

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DERWENT LOWER SCHOOL**

Henlow

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109457

Headteacher: Mrs Meena Modi

Reporting inspector: R B Bonner  
25384

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 October 2001

Inspection number: 217209

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hitchen Road Henlow Bedfordshire
Postcode:	SG16 6BA
Telephone number:	01462 812047
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andrew Edgley
Date of previous inspection:	27 September 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25384	R B Bonner	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9619	R E Miller	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20230	J H Clayphan	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21893	V Brittain	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Derwent Lower School is situated adjacent to Royal Air Force, Henlow in Bedfordshire. Most pupils who attend the school come from families with service backgrounds. The school is for pupils aged four to nine, and it has 135 pupils on roll. When the children enter the school a very wide range of attainment is represented but it is the same as in most schools. At the time of the inspection there were 35 children in the reception class who were under the age of six. Of these 21 attend on a part-time basis. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs' register is higher than at the time of the last inspection and is broadly average. Of these pupils, over 5 per cent have statements of educational need. This is higher than the national average and is higher than at the time of the last inspection. The majority of pupils who attend the school are white and from the United Kingdom. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupil mobility is extremely high.

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

This is a good school. The school is effective and provides good value for money. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds are above average in English and science and average for mathematics. Standards achieved by 9-year-olds are above average in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is good. The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership and management, and is well supported by the deputy headteacher, the staff, and the governing body.

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

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the age of nine.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching is very good for the children in the reception class and good for pupils aged six to nine.
- Pupils enjoy going to school, they have very good attitudes and relationships and behave well.
- Provision for children in the reception class is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils are well cared for in a safe and happy environment.

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

- The way the school monitors and assesses pupils' progress.
- The role of subject co-ordinators other than English, mathematics and science.

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

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

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in 1999. All of the key issues and minor weaknesses have been tackled very effectively and there has been significant improvements, particularly relating to the quality of teaching and learning. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds have risen in English, science and design and technology and they are now above average. Standards achieved by nine-year-olds have risen in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology and history and they are also above average. Pupils' attitudes to work are very good and their behaviour has improved and it is now good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	C	A	B	C
writing	B	C	A	A
mathematics	E	C	D	E

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

Standards in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds were well above average in writing, above average in reading, and below average in mathematics when compared with all schools. Teacher assessments in science indicate standards that were above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well above average in writing, average in reading, and well below average in mathematics. Taking the three years 1998 – 2000 together the pupils' performance in reading and writing exceeded the national average, while those in mathematics fell below the national average. Unconfirmed results of National Curriculum tests in 2001 indicate that standards in reading and writing are likely to be well above average, those in science will be above average, and those in mathematics will be average. As a result of the substantial improvement in results achieved by pupils between 1996 and 2000, the school has received the nationally recognised School Achievement Award.

The findings of the current inspection are that standards achieved by 7-year-olds are above average in English, science and design and technology, and average in all other subjects. Standards achieved by nine-year-olds are above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and history, and average in all other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make very good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and eager to come to school. They have very good attitudes to their work and are very enthusiastic about all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in and around school. They understand rules and show respect for people and property.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils form constructive relationships with one another and with adults. Pupils take responsibility seriously and use their initiative.
Attendance	Well above the national average and continues to be very good.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Very 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.*

Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. The first part of each lesson is used well as teachers emphasise key points that build on what pupils know already. They use a variety of skilful questions to assess what pupils have understood and also inspire them to extend and deepen their thinking. They manage the pupils well and have high expectations of their effort and concentration. In response, pupils have very positive attitudes and try hard. The pupils and staff have very good relationships with one another and these add significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel their contributions are valued and this appreciation helps to build their self-esteem and encourages them to try harder. Lessons are well organised, and time and resources are used effectively to promote pupils' learning.

The teaching of literacy in English lessons is very good, and the teaching of numeracy in mathematics lessons is good. The planning for these lessons takes into account the needs of all pupils, so that independent and group work is well matched to pupils' learning needs. The early identification and effective support provided for pupils with special educational needs enable them to make very good progress and achieve very well. These pupils are particularly well supported by highly trained and knowledgeable learning support assistants.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities that are relevant to the pupils' needs and meet National Curriculum requirements. The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities for children in the reception class. There are good links with the community, and very constructive relationships with local schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are included in all aspects of school life. They are very well supported and make very good progress against the targets set within their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school operates as a caring community that aims to provide experiences that encourage pupils to appreciate cultural diversity, act responsibly, and value each other's contributions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils and provides them with good welfare, health and safety. Support and guidance are effective, and there are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring still need improving.

Parents consider Derwent Lower to be a good school. They are very happy, overall, with what the school provides and achieves. They feel their children progress, reach acceptable standards and generally behave well. The quality of information provided for parents is good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher with the effective support of the deputy headteacher. The curriculum co-ordinators work hard in their roles but the co-ordinators for subjects other than English, mathematics and science do not systematically monitor standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body contributes well to the effective running of the school. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to providing the best possible education for all the pupils. They are kept well informed and work hard and effectively. They have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and where it needs to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and deputy headteacher effectively monitor and evaluate the performance of staff and provide relevant feedback and training opportunities. All data relating to pupils' attainment are analysed, targets set for improvement, and progress towards them monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning. Spending is targeted to agreed priorities especially the raising of standards. The school understands, and applies well, the principles of best value to its work. The governors carefully monitor the effectiveness of the school in terms of the value for money it provides.

