morning and afternoon and are returned to the school office. The Travellers Education Welfare Officer regularly monitors pupils' attendance and provides home visits if needed. Parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities to comply with legislation for attendance and the vast majority successfully fulfil their obligations.
47. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. These include the very regular use of standardised tests in English and mathematics and regular ongoing assessments in all subjects. Individual portfolios of pupil's work clearly show what pupils know, can do and understand. The assessment of children on entry to the school provides a very accurate picture and is used to plan for the next stage in learning. Traveller pupils joining the school are assessed promptly by the Traveller Support Service teacher. This is very thorough and is effective in ascertaining pupils' previous experience and current levels of attainment so that work planned is pertinent to individual pupils. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs very promptly; a feature of the school commented on by parents at the meeting and in the questionnaire. This means pupils' needs are identified early and are quickly acted upon. The targets on pupils' individual education plans appropriately identify pupils' specific needs. Some of the targets however are rather broad and need to be broken down into smaller, more measurable steps. This would also assist in the process of review. Reviews take place very regularly and the system is sufficiently flexible to enable them to take place more regularly if needed.
48. Assessment of pupils' attainment is very thorough and is used to set targets for pupils in English and mathematics. Assessed work is carefully annotated and dated and clearly indicates levels of attainment. All teachers know exactly what levels their pupils are attaining in all subjects in relation to the National Curriculum. Assessment is manageable, very relevant and useful. Very good use is made of assessment information, for example, to group pupils for English and mathematics and to target specific groups of pupils throughout the school for additional work in aspects of English and

mathematics. Teachers use assessment information very well when planning future work, which is based on clear evidence about what pupils already know, can do and understand. Assessment information is also used effectively to set targets for individual pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

49. Partnership with parents has been strengthened since the last inspection. The partnership between parents and the school and parents' commitment to supporting pupils' learning at home has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The school has very effective links with parents. Parents are very satisfied with the quality of education provided and standards achieved by their children.
50. The school keeps particularly good links with those parents who have children with special educational needs. The statutory requirement of annual reviews is met and teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator are always available to resolve any concerns and to discuss progress.
51. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The school prospectus is informative and easy to read and regular newsletters encourage a response from pupils and parents. They also give information on pupils' achievement in school and on extracurricular activities. Termly parents' evenings, daily contact through pupils' homework and the governors' annual report to parents all help keep parents involved and in touch. Parents feel they are well informed by the school. They say pupils' annual reports are good and appreciate that the school has listened to their request for a meeting after reports have been received; this will happen in the summer term for the first time. The curriculum information evening was not well supported but the recent information technology meeting was. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt they are able to approach the school with any queries or problems and are equally confident they will be promptly and sympathetically heard. Home School Agreements are in place although a number of parents feel the agreement is superfluous and have chosen not to sign it.
52. Parental support for the school is very good. A few parents help during the school day. They feel this is not only improving standards but also parental links, which have improved tremendously since the last inspection. Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning at home; there is a regular dialogue with teachers through pupils' homework and a real commitment to hearing pupils read and to practising spellings. Opportunities for a weekly 'pop in' to the teacher are not always well supported, as parents say they talk to their child's teacher every day so they are rarely necessary.
53. There is a thriving Parent Teachers Association that raises considerable funds for the school and also provides social events; the contribution is greatly appreciated by staff. Funds have recently been provided for a computer, books and gymnastics equipment. There is a good relationship between the governing body and the Parents Association; governors frequently attend the meetings to ensure they are aware of parents' views and wishes for the school. Governors have recently set up a regular newsletter for parents, which describes governors' current activities and priorities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has worked well with the staff and governors to address the serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. This has also strengthened the leadership and management. Through recent changes within the governing body additional strengths and expertise have been brought to the school and subsequently, the governors' role has also been strengthened and extended.
55. The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear educational direction. She is well respected by the staff, parents and pupils, and has created a calm working spirit in which staff share their expertise

and work well together for the benefit of pupils. An effective management team has been developed and there is a shared purpose and common vision. School governors and senior staff have worked very hard to make improvements and address the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. The effect has also been to draw staff together more closely, moving from a situation where individuals tended to work in isolation, to one of team effort, mutual support and help, and a desire to work towards a common goal.