The school has a good number of teaching and support staff. Resources are good. The accommodation is very good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy going to school.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The standard of behaviour.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information about how well their children are getting on.</li> <li>• Home/school relationships.</li> <li>• The amount of homework their children receive.</li> <li>• The provision of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team strongly endorses the positive views of parents. However, the team does not support the views of a small minority of parents in all the areas identified. The parents are correct in their perception that homework is inconsistent across the school and the school is taking steps to ensure that the homework policy is fully understood. The quality and quantity of information for parents is good. Information includes letters, newsletters from the school, parent teacher association and governors. There is a good range of opportunities for parents to find out how their children are getting on. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons, similar to that normally found in schools of this size.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

## HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards that are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In so doing they make at least good progress in developing important skills of literacy. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported in their learning and make very good progress. National Curriculum test results at age seven show a similar picture to standards seen during the inspection, with the number of pupils achieving higher levels in reading and writing being particularly impressive. Given that most pupils have broadly average attainments when they start in Year 1, all groups of pupils achieve well in English by the age of seven as a result of good teaching and support that they receive in class. This constitutes a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection and is as a direct result of the effective monitoring and support that teachers have received.
2. By the age of seven, pupils listen and speak confidently in a wide range of contexts. Pupils read accurately, confidently and with good expression. Higher-attaining seven-year-old pupils recognise difficult words and make reasonable predictions about what might happen next in a story based on what has gone before. The majority of pupils write in sentences with capital letters and full stops. They make good use of interesting vocabulary to enhance their stories and often create complex sentences.
3. Standards in mathematics are rising and are now broadly average. This view is supported by the unconfirmed results of the national tests in 2001, which point to a significant increase in pupils attaining at the higher level, (Level 3). This constitutes a good improvement in standards since the last inspection and is as a direct result of the effective monitoring and support that teachers have received. As a result of the substantial improvement in results achieved by pupils in English and mathematics between 1996 and 2000, the school has received the nationally recognised School Achievement Award.
4. By the age of seven, pupils recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 and have a good understanding of the value of numbers up to and beyond a hundred. They sort and identify flat and solid shapes and recognise shapes that have line symmetry. They collect information and display it in charts and on graphs and explain their findings.
5. By the age of nine, pupils achieve standards that are above average in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve particularly well in both English and mathematics as a result of consistently good and often very good teaching with the emphasis being placed on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils who have special educational needs are particularly well supported and make very good progress.
6. By the age of nine, pupils speak confidently in expressing their point of view. They read with increasing fluency and accuracy and develop critical appreciation of a range of stories and forms of poetry. Pupils punctuate and construct different types of sentences with increasing skill. In mathematics, pupils understand the value of numbers beyond one thousand. They use skills of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication to solve problems and calculate areas and perimeters of shape. Pupils collect data and display it in the form of block graphs and pie charts.

7. Standards in science are above average at both ages seven and age nine. Recent National Curriculum teacher assessments confirm this judgement. By the age of seven, pupils conduct experiments, draw conclusions and record their observations accurately. They recognise that living things grow and change. They understand the properties of different materials and make bulbs work by creating a circuit. By the age of nine, pupils undertake experiments identifying key factors to be considered when making a test fair. They know about the properties of light and sound and draw electrical circuits using the correct symbols.
8. Pupils on the school's register of special education needs (SEN) have a wide range of needs and benefit highly from the specialist help they receive particularly in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 4, pupils with SEN have made very good progress, successfully achieving many of their individual targets and achieving well in the national tests.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good. They enjoy school and are eager to learn. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 responded enthusiastically to learning about Christian and Hindu wedding practices and were eager to ask questions. In class pupils settle quickly to work. They listen well to each other and to adults and are always willing to answer questions and discuss their ideas. Pupils show good levels of concentration; Year 4 pupils were completely engrossed in their work when making collages with leaves. Good co-operative working was seen as groups of Years 1 and 2 pupils investigated magnetic and non-magnetic materials around the classroom. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 often work independently: they use the information and communication technology (ICT) suite regularly to find information to help them to research subjects, for example when finding out about the work of well-known artists. Pupils in a Year 3/4 class have organised and carried out a survey of attitudes to school, reporting back their findings to staff.
10. Behaviour in class and around school is good; high standards are set and pupils respond well. There were no exclusions from school last year. Children play and work well together, sharing equipment, and there is no evidence of bullying or inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are polite and friendly to each other, staff and visitors. There is no damage or litter around the school buildings and pupils use resources with care. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when behaviour at lunchtime was unsatisfactory.
11. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils are consistently of a high order and the school is a very harmonious community. This has a good impact on standards achieved. In the playground younger pupils play well with older pupils and they are included in play activities.
12. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own values and beliefs and in religious education lessons they are beginning to respect the values and beliefs of others. Pupils in Year 3/4 have used the Bible story of Ruth and Naomi to discuss choices they could make in their own lives to improve the lives of others, for example befriending a child being bullied or saving pocket money to help the homeless.
13. Despite the lack of a formal policy, personal development is good. Pupils learn quickly to adjust to the school routines and are soon settled into the school community. They respond well to opportunities to use initiative and many are confident, independent

learners. Year 4 pupils are developing good research skills, using the library and the Internet. They exercise responsibility in class as they prepare for lessons and perform duties sensibly such as preparing for assemblies and acting as monitors for physical education equipment.

14. Attendance at around 96 per cent is well above the national average and continues to be very good since the previous inspection. Nearly all pupils have good individual attendance records. Family holidays taken during term time account for some of the authorised absence and where this is longer than ten days in any one year, this reflects itself in the unauthorised figures as well. Punctuality is generally very good and lessons usually get off to a prompt start.

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

15. The quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. Teaching is very good in the reception class and it is good for pupils in Years 1 to 4. All teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory; nearly all lessons were good and over a third were very good. This constitutes very good progress since the last inspection when fourteen per cent of lessons were judged less than satisfactory and the percentage of very good or better teaching was much lower.
16. Weaknesses in teaching identified in the previous inspection have been tackled effectively and there have been significant improvements in these areas. The provision for the teaching of literacy for pupils in Years 1 and 2 has improved significantly and is now good. This improvement has come about because of the effective monitoring and support provided by the headteacher and other professionals. As a direct result of this intervention pupils are achieving well and standards have risen in English and are now above average. A specialist teacher now teaches music and teaching in this subject is good. The teaching of physical education is good overall, but there are occasions when weaknesses in teachers' organisation allow the pace of the lesson to slacken and as a result pupils' attention and behaviour deteriorate.
17. The very good teaching is characterised by lessons that are thoroughly planned and focused, and conducted at a brisk pace so that full use is made of the time available to move pupils' learning on quickly. In a very good science lesson in a Year 3/4 class, for example, the teacher effectively linked pupils' past to their current learning. She posed a range of challenging questions to assess pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. The teacher promoted subject specific vocabulary well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. The lesson was very well planned and structured to promote the pupils' understanding of a fair test. The teaching was very purposeful and was based on very secure knowledge and as a result the pupils were highly motivated and worked with sustained interest. In the reception class lessons are well planned and prepared with tasks that are targeted to meet the needs of all children. The reception teacher has a very good understanding of the way in which young children learn. Activities are very well organised to promote children's independence and their intellectual and social development. Both the teacher and the learning support assistant question children very effectively, seeking to develop language and widen the children's vocabulary at every opportunity. When sharing books with the children the teacher encourages the children to look beyond the text.
18. The pupils and staff have very good relationships with one another and these add significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which

they learn. The pupils feel their contributions are valued and this appreciation helps to build their self-esteem and encourages them to try harder. Most teachers manage the pupils effectively and they in turn behave well and try hard. The caring relationships that teachers have developed with the pupils ensure that they listen attentively and fully engage in their learning.

19. Minor weaknesses that occur in lessons that are nevertheless satisfactory or better relate to weaknesses in class management. On these occasions, although the teachers usually take prompt action to correct pupils who do not listen or act responsibly, the class routines and high expectations are not sufficiently well established to make this unnecessary. In other lessons the introduction is sometimes a little too long or resources are not sufficiently well organised and as a result time is not used well and pupils begin to lose concentration.
20. The teaching and learning in English and literacy in English lessons are very good. Class teachers have a very good understanding of all aspects of the literacy strategy and they are confident in teaching the basic skills in all aspects of reading and writing. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide work that is well matched to all pupils' needs and interests. Effective use of questions enables pupils to consolidate knowledge and extend their learning. Planning for the literacy hour is effective and has been implemented well. In a very good lesson in the Y3/4 class that focused on a journalistic style of writing the teacher planned and organised the lesson very well using a range of methods and resources to enable all the pupils to learn effectively. The teacher continually posed searching questions to challenge pupils' thinking and assess their understanding. She managed the pupils very well, setting high expectations of their effort and concentration. In response the pupils were alert and attentive and settled to their tasks with enthusiasm and produced work of good quality.
21. The teaching and learning in mathematics and numeracy in mathematics lessons are good. Teachers have embraced the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy well in their planning with a strong focus on the development of mental skills. The teachers present lessons in a variety of ways which capture pupils' interest, making them enthusiastic about number and giving them confidence in their own abilities. In a very good lesson in a Year 1/2 class, for example, the teacher set high expectations of pupils' concentration and attentiveness as they consolidated and extended their ability to count forwards and backwards in 1s, 2s, 5s, and 10s and recognise odd and even numbers. In response the pupils were attentive and worked with interest and enthusiasm. They persevered well even when they were unsure, and overcame the difficulties they experienced. At the end of the lesson the teacher reinforced the learning objectives and gave the pupils pointers to the next stage of their learning. Learning intentions for each lesson are clearly defined in the planning and shared with pupils. Teachers manage the pupils and resources efficiently and the learning support assistants give very effective support.
22. Pupils throughout the school are keen and interested in their lessons and this has a positive effect on their learning. They are very enthusiastic learners who enjoy coming to school where they are stimulated by exciting and challenging lessons. Pupils are well motivated by the very good relationships they have with their teachers and peers and have very positive attitudes to their learning. All try hard and this is evident throughout the school, from the youngest children in the reception class to the oldest pupils in Year 4. Both teachers and classroom assistants give very good support and encouragement in lessons where pupils find the work hard. Pupils of all attainment levels demonstrate good levels of independence in their work and

concentrate well on the tasks set for them. This contributes significantly to the progress that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make in their learning.

23. Class teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils with SEN in all subjects across the curriculum. Tasks are well prepared and taught in appropriate groups often with the help of well-trained and very effective support assistants. The SEN co-ordinator takes part in planning and prepares pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) jointly with teachers and support assistants. The majority of support teaching takes place in the classroom, but there is some withdrawal for short, carefully chosen, periods of time for those who need more support. IEPs are kept in class files so they are readily available for teachers when doing their planning. In all the lessons observed, pupils with SEN were included well, were praised frequently and showed good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Pupils participate well and maintain good levels of concentration because their tasks are appropriate. As a result of this very good support pupils with SEN make very good progress.

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

### **Learning Opportunities**

24. The range of learning opportunities is satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and good for pupils in Years 3 and 4. These opportunities are relevant to the pupils' needs and meet national curriculum requirements. The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities for children in the reception class and it is implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum well. The school continues to monitor very carefully the high transient level of the pupil population and any differences in the performance of boys and girls, and it is swift to take appropriate action. This, and the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, ensures that all pupils have good access to the whole curriculum.
25. The school has received an award for improving pupils' results in literacy and numeracy. The school has worked hard to rectify the weakness in the provision of literacy for Years 1 and 2 identified in the previous report. It is now putting both the literacy and numeracy strategies into practice well, and standards are improving across the school. The school has adopted the nationally recommended curricular planning guidelines for nearly all subjects and is adapting them suitably to fit the school's specific needs. Pupils' literacy skills are used well in many other subjects of the curriculum, and teachers provide increasing opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their mathematical and information and technology skills as well.
26. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The opportunities for enrichment of pupils' learning are many and varied. Specific opportunities are created where teachers highlight the importance of tolerance and where pupils celebrate theirs and others' achievements. Pupils learn strategies to resolve conflict between each other and the school works hard to make pupils feel welcome and safe. Teachers show them that they have a choice relating to how they interact with others and to personal health, smoking and drugs. Where appropriate, pupils with special educational needs have clear behavioural targets in their individual education plans. Pupils learn memorably on visits such as to the Bedford Toy Museum, Ashwell Field Study Centre and Hazard Alley in Milton Keynes. There are

many visitors who expand pupils' horizons: for example, a storyteller, a theatre group, and music groups ranging from a local brass band to string and wind groups. There are further learning opportunities through a satisfactory range of clubs that take place after school and which are very popular with pupils. The nearby RAF base offers an additional wide range of clubs that all pupils in school are welcome to join. There is also a daily after-school club on the base.