56. There have been good improvements in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and assessment. The results of monitoring and pupil tracking have enabled the school to invest wisely, for example to buy in additional teaching for specific groups of pupils or to invest in additional teachers for certain subjects. Monitoring has also identified where additional emphasis has needed to be placed in the curriculum such as on science investigation activities and on writing, spelling and handwriting in English. The development of work in literacy, numeracy and science has been given good attention and this has been effective in raising standards. The school's development plan is detailed and is linked to clear educational priorities.
57. There has been good progress in raising the quality of teaching and learning through regular support and monitoring of both teaching and the curriculum. The involvement of co-ordinators in the monitoring of teaching could be developed further. The school meets its stated aims and has a very positive, welcoming ethos. The challenges associated with the very high pupil turnover are addressed successfully. Parents comment that each child at the school is valued and respected as an individual and inspection evidence confirms this. This helps pupils to develop self-esteem, very good relationships and the confidence to try to do their best. There is a firm commitment to continually raising standards and to ensuring that parents are satisfied with what the school provides.
58. The governors' role has been extended very well since the last inspection and governors provide good leadership. They are well informed and have a strong desire to be fully involved in the work of the school. There are some newly appointed governors who bring additional skills to the school. Governors are interested, informed, involved and very supportive of the school. They show a strong sense of commitment and a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Each governor has a specific subject or aspect of responsibility and most have attended appropriate training courses. Governors' meetings and those of its sub-committees take place regularly and are efficiently minuted. Governors' role in strategic development and in monitoring the school's work is good. Monitoring visits take place regularly. The reports from these visits demonstrate a rigorous approach, which is enabling all governors to be better informed about standards in teaching and learning and to carry out their role as critical friend. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.
59. Although the school is very small, there are sufficient teaching staff with a range of qualifications to support the number of pupils and to deliver the National Curriculum. A strength is teachers' flexibility and adaptability as a number of teachers perform several roles. The headteacher has a large teaching commitment but organises her administrative and teaching responsibilities effectively. The school has made good use of specialist teachers to cover particular areas of the curriculum and to provide in-service training for teachers where there was considered to be a lack of expertise, especially in design technology and physical education. These teachers bring additional strengths to the school and this has helped to raise pupils' standards.
60. There are sufficient support staff to assist effectively with the teaching and learning. Support staff for pupils with special educational needs and Traveller children offer very good support and are patient and encouraging. They also help to ensure that all pupils feel an important part of the school and that they can succeed. Support assistants work closely under the guidance and supervision of teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator when planning work and supporting pupils. They make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

61. Arrangements for staff training are good and have been closely linked to curriculum development priorities. Recent emphasis has been on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the development of listening and presentation skills. The effectiveness of this training is clearly evident in the quality of the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the standard of presentation in pupils' work. Appraisal for teachers is carried out on a regular basis where individual targets are set and then monitored by the headteacher.
62. The size of the school's accommodation is limited and as such is unsatisfactory. The library is a comfortable and practical area and the hall is of a satisfactory size for dinners and for school assemblies, but is restrictive in terms of the provision for physical education and especially for the use of large equipment. The staffroom is in a poor state of repair and the roof requires attention. The playground area is drab and there are no interesting playground markings and outdoor equipment to challenge and stimulate pupils at playtimes. Classrooms are comfortable working areas and teachers work hard to keep these well organised and make them attractive and stimulating for their children. The school is fortunate in having access to a large field bordering the playground where sporting activities are held during the summer. Building work is due to start shortly which will enhance the current provision and also provide an additional classroom. There are also tentative plans to incorporate the schoolhouse building into the school's accommodation.
63. Resources throughout the school are generally sufficient to deliver the curriculum. Priority has been given to resourcing the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Resources for information communication technology are as yet fairly limited and there is no Internet connection and data-logging equipment. There are enough books and materials and some of these reflect the different cultural backgrounds represented in British society. Staff make good use of the available resources and accommodation.
64. The finance committee of the governing body has effective systems in place to ensure that principles of best value are applied. The school makes good use of the available money and of the grants it receives for specific purposes, including those provided for staff training, additional resources to support work in literacy and numeracy, for Traveller children and for pupils with special educational needs. The school has not yet been allocated funds from the National Grid for Learning to help it to develop its computer hardware.
65. The school secretary and finance officer is both conscientious and efficient, ensuring a good standard of day-to-day administration and control of the school's budget. This is especially important when one considers the teaching commitment of the headteacher. The secretary also supports the work of the class teachers and provides a useful contact point for both pupils and parents. The most recent auditor's report identified only two minor areas for attention, which have been attended to.
66. There are wide variations in pupils' attainment levels on entry into the school. However, in most subjects pupils of all prior attainment levels make good progress in relation to their abilities. There is good provision for the Traveller pupils and pupils with special educational needs and for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is well managed and the quality of teaching is good. The school achieves very good standards of behaviour and pupils develop very good attitudes to learning. Being a small school, the cost per pupil is above average. When consideration is given to all of these factors, the school provides good value for money. This is an improvement since the last inspection when value for money was judged to be unsatisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Raise standards in information technology by extending the range of resources so that all aspects of the subject can be taught, and continue with the important work which has been started to incorporate the use of information technology into work across the curriculum. (Paragraphs 9, 13, 34, 63, 97, 99, 101, 102, 122)
- Extend the good provision for pupils' cultural development by the inclusion of work which better informs pupils about the achievements and life-styles of ethnic minorities, including Travellers. (Paragraphs 42, 114,121)
- Implement the planned improvements to the building. (Paragraphs 31, 62)