27. The school uses community resources effectively and has very close relations with the RAF base. For example, one local firm provided a weather station and also offers termly awards towards science and information and technology projects. The RAF base helps set up facilities for sports day such as a loud speaker system, and tents in case of rain during the family barbecue in the summer. The school now has the RAF Henlow World War 2 Memorial exhibition and the transport group has promised to donate large tyres for the reception play area.
28. The school maintains very close and effective links with the local pre-school group and with partner schools including the middle school that many pupils transfer to. This means that pupils are well known to teachers and they quickly feel part of the school family.
29. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and this helps them make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Skilled learning support assistants work closely with the class teachers during English and mathematics lessons. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are very well supported throughout the day, which enables them to achieve very well and also means that the rest of their class can concentrate uninterrupted on the work in hand.

### **Personal Development**

30. The school offers a wide range of experiences for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good provision in all four areas matches the findings of the previous inspection.
31. Assemblies and religious education lessons are used well to help pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths and to develop their spirituality. By using religious stories and celebrations pupils are shown the links and similarities between faiths. This was clearly seen by pupils in Years 1 and 2 in a lesson comparing Christian and Hindu wedding traditions. Opportunities in assemblies give time for pupils to reflect on how we accept others into the community. The curriculum encourages pupils to develop an appreciation of music, art and literature in class, in assemblies and in some extra-curricular activities. During the inspection artefacts were used effectively in lessons to inspire awe and wonder. Pupils were rapt in wonder at the beauty of an Indian wedding sari and English wedding dress and veil. The same pupils were fascinated by a collection of toys from a past age.
32. The school promotes a strong moral code. Throughout the school pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and the school's rules are discussed frequently. This is especially important at Derwent because of the high turnover of pupils. A positive discipline policy is in place, which rewards good behaviour, and all staff, including lunchtime supervisors have clear expectations of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Governors regularly monitor behaviour in the school. In assemblies and in religious education lessons, stories from many faiths are often



used to illustrate how people should behave towards each other. In one lesson older pupils were encouraged to consider the choices they could make if they saw a child being bullied.

33. Social development is strong. Assemblies play an important part in the development of a harmonious community at Derwent. Pupils are regularly entering school throughout the year and there is a strong emphasis on settling the new arrivals down quickly so that they can begin learning. During the inspection week the focus of the assemblies was on welcoming others into an established community. This theme was well developed by the re-enactment of the well-known story about how the Parsees first settled in India and by considering the great contribution they have made to India's culture and prosperity. Pupils were encouraged to think about how they welcome newcomers to the school and, for older pupils, how we accept 'different' people into our country. Pupils show their concern about less fortunate people in the world by collecting for a number of charities such as 'Food Aid' and 'Children in Need'. Lessons for religious education and for personal and social development explore issues such as looking after friends and making choices to improve the life of others. Pupils have opportunities in class to learn to work together co-operatively. They regularly undertake tasks that promote the smooth running of the school and these help to develop responsibility. Year 4 pupils help with lunchtime trolleys and preparing for assemblies. There are monitors in all classes to help teachers with resources.
34. The curriculum offers a good range of activities to develop pupils' cultural awareness. Through history and geography pupils are developing an awareness of their own culture and visits are sometimes made to enrich this, for example to St. Albans to study Roman Britain. Music and art particularly are used well; pupils study the work of western artists such as the Impressionists as well as art from other cultures. In religious education lessons pupils are learning about the similarities and differences between cultures as well as faiths. Classroom displays, books and posters around the school reflect the diversity of cultures in our society.

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

35. Pupils are provided with a caring, happy and supportive environment. Parents are pleased with this and say that their children like school. The good provision for welfare and guidance identified in the previous inspection continues to be a strong feature.
36. There are good systems for safeguarding pupil's health and safety and this is an improvement on the previous inspection. There are regular safety inspections and appropriate action is taken where necessary. Effective first aid arrangements are in place for dealing with accidents and illness. There is a consistently high standard of pastoral care.
37. There are good arrangements for dealing with child protection issues and staff training has been undertaken to keep them updated. Mid-day supervisors are kept well informed where there may be concerns about a child and links with outside agencies are effective. Governors have not yet had an opportunity to review the policy for child protection.
38. There are good procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality. Registration and follow up procedures are well established and registers meet statutory

requirements. There is effective liaison with the educational welfare service that works closely with the headteacher in dealing with a small number of individual problems.