Issues highlighted here relating to improvements to work in information technology and to the building have already been identified by the school and are priorities in the current development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	70	22	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

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	93
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.7
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	5	1	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	5	5
	Girls	0	1	1
	Total	4	6	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67(88)	100(62)	100(100)
	National	82(80)	83(86)	87(89)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	5
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	4	4	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67(67)	67(67)	83(83)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	6	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80(60)	80(40)	80(50)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	12	12	12

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80(60)	80(50)	80(60)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	93
Any other minority ethnic group	31

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	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR- Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	166,715
Total expenditure	166,251
Expenditure per pupil	2,053
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,415
Balance carried forward to next year	8,239

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	63
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	16	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	24	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	54	3	8	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	55	3	3	3
The teaching is good.	59	38	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	54	3	11	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	22	0	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	32	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	35	5	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	44	0	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	35	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	33	3	0	0

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

67. At the time of inspection, as only two children were under the age of five and because of the small number of inspection days, no separate inspection of the under fives provision took place. However, inspectors did observe the two children being taught as part of the group of reception children and as part of the Reception/Year 1 class to which they belong. Inspectors also talked with the teaching and support staff and looked at planning documents and resources.
68. The previous inspection highlighted shortcomings in relation to the curricular provision. Since that time the school has made good improvements. This has been achieved firstly by ensuring that the curriculum now follows that recommended for children under the age of five and gives appropriate time to each of the six areas of learning, and secondly by increasing the staffing to facilitate this. The class teacher and support assistant work very well together to ensure that the youngest pupils are treated as a distinct group within the mixed-age class and that their specific needs are addressed.

ENGLISH

69. There have been good improvements to work in English since the previous inspection. Pupils now make good progress and the needs of higher-attaining pupils are addressed. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, 67 per cent of pupils attained or exceeded the expected level 2 in reading, a proportion that is below the national average. All pupils taking the test attained at least the expected level 2 in writing. In both reading and writing a third of all pupils attained the higher level, a proportion that is above the national average.
70. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage attaining the expected level, 80 per cent, is above average. The proportion attaining the higher level 5, at 40 per cent, is well above the national average. The school's target for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in the tests for the current Year 6 cohort is lower than that for the previous year. However, the current cohort is smaller than in the previous year with fewer higher-attaining pupils. The school set realistic and challenging targets for the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 or above in the tests at age eleven.
71. Inspection findings show a wide variation in pupils' attainment in all year groups and between year groups. This is particularly evident because of the sometimes very small cohort size. By the age of eleven, overall attainment in the current cohort of pupils is slightly below average and by age seven is slightly above average. In the current Year 6 pupils' attainment in writing is slightly below average and no pupil is currently working at the higher level. However, work samples do clearly show that average and lower-attaining pupils have made good gains in learning since the beginning of the year. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and the content of pupils' written work is good. Average-attaining pupils show good use of vocabulary and descriptive language and in most instances punctuation is used correctly. Lower-attaining pupils write short pieces in which ideas are reasonably well structured. Spelling is improving, but is still weak for the majority of pupils. All of the six pupils in Year 6 use joined-up handwriting although one or two pupils still have difficulty with correctly differentiating the height of letters.
72. The work scrutiny shows pupils of all prior attainment levels in each year group making good progress in writing. Pupils in reception, for example, learn the basic rules of phonics and begin to develop the skills of independent writing. In Year 1, pupils make books based on stories they have read or heard and they write simple rhyming poems. By the onset of Year 2, average-attaining pupils are able to write short, meaningful and interesting stories in which full stops and capital letters are used correctly.