39. Good arrangements for promoting high standards of behaviour, including measures to prevent bullying have been developed after consultation with parents, staff and the pupils. There are simple rules for the pupils, rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for dealing with misbehaviour. All staff throughout the school consistently apply these rules, and governors carry out regular monitoring of the policy. The active involvement of mid-day supervisors in applying these procedures is an improvement on the previous inspection.
40. The school has good procedures in place to track pupils' personal and social development and is effective in the manner in which it sets targets for improvement. This has a positive impact on pupil's learning and in actively involving the pupils in their own personal and social development. The needs of individuals with special needs are dealt with sensitively and supportively. There are high levels of awareness among teachers, assistants and other pupils.
41. The school regularly analyses results from the national tests in English and mathematics, as well as in-school tests. Appropriate targets are then set which over the past few years have been successful in raising standards. Informal day to day assessment of pupils' attainment is good. New pupils are assessed on arrival in order to see where they will fit into their class and teachers adjust their lesson plans accordingly. However, apart from mathematics, there are no standard systems in place across the school that show at a glance, pupils' progress in developing specific skills in different subjects. The school is considering how to do this because such information will help teachers to accelerate pupils' achievements further by pinpointing which skills need additional lesson time. The school's procedures for assessment of children in reception and also early identification of new pupils coming into the lower school who have special educational needs are very good and this allows an appropriate programme of support to be established quickly. Pupils' individual education plans show not only areas in English which need attention, but where appropriate, mathematics, social or behavioural needs too. These needs are reviewed each term in full discussions between the co-ordinator, class teachers and specialist support teachers. Pupils are moved between stages, as appropriate and new targets are set. Statements of special educational needs are appropriately reviewed and updated annually.

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

42. Parents consider Derwent Lower to be a good school. They are very happy, overall, with what the school provides and achieves. They feel their children progress, reach acceptable standards and generally behave well. The parents are correct in their perception that homework is inconsistent across the school and the school is taking steps to ensure that the homework policy is fully understood. The school is continually seeking more ways of actively involving parents in the education of their children but despite their efforts this has not been as successful as it would like.
43. The vast majority of parents attend consultation evenings and a reasonable number help in school listening to pupils read and on school trips and with after-school clubs. There is a parent teacher association but with the mobility of the service personnel whose children attend the school and the turbulent effect this has, it is sometimes difficult to keep the momentum going. However, it has managed to hold a number of

fund raising events and this has enabled the purchase of learning resources such as a laptop computer and multi-media equipment.

44. The quality and quantity of information for parents is good. Information includes letters and newsletters from the school, parent teacher association and governors. There is a noticeboard that is kept regularly updated. The school prospectus and the annual governors' report are both informative and comprehensive. The end-of-year reports are clear and well written and clearly outline the academic and personal targets for the pupils to achieve in the ensuing period. There are opportunities for parents to discuss the contents of these reports with staff.
45. Very good provision is made for parents to discuss the progress of pupils who have special educational needs. Opportunities are made for parents to be kept fully informed of the contents of individual education plans and to attend review meetings. The vast majority of parents find the staff of the school approachable and feel confident that any concerns that they have will be listened to and acted upon. The induction procedures when pupils start school are very good.

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

46. The leadership and management of the school are very good. This constitutes an improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership and, with the support of the deputy headteacher and staff, gives a clear direction for the development and improvement of the school. The improvement in the quality of education since the last inspection owes much to her leadership and the effective support of a hard working and committed team of staff and governors. The aims of the school that focus on the educational, social and personal development of the individual are effectively promoted and underpin its work. The school is committed to raising standards with equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school is clear about where it needs to improve and there is a shared sense of determination to succeed and move forward. It is in a good position to make further improvements and has the capacity to achieve these.
47. The headteacher communicates very effectively with the staff and the governors to ensure that everyone understands the school's priorities for development and works successfully as a team. She maintains a good balance between the strategic, administrative and monitoring elements of her work. In all of these she is very well informed. Working closely with the deputy headteacher, she monitors the work of teachers in the classroom and has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all staff. As a result of this monitoring, and the provision of training, standards of teaching have improved significantly since the last inspection.
48. The deputy headteacher works very closely with the headteacher and takes a leading role in developing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of new initiatives. These cover a wide range of areas including teaching, curriculum and assessment and the early years. In each of these areas she is well informed and influential. The role of subject co-ordinators is at various stages of development. In English, mathematics and science, for example, co-ordinators monitor standards and evaluate the effectiveness of pupils' learning. In other subjects, teachers work hard in their roles and are influential in their support of colleagues providing guidance on a day-to-day basis. All subject co-ordinators are budget holders and monitor planning in their subject areas. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for co-ordinators in subjects other than English, mathematics and science to effectively monitor or

evaluate pupils' performance or the standards being achieved. The school has identified this as an area for further development.

49. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. Both the co-ordinator and the learning support assistant who is also a school governor are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The specific grant is used well and extra money is provided in order to assure good levels of support for pupils for as much of the day as possible. This has the effect of helping both those pupils with SEN and their classmates to work in a calm atmosphere and make very good progress in their learning. The management of the support staff has been very effective enabling them to work well with pupils and to communicate with the teachers involved.
50. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and is effective in its work. There are good procedures to ensure that individual governors are kept well informed and play a vital role in shaping the direction of the school. Governors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how the school needs to move forward. The chair of governors works closely with the headteacher and is influential in the work of the school. Following the last report, members of the governing body have undertaken regular visits to ensure the improvement of pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes. The impact of these visits and other effective measures taken by the school has resulted in a significant improvement. Each governor has a curricular responsibility and makes regular visits to observe lessons and to talk to the co-ordinators and head teacher. The involvement of the literacy governor over the last two years highlights the commitment and determination of governors and their willingness to do their best to raise standards further.
51. There is a policy for introducing new staff to the school's routines and procedures as part of its effective professional development systems. The school and the local education authority ensure that newly qualified teachers are well supported. Release from classroom duties gives them the opportunity to watch good practice and attend relevant courses. Each newly qualified teacher receives professional support from an experienced teacher colleague.
52. The school has established effective and efficient working practices to plan, manage and monitor its finances. Budget setting is firmly linked to development planning and reflects well the educational needs of the pupils. Financial control and administration are good. There are close links between planning and resourcing. Records of financial decisions are accurate and clear. All the minor recommendations in the last audit report have been implemented. The school had been audited shortly before the inspection took place but had not received the report. Budget monitoring systems are effective. The comparatively high carry forward from last year is being targeted on improving the school environment, resources and maintaining the good levels of staffing.
53. Specific grants received by the school are used for the purposes for which they are intended and there is a detailed record of how the money has been spent. The school applies the principles of best value well. It analyses its performance using both national and local data and uses this to evaluate the standards that its pupils are achieving and where improvements are needed. Parents are provided with a range of opportunities to voice their opinions. For administrative purposes, the school makes good use of computers. Many of the administrative records are computerised and are well kept. The school seeks to obtain good value for money when purchasing goods and services.