At Key Stage 2, pupils extend their vocabulary through their own reading and the study of texts and methods which authors employ, and are able to employ techniques to improve their own writing skills. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are being taught well in context through Key Stage 2, and pupils are developing a sound knowledge with many examples of well-structured writing. Throughout the school, however, there are some pupils in each class who are in the early stages of learning to read and write and whose attainment in writing is well below that expected for their age. Pupils regularly learn spellings as part of their homework and this is having a positive impact on their progress and confidence in independent writing.

73. By age eleven current attainments in reading is, again, slightly below the expected level. Pupils do read from a range of texts. Higher-attaining pupils read with expression, confidence and good understanding and can select useful points from the text using inference and deduction appropriately. They are developing a sound knowledge of different genres and of authors and the style in which they write. They discuss and explain their preferences confidently. They can describe how to find books in a library and explain how to extract information from non-fiction books.
74. Reading is given a high priority and pupils throughout the school make good progress. The school's own analysis shows that four out of five pupils attain standards which are at least commensurate with their chronological age. At the time of inspection higher-attaining pupils in the reception class were able to turn the pages correctly and to use the picture clues to tell the story and they recognised a few of the words in the text. In Year 1, average and higher-attaining pupils are able to read simple books from the reading scheme confidently. Lower-attaining pupils know some of the words in their books and use picture clues and phonics to help them to decipher unknown words. By the time they are in Year 2, many pupils are reading confidently, with expression and good understanding of the text. Lower-attaining pupils have sound skills in decoding and in interpreting the story. Pupils of all prior attainment levels can answer questions about the stories and characters. Reading skills are well developed by teachers as pupils move up through the school using a mixture of whole-class teaching in the literacy hour and individual support. Pupils are heard reading regularly and groups of pupils, both lower and higher-attaining pupils receive additional targeted support for specific periods of time. This is effective in raising pupils' standards.
75. In Key Stage 2, pupils read with growing independence and increased fluency and extend their knowledge of authors, the styles in which they write and the literary skills employed. Pupils are taught to use books effectively to find information needed for work in other subjects. Pupils throughout the school are allocated time for independent quiet reading. They are expected to read regularly at home and parents are encouraged to listen to their children reading. This makes a good contribution to pupils' progress.
76. Throughout the school pupils of all ages and abilities have good speaking and listening skills. This is evident not only in class lessons but also in assemblies and in informal settings, such as observations of pupils around the school and through talking to pupils in the dining hall and in the playground, for example. Pupils listen attentively for sustained periods. They speak confidently and at length in a range of contexts and are keen to express their ideas and opinions and to answer and ask questions. Higher-attaining pupils, many of whom have very good speaking skills, use a varied and interesting vocabulary.
77. Pupils' response in lessons is almost always at least satisfactory and in most instances is good. Pupils quickly settle to work and sustain good levels of concentration which enables them to keep up a good pace. During independent and group work pupils work very well without supervision while the teacher works with a specific group of pupils. They help and support each other very willingly and effectively, as was seen for example when pupils listened respectfully to the suggestions and ideas others

volunteered, and pupils of all prior attainment levels were confident to offer ideas knowing that their contributions would be respected. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their written work.

78. Teaching in the lessons seen was always at least satisfactory and was good in half of lessons. Strengths of teaching overall are teachers' good subject knowledge and skilful use of questioning to check that pupils of all prior attainment levels are understanding and can contribute. Teaching methods and organisation are satisfactory. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and manage them well and work is well matched to pupils of different prior attainment levels, including Traveller pupils and pupils on the school's register of special educational needs.
79. The teaching of reading is given very good attention and is taught well, initially with the help of a structured commercial reading scheme. The development of handwriting and accurate spelling are being emphasised which is having a positive impact on improving standards. There are some planned opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their speaking skills in English lessons and across the curriculum. Homework, especially in reading and spelling, is used very effectively and this makes a very positive contribution to the standards which pupils achieve.
80. Teachers' planning follows the National Literacy Strategy and this provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Additional time is given to aspects of English where assessment information indicates that pupils need more practice. For example, currently there is a focus on reading in Year 2, particularly pupils' reading comprehension skills, and the development of writing is being targeted in Year 6. In addition the previous terms saw a whole-school focus on developing and improving listening skills and presentation of pupils' work. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills through other subjects, for example through work in history and science. Teacher assessment is ongoing, and is very good. Standardised spelling and reading tests are administered regularly and pupils' progress is regularly monitored. The optional National Curriculum tests are used in Years 3, 4 and 5. The quality of marking is good. Pupils are given good guidance about the strengths and weaknesses of their work and how they can improve it further.
81. The co-ordinator has worked hard to improve the curriculum, teaching and learning. She regularly monitors teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work. The number of resources is satisfactory and these are of good quality and are well chosen. A good feature is the inclusion of texts with characters from different cultural traditions, including Traveller families, and the increased use of non-fiction texts aimed at developing and maintaining the interest of boys. There are plans to re-site the school library after proposed building works are completed. This will enable the school to extend the number of books, and pupils will be able to use it for research and to learn study skills.