54. The teaching staff are well qualified and sufficient in numbers to provide a good education for the pupils. The learning support staff are experienced and knowledgeable; they have a very good level of expertise and give the pupils in their care good support and guidance. Procedures for performance management are well developed with targets being set for teaching staff in three key areas: improving personal performance, raising standards and developing the curriculum management role.
55. The accommodation is very good. The school building is welcoming and spacious, and provides a very good environment in which pupils can learn and develop. Outside, the grounds are very pleasant and provide well for pupils' physical and educational development. Outdoor facilities for the children in the reception class are particularly good. The school has a good range of resources. The library contains a wide selection of fiction and reference books in good condition. Each class has a weekly session when books are changed, and pupils are given a specific task such as doing research. The computer suite is very good, and is clearly providing the basis for the good improvement in pupils' work.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

56. The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection but in order to further improve the quality of education in the school, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:
- (1) Establish systems for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress in all subjects.  
*(see paragraphs: 41,78,91,96,101,106,112,118,127)*
  - (2) Improve the provision for subject co-ordination by:
    - providing co-ordinators with opportunities to monitor standards in their subjects.*(see paragraphs: 48,96,101,106,112,127,132)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	16	1	0	0	0
Percentage	0	35	62	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	135
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	30

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	59
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	47

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	16
	Girls	14	13	13
	Total	30	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	97 (96)	94 (96)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	16
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	30	31	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (96)	100 (96)	97 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	108
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

## **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6:1
Average class size	26.8:1

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	165

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	355609
Total expenditure	355793
Expenditure per pupil	2523.35
Balance brought forward from previous year	22493
Balance carried forward to next year	22309



## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	141
Number of questionnaires returned	50

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	42	2	0	12
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	48	2	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	46	16	4	2
The teaching is good.	44	42	4	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	14	36	28	6	16
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	38	14	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	44	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	28	36	20	8	8
The school is well led and managed.	50	30	12	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	46	4	0	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	28	34	6	14

## **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**

57. On entry to the reception class there continues to be a wide range of attainment represented but standards are similar to those found in most schools. A minority of children enters this class with weaknesses in their mathematical understanding, personal and social development and physical development. Teaching in the reception class is very good and all children achieve well because of the very good support they receive. By the time the children leave the reception class and start in Year 1, almost all reach the standards expected for their age with a significant minority exceeding these standards. In respect of the standards achieved this is a similar picture to that recorded at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and the provision made for these children has improved and these are now very good.

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

58. Most children are attentive during the introduction to lessons and participate well in the very good range of practical activities that the teacher provides. They make independent choices about the activities they want to do, for example whether they want to 'work' in McDerwent's restaurant, create sponge prints of flowers or play in the sand. Most show maturity when negotiating roles and responsibilities and join in willingly with the teacher's suggestions. A small minority of children finds it difficult at this early point in their school career to settle to the routines and does not always react appropriately to the high expectations of the staff. The children build effective relationships with adults and with each other. Children know to put on aprons when they participate in creative activities and to return them to the appropriate place. At the end of lessons children tidy up very well. Children manage their own personal hygiene well. Most children are polite, friendly and well behaved and have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. They are very encouraging of each other, for example, after singing a counting rhyme one girl said of another, 'Lauren sings very nicely'.
59. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Strengths of the teaching relate to the high expectations of the children and the very good range of opportunities that the teacher and support staff provide for the children to make choices and develop independence. The classroom and outside play area are well organised and promote the children's ability to choose. The class teacher and classroom assistants are consistently positive and this builds children's self-esteem and helps them to persevere with challenging tasks. As a result of the very good support they receive children achieve very well.

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

60. Most children listen attentively and respond well to instructions and directions. They communicate with simple statements and questions when talking to adults. When playing in McDerwent's Restaurant, for example, they order the meal they want, most saying 'please' and 'thank you' and those working behind the counter respond appropriately. The children talk readily about what they are doing. Higher-attaining children display a good vocabulary, for instance, describing an object in a 'feely box'

as 'prickly, rough and it's got a mouth'. The children enjoy 'reading' books and handle them with care. Most children know that the print conveys meaning, and understand stories read to them. They listen to favourite stories such as 'This is the Bear', joining in with the parts they know well. When asked they offer suggestions as to why the bear might want another day out. Higher-attaining children talk enthusiastically about books. They retell the story by reading simple words and looking at the pictures. Children in the current reception class identify a narrow range of letters such as c, g, h, m, s, and t and know their sounds, and they identify words that rhyme. Most children hold a pencil correctly and write their own names, but a few find this quite difficult. Higher-attaining children write simple sentences independently, forming their letters carefully and spelling most words accurately.

61. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are very well planned and prepared with tasks that are targeted to meet the needs of all children. The teacher and support staff question children very effectively, seeking to develop language and widen the children's vocabulary at every opportunity. During one lesson the teacher challenged the children to look beyond the text and think why the bear would want another day out. The teacher set high expectations of the children's attention and effort and then set the challenging task of writing their own sentences. As a result of the very good support that children receive they achieve very well.