MATHEMATICS

82. Pupils' overall attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above the national average and that found in similar schools. A hundred per cent of pupils achieved at least the national expected level 2. The proportion achieving level 3 is a third of all pupils compared with 21 per cent nationally. Standards have been rising and over the last four years pupils' overall attainment at age seven has been just above the national average.
83. The results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 were above the national average and similar schools comparisons. Four in every five pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4 and of these one in four achieved the higher Level 5. When the past four year's results are taken together overall, standards are above average and have improved since the previous inspection. In the present Year 6 group of pupils, standards are below average overall.

84. In Key Stage 1, there has been an improvement in pupils' attainment in mental mathematics and the majority of pupils are working at the expected level in written calculations. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils recognise numbers up to 100 and can count in tens. They are becoming familiar with addition and subtraction and with multiplication as repeated addition. Pupils develop their understanding of place value, and gain confidence in the sequencing of numbers. They can partition numbers to help simplify addition and are learning about simple fractions. Pupils learn to tell the time. They understand which coins to use to pay sums of money up to a pound and can work out the answers to problems such as £2.00 minus 90p. Pupils construct simple bar charts to show their favourite sports.
85. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrate increased competence in their mental mathematics work and their ability to apply mathematical reasoning to problem solving is developing well. Work is well presented and supportive teachers' comments have a positive impact on the pupils' confidence and enthusiasm. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed sound numeracy and computational skills. Pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 can both multiply and divide 3-digit number by 10 and 100 and have satisfactory understanding of place value, decimals and the use of brackets in computation. The majority know number facts by heart and uses what they know to calculate answers mentally. Their grasp of mathematical vocabulary, however, is fairly weak. Progress in the development of mathematics is slower with the current Years 5 and 6 pupils as their overall ability levels are lower. Throughout both key stages the high pupil turnover and the comparatively low proportion of higher-achieving pupils in some year groups affects overall standards and helps to explain the fluctuations in results in the tests and in work seen during the inspection.
86. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The quality of teaching seen was good except in one lesson where it was very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain concepts well using appropriate language. They relate new learning to previously learned concepts. For example, in a lesson in Year 6 when pupils were being introduced to the properties of triangles and the angles within a quadrilateral, the teacher was able to use previously learned mathematical facts about right angles to help her pupils to understand. Teachers motivate pupils by setting challenging work for them, especially during mental mathematics sessions. Mental mathematics sessions are conducted at a brisk pace with good questioning. Pupils also enjoy the variety of tasks set.
87. All teachers have at least a secure understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and of the methods to be used. This allows teachers to provide clear explanations and to enable pupils to understand that there are frequently several ways to solve a problem. In Year 2, for example, pupils were partitioning numbers to enable them to make easier additions using known information that $5+5=10$. The teacher asked her pupils to compare a number of addition techniques to help others with their learning. In all the lessons seen, teachers' planning was satisfactory or better. Teachers make good provision for pupils of all prior attainment levels and match work well to pupils' needs. The higher-attaining pupils are well challenged to make good progress throughout both key stages and the quality of support given to Traveller children and pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers manage their pupils well; they reassure and challenge them. Teachers however, do not make enough use of information technology to support learning.
88. Throughout both key stages pupils have positive attitudes and behave well in mathematics lessons. During the introductory mental mathematics sessions they are keen to give the correct answers. In moving from the introductory session to the practical tasks their behaviour is generally sensible and they are able to work very well together using any resources in a responsible manner.
89. The implementation of the numeracy strategy has ensured that the curriculum is balanced. The school has, through its monitoring procedures, been able to track coverage in mathematics and the progress of

individual pupils accurately. This enables teachers to make a good match between work set and pupils' prior attainment. Targets for the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level in the National Curriculum tests at age eleven are realistic, set appropriate challenge and are based on pupil tracking and assessment information. Teachers have had in-service training in connection with the numeracy strategy which has helped to improve teaching. There has been support from the local education authority numeracy consultant in the monitoring of mathematics teaching and the way the numeracy hour is planned and carried out.