### **Mathematical development**

62. Most children currently in the reception class count to 10 and beyond, but a few lower-attaining children do not count and match objects accurately. Most children recognise and name simple flat shapes such as a circle, triangle and square. Higher-attaining children describe the shapes by counting the corners and the sides and use words such as 'straight' and 'curved'. Higher-attaining children create structures from solid shapes and identify the shapes that have rectangles in them. Previous work indicates that by the time they leave the reception class and start in Year 1 children count and match to 20 and add and subtract numbers up to 10. They count money up to 10p and identify objects that are heavier and lighter.
63. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher provides a very good range of activities to promote the children's awareness and appreciation of number and shape. Number songs and rhymes are used effectively to promote children's understanding of number. A good range of related activities are provided to reinforce the concepts that are being taught. For example, to promote the children's understanding and awareness of shape they created pictures using different coloured shapes and 3 dimensional models using different sized boxes. At every opportunity the teacher and support staff seek to assess the children's understanding and promote and develop their mathematical vocabulary. The children are often provided with homework, such as collecting leaves or conkers and the teacher effectively uses these opportunities to promote the children's awareness of number.

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

64. Children use their senses describing various materials as being 'hard' or 'soft'. They study animal books by authors, such as Eric Carle, and in their own writing describe the movement of snails as 'slithering'. Children construct wheeled vehicles using construction kits and investigate how a platform moves up and down. All the children show a high level of curiosity and interest in the world around them. When they use a computer they display good mouse control as they 'dress teddy'. Previous work

indicates that by the time they leave the reception class and start in Year 1, children draw maps of farms, identifying the buildings, car park, picnic area and fields. They have a satisfactory understanding of the life cycle of living creatures such as a butterfly and can identify things that are living and those that are non-living. Children learn about the climate in this country as they record the weather each day.

65. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher provides a wide range of activities that are planned to extend early concepts in science, design and technology, history, geography and information and communication technology. The reception teacher sets particularly high expectations, always seeking to challenge and develop the children's thinking. The learning support assistant works very well with groups of children who are, for example, studying the parts of a flower, drawing the children's attention to different parts and encouraging them to use a magnifying glass to look more closely.

### **Physical development**

66. Children guide their tricycles in and out of obstacles and move confidently on climbing frames and balance on beams and rope ladders. They move over, under, round and through the equipment displaying an appropriate awareness of space and levels of co-ordination. Most display satisfactory levels of control when using scissors, pencils and paintbrushes. When creating a collage of a flower, for example, children drew a leaf shape and then carefully cut it out. Children working with construction blocks display good levels of co-ordination as they concentrate on building different types of wheeled vehicles. Similarly, children shape play dough carefully with a roller and then cut out shapes using pastry cutters.
67. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons and activities are well planned and managed and there is good attention paid to issues of health and safety. The children are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop physically inside and outside the classroom. The teacher makes particularly good use of the outdoor play area to promote children's physical development.

### **Creative development**

68. Children study artists, for example Van Gogh, and create their own sunflower paintings, of good quality, using a variety of materials. They make collages using fabrics that have been chosen because of their different textures. They make selections from a range of mark-making tools to create pictures and small books. They paint and draw themselves and animals, such as lions and sheepdogs, and create symmetrical butterflies and lions using a computer program. They enjoy singing number songs and rhymes.
69. The teaching and learning are good. The teacher provides a good range of opportunities for the children to develop creatively. There is constructive support for children, and techniques and skills are well taught. For example, the classroom assistant carefully taught the children the skills of printmaking using different sponges. In response the children concentrated hard and enjoyed creating their flower prints and learnt well.

## **ENGLISH**

70. The standards of attainment of seven-year-olds are above average with a large minority of pupils already attaining at the expected level. Since the last inspection, pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 have risen and last year they were above the national average in reading and well above in writing. The standards of attainment of nine-year-olds are also above average.
71. The previous inspection judged some aspects of the literacy programme to be unsatisfactory and the school is to be commended for the hard work it has put in over the past two years to rectify the shortcomings. The provision for teaching literacy is now of very good quality throughout the school and evidence shows pupils achieving well during their time in school.
72. By the age of seven, pupils' listening skills are well developed. They listen attentively to their teachers and courteously to each other. Speaking skills are also well developed. Many pupils speak clearly and fluently and use a wide and appropriate vocabulary. Pupils' standards in reading are above average. The most able pupils are already reading at a higher than expected level, and average pupils are reading at the level expected. Lower-achieving pupils read simple texts with confidence and enjoyment. Pupils begin to spell simple words accurately. They start to savour the sounds of words such as "glittering, deserted" as they learn to describe an imaginary situation, and they use word banks sensibly or ask their partner to help with spellings. Pupils show great delight in their achievements and also appreciate others' work. For example, one pupil really liked another's description of "sea gulls screeching and flying swiftly in the sky". A less able pupil wrote with some adult support "the waves were running up and down the shore".
73. By the age of nine, most pupils work at the expected level and a minority are achieving above this. They listen acutely and assimilate a sophisticated range of information and questions that they respond to appropriately using a wide and mature vocabulary. Reading skills are good. Writing skills are developing well. Pupils write fluently in a range of genres. For example, they draft eyewitness accounts of the Blitz, which will later be word-processed in a newspaper format with photographs taken from a web page. During the year they also write poems. One pupil wrote a haiku poem, "I am allowed to / Go on the tall monkey bars / I still can't reach." Handwriting is joined and is becoming fluent. Most work is tidy and presented with care.
74. Pupils' standards of attainment in Year 1 are average at this early time in the school year. The majority listen attentively and speak clearly. Many pupils are starting to read confidently from simple texts. The more able pupils start to write simple sentences and form their letters with increasing care. Many are beginning to use their growing knowledge of sounds to write words independently. Pupils benefit from the stimulation created by working in the same room as the pupils in Year 2. Pupils in Year 3 attain above national expectations. They listen well to their teachers and to each other and speak with assurance when explaining or answering questions. They read with confidence from a range of texts and their writing is clear and appropriate to the task in hand.
75. The literacy hour is increasingly used in connection with other subjects across the curriculum, as in a series of Year 3/4 lessons where history and computer skills were combined with the aim of heightening pupils' ability to write in a reporting style. Literacy skills are also promoted in science when pupils record the results of investigations, in design and technology when pupils evaluate their designs and

models, and in geographical reports. Computer skills are often used to present finished pieces of work drafted in literacy lessons.