SCIENCE

90. In 1999 on the basis of teacher assessment in science at the end of Key Stage 1, eight out of ten pupils attained level 2 or above. This is below the national average percentage. However, almost a third of pupils achieved the higher Level 3, a proportion which is well above. Boys outperformed girls. Pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is above both the national average and that for similar schools. Eight out of ten of the pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4, and almost half achieved the higher level 5. In Key Stage 2 girls achieved better than the boys. Over the last three years, standards have varied considerably as a result of the high pupil mobility and, with such small and different sized cohorts of pupils, it is not possible to determine any meaningful or reliable trends in standards over time.
91. Inspection evidence is that overall attainment by the end of each key stage is average. Although test results indicate a difference between boys' and girls' attainment levels, this is not borne out by inspection evidence.
92. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can make predictions about what might happen in an investigation. They work well collaboratively on a variety of investigations and are able to discuss their findings using appropriate scientific language. Their recording skills are developing well. Some pupils have a clear understanding of fair testing. For example, pupils in Year 2 were carrying out an investigation on the absorbency of different kinds of paper. They made sensible predictions, took careful measurements and most were able to explain their findings making suggestions as to why some paper was more absorbent than others.
93. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand the need for fair testing and can explain how this might be achieved. They learn the importance of making accurate predictions and to compare their findings against these. They set out and record their work with increasing accuracy and with careful presentation. For example, they produce clearly labelled diagrams, use tables to record their data, and set out investigations in a logical sequence. They are developing good skills in taking measurements and in setting out their findings. While there are good links between mathematics and science with pupils both applying and developing their mathematical skills through science, as yet there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support their work.
94. The science co-ordinator has introduced the government's exemplar scheme of work for the subject. This is being used enthusiastically by teachers along with a commercial scheme, which supports activities on the school's two-year topic cycle. The schemes ensure pupils develop and build on their knowledge, understanding and skills in a progressive way. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, helped by better planning, more investigative work and the introduction of a system of regular assessment. Assessments allow teachers to know their pupils' needs and enable them to match tasks to pupils' age and attainment levels.
95. The quality of the teaching in all science lessons seen is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and this allows them to give clear descriptions and explanations of scientific concepts. They take care in explaining scientific terms and give pupils opportunities to ask questions. In all of the lessons

observed, the teachers use good teaching methods, incorporating whole-class introductions and explanation of tasks, with resources readily available, and then opportunities for pupils to come back together to discuss findings and evaluate their learning. Teaching is further enhanced when additional support is available from a classroom assistant, allowing the teacher to concentrate on particular groups or individual pupils. Pupils' positive attitudes and their ability to concentrate and collaborate with each other also contribute to the good quality of learning.

96. The co-ordinator has monitored science throughout the school and has identified the strengths and weaknesses. As yet she has had little opportunity to monitor teaching although this is planned. She does, however, monitor pupils' books and teachers' plans. Little recent in-service training has taken place due to the emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Resources are satisfactory although there are few posters or photographs to help illustrate science topics. There are some bright displays of pupils' work in classrooms and in one class the display is particularly informative.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

97. While the school has made progress in information technology since the last inspection, the range of hardware and software continues to pose limits. Making improvements to resources and developing all aspects of information technology is a current school priority.
98. By the end of Key Stages 1 overall attainment is below national expectations as pupils do not have the opportunity to study all aspects of the subject. Pupils in Year 2 who were familiarising themselves with a database from 'Information Workshop', were able to make their way through menu options and interact with the software successfully in order to build up their collection of data. This made good links with their science topic on mini-beasts. Pupils use Logo well to control the floor turtle as it moves around obstacles. Pupils' literacy skills are also developed well when they rearrange texts using a word processing package or simple desktop publishing software.
99. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' overall attainment is below average. Pupils do have enough chances to develop aspects such as information handling skills, the use of spreadsheets or the use of advanced search routines available on some CD-ROM. Pupils have effective word processing skills that enable them to create poems and write stories. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, for example, have produced some attractive winter poems, which they have illustrated through the use of clip art. During the inspection, pupils were using a control box and writing programs to simulate the sequencing of traffic lights. Pupils at this key stage do not, however, develop sufficient skills in data logging or the use of the computer to monitor processes.
100. The teaching of information communication technology is good. Teachers use software they are familiar with effectively. They use information communication technology to support work in literacy and are beginning to use it in supporting other subjects. The quality of learning in lessons is good enabling pupils to make effective progress. Pupils respect the equipment and are able to concentrate for long periods of time. Pupils work together well and show good levels of independence.
101. The school has recently adopted the government's exemplar scheme of work and this has been used by teachers to plan activities and to ensure that skills are taught in a progressive way. School managers know what needs to be done and have built appropriate targets into the school development plan to address weaknesses. This includes the provision of an information communication technology suite when the scheduled building works are complete and staff development funded by the National Grid for Learning is also planned.
102. The co-ordination of information communication technology has some successes but planning to ensure

total coverage of all requirements has yet to be achieved, which impacts on pupils' progress and standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

103. The school meets the statutory requirements for the provision of religious education. The scheme of work is based upon the local agreed syllabus and, whilst being broadly Christian based, also includes in-depth coverage of the major religions of Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.
104. Pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages meets the requirements of the local agreed syllabus and pupils of all prior attainment levels make satisfactory progress. Throughout the school pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding of the main faiths studied. They learn about the major features of a number of religions such as the common belief in a Supreme Being, a Holy Centre, and about religious practices. Pupils develop an appropriate understanding that religions have common features and differences, and learn about the role of festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Chanukkah.
105. Pupils in Key Stage 2, for example, have been learning about the ways in which Christians, Jews and Muslims pray. They know about some of the items used to help people pray, for example beads, crucifix and icons. They learn about the commitments individuals make to God, and those of leading figures such as Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa and St. Alban. In the class of pupils from Years 2 and 3, they have learned about the importance of Holy books and about some of the stories told in these.
106. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection: a lesson on baptism in Key Stage 1. The teaching in this lesson was good. The lesson was well prepared and lively and interesting. The vicar conducted part of the lesson when he performed a 'baptism ceremony.' The children were able to take part, acting out the scene, a role which they both enjoyed and took very seriously, sustaining very good levels of interest and concentration. Pupils made good gains in learning about the significance of rituals, signs and symbols such as the candles, cross and holy water.
107. Daily assemblies also make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and allow pupils opportunities to reflect on human experiences and moral issues. For example, during the week of the inspection, in one assembly pupils learned how, with God's help, the Israelites were freed from slavery. In a Key Stage 2 assembly pupils were able to reflect on when it is and when it is not appropriate to tell someone about another person's secret and about the possible repercussions of betraying a confidence.
108. The locally agreed syllabus provides breadth and balance and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The work sample also shows teachers using religious education as a means for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills.
109. The co-ordinator is well informed about the subject. She has attended an extended training course since the last inspection and has improved the resources for the teaching of the subject. There are some visits to places of worship and links with the local church are developing well.

FOUNDATION SUBJECTS

110. Because of the small number of inspection days and emphasis on inspecting the core subjects, it was possible to sample only a relatively small number of lessons in the foundation subjects. Physical education lessons were observed in all classes and one lesson was observed in each of the following subjects: geography, history, art and design and technology. No music lessons were seen being taught, although pupils and the choir were heard singing in assemblies, as were groups of pupils playing recorders. These lessons and the scrutiny of samples of work, including that on display in classrooms and around the school, provide a secure evidence base to make judgements about progress. In

addition, inspectors spoke with all co-ordinators about the work in their subjects and were able to view their planning files, which also contained some photographic evidence and information about the assessment of pupils' work.

111. In the work seen, standards are at least satisfactory and in dance and singing pupils' standards are good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards in art, design and technology and music were judged to be below average. The development of work in the foundation subjects has been given good attention since the previous inspection and good improvements have been made.
112. In art, pupils throughout the school explore and reflect on the techniques employed in the work of famous artists such as Breugel and Matisse. They learn to apply this knowledge to some of their own work. For example, pupils in the middle years have produced some pictures on the theme of Breugel's winter scenes and there are some very effective abstract paintings based on the theme of Jack Frost which show good use of colour mixing and use of shade. Pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrate that they are developing good skills in observational drawing with attention to detail, as seen for example in their observational drawing of flowers in their sketchbooks. Pupils in all classes have opportunities to work in three dimensions using clay.
113. Pupils sing well. During an assembly the whole school sang a hymn in two parts keeping in time and in tune. The choir and recorder groups also performed well. In dance lessons seen and in a whole school performance of a Millennium Dance, pupils performed well. They compose and control their movements by varying shape, size, speed and direction, responding well to the music, and create simple narratives and characters.
114. In geography pupils develop an increasing awareness of places beyond their immediate locality. They are able to make comparisons between life in Whitminster and elsewhere, understanding some of the factors affecting the way settlements are established and grow. Pupils, however, experience more difficulty in appreciating the positive aspects of life in distant places which are culturally very different from that in Britain, as seen in a lesson in with the older pupils in Key Stage 2. Where possible pupils are given opportunities to learn from first hand experience, for example by use of the immediate locality and visits to the seaside. Pupils have a secure understanding of some of the particular features of life in different periods in history and can use secondary sources such as books and artefacts to find out information. They understand that life in past times was very different for different groups in society, for example rich and poor people.
115. In a design and technology lesson in the reception and Year 1 mixed-age class, standards seen are very good. Higher-attaining pupils can identify at the start of the lesson that playground equipment must be strong, and they can say what needs to be done to improve some pre-prepared models. When working in groups using different construction kits pupils of all abilities demonstrate good design skills. They produce a wide range of designs for their own playground equipment, which fulfils the given criteria of being strong, stable and fun. They learn well about the different methods which can be used to stabilise products, including the use of ramps and bridges. Pupils manipulative skills are good, as is their ability to evaluate finished products.
116. The quality of teaching in the foundation subjects is good overall. In five of the seven lessons seen teaching is good and in one lesson, is very good. Dance is taught well. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are well planned to both develop pupils' skills and allow pupils to respond to music and express their individual ideas and feelings. Good attention is given to warming up at the beginning of lessons and to safety issues throughout the lessons. Teacher demonstration is good and is used well to exemplify and to move pupils on. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to evaluate and learn from their own and others' work.

117. The teaching of history and geography in the two lessons seen is good overall. A strength is the teachers' own enthusiasm for the subjects. They select and use resources well. Artefacts, for example a range of cooking vessels and other containers of the type used in an Indian Village, are used effectively to pose questions and to help children to consider what evidence can be drawn from secondary sources of information. Teachers use history very effectively as a vehicle for extending and developing pupils' reading and writing skills. This was evident in the lesson seen when pupils were asked to extract further information from a text and from the sample of project work produced by pupils in Key Stage 2 which contains a good amount of research work and extended writing.
118. In a design and technology lesson in Key Stage 1 the lesson was taught by the subject specialist employed specifically to teach some of the lessons in each class. The teaching was very good and enabled pupils to attain very good standards. Planning was very good and was very tightly focused to maximise the use of the available time. Standards in singing and recorders indicate some good music teaching.
119. Pupils' response in lessons is good. Pupils behave well and are interested and eager to learn. There are many examples of pupils working co-operatively and collaboratively in lessons, trying hard and showing appreciation of others' work and efforts. Pupils express themselves well and confidently. They behave very well in lessons and work hard.
120. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to improve teaching in the foundation subjects especially design technology, music, art and physical education, in which particular weaknesses were identified. Improvements have been achieved through the provision of some specialist teaching and the appointment of new teaching staff. This has been effective in raising standards in both teaching and learning. New co-ordinators have brought additional skills to the school. Specialist teaching has also provided very good opportunities for all teachers to extend their knowledge and understanding, as class teachers have the opportunity to work alongside teachers with specific skills and therefore to learn from these opportunities.
121. Co-ordinators of all the foundation subjects have worked hard to develop a broad curriculum which ensures that skills are progressively built on and which gives good attention to all strands of the subject. There is good inclusion of work from a range of cultures, for example African music and art from different countries. However, the curriculum in the foundation subjects can do more to challenge the stereotypical attitudes prevalent in society. The contribution of extracurricular activities, especially in music and sporting activities, makes a very effective contribution to pupils' standards in the foundation subjects.
122. Teachers make good use of the links between subjects when planning work for each half term. This makes the work more meaningful for pupils. Foundation subjects contribute well to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers have begun important work in using information communication technology through the curriculum and there is the potential to develop this further.