76. The quality of teaching is very good. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 and 4. Teachers plan closely together across year groups. They have a very good grasp of the subject. The first part of each lesson is used well as teachers emphasise key points which build on what pupils know already, and they use a variety of skilful questions very well, which assess what pupils have understood and also inspire them to extend and deepen their thinking. Many pupils are confident to answer because they know that teachers encourage them to try even if sometimes they get things wrong. Well-trained learning support assistants play a valuable part by giving discreet help to pupils who learn more slowly. They rephrase things so that pupils will understand and this enables those pupils to feel confident and well involved in the lessons. They behave well because they are interested and can keep up with the rest of the class. Teachers include them well by asking questions tailored to their levels of understanding which raises their self-esteem.
77. During the main part of the lesson, teachers and support assistants work carefully with small groups of pupils and ask questions which clarify and extend their thinking. Teachers have high levels of confidence in their pupils and very good classroom control. Pupils respond positively and work sensibly in pairs when appropriate. This all creates an atmosphere conducive to work. Pupils settle quickly because they are interested and enthusiastic and they put very good effort into their work. Teachers plan with their support assistants who are then able to give really good support to groups who need it and this enables pupils to achieve well and have pride and confidence in what they do. The sessions at the end of lessons are used well as a time for teachers to check how much their pupils have learned and also as a time when pupils extend their thinking and understanding further in response to careful questions.
78. The subject is very well managed. Since the last inspection staff have been very well trained and briefed. The school regularly monitors both planning and teaching. National test results are analysed for areas where teaching has been less successful. In-school tests are also analysed and from the results individual targets are set for pupils to aim towards. These are updated regularly as pupils achieve them. Predictions are made of pupils' probable future results throughout the school. The system of assessing pupils' attainment in each class is not yet complete. It needs to be refined so teachers will find it easy to keep brief records that are easily accessible. Resources for the subject are good. There is a wide selection of big books that are used appropriately in literacy lessons. The central library contains a good selection of fiction and reference books in good condition. Each class has a weekly session when books are changed, and pupils are either given a specific task such as doing research or perhaps sharing books in this quiet atmosphere. The librarian ensures that books are kept in good repair and each class is responsible for leaving the room tidy. At present only the older pupils use the library for individual research.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. The standards of attainment of seven-year-olds are average. This view is supported by preliminary results for the national tests in 2001, which show a further rise in the number of pupils achieving and exceeding national expectations. Standards achieved by nine-year-olds have improved and are above what might be expected for pupils at this age. The continued implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the improvement in the quality of the teaching have both made significant contributions to

the increase in standards throughout the school. The teaching of mathematics is monitored by the headteacher and deputy head who have provided very good support to improve the quality of the teaching in the subject. Weaknesses noted in the last report have been tackled effectively and the school has made good progress in this area of its work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs are well supported in their learning and achieve well.

80. By the age of seven, pupils have built well on their early mathematical experiences gained in the reception classes. They order numbers to 100 and beyond and have a satisfactory understanding of the value of numbers. Most pupils use the four number operations up to 100 to solve problems. Higher-attaining pupils multiply and divide by 10 and understand that addition and subtraction are inverse operations. Pupils work out money problems giving change for amounts to £2.50. Most pupils know the names of flat and solid shapes and describe them by their properties. Pupils use a variety of units of measurements and display data on graphs and charts. In lessons, pupils count in 2s, 5s, and 10s and identify odd and even numbers looking for patterns. They estimate lengths and then measure to see how close they were.
81. By the age of nine, pupils understand the value of number to 1000 and beyond and round numbers to the nearest 10, 100 and 1000. They use the four number operations to solve problems to 1000 and use different methods of checking calculations. Lower-attaining pupils calculate fractions of different sizes while average and higher-attaining pupils order fractions by size and identify fractions of the same value. Pupils calculate areas and perimeters of shapes, and plot co-ordinates on a grid. They collect, sort and interpret data and display their information in charts and graphs. In lessons, pupils sort shapes by their properties, for example, by the number of right angles or the lines of symmetry and display their information in Carroll diagrams. Average and higher-attaining pupils are beginning to understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and they describe solid shapes using terms such as 'faces' and 'vertices'.
82. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good with a significant number of very good lessons observed. The teachers' very good subject knowledge and good class management keep all the pupils involved in challenging tasks. The clear explanations, high expectations, good demonstrations along with the pupils' behaviour, concentration and application to work, ensure that the pupils learn well. The teachers consistently use appropriate mathematical terms and this ensures that the pupils develop a sure understanding of the meaning of accurate and mathematical vocabulary. Teachers plan their work together and this joint planning is an effective way of ensuring the continuity and equality of provision in the year groups. In the most effective lessons, teachers make good use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking. They maintain a very good pace that captures and maintains the pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
83. The teaching of basic mathematical skills is good, with the teachers using the National Numeracy Strategy to give a very good structure to their work. Lesson objectives are generally shared with the pupils and the pupils are clear what it is they are learning. The teachers ensure there is a good range of learning experiences to assure that the pupils are fully involved in their learning and the tasks set are stimulating and engaging. Teachers make good links with previous work, give very clear explanations and instructions and make effective use of examples and demonstrations. Mental activities at the beginning of the lessons are used well to promote quick mental agility. This was seen in a very good lesson in a Year 1/2 class where there was a strong focus on the development of pupils' skills in counting

forwards and backwards in 1s, 2s, 5s, and 10s. In a very good lesson in a Year 3/4 class the teacher was particularly skilled at adapting the mental work for all levels of attainment so that all pupils were involved and challenged. In this lesson the pupils had very positive attitudes to their learning, they displayed high levels of concentration and made significant gains in their learning.

84. The teachers plan well to the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. All areas of work are dealt with in sufficient depth and breadth to enable pupils of all attainment levels to achieve well. This constitutes an improvement since the last inspection. There is often a good balance between work that is teacher generated and that which requires pupils to record their own findings. However, from the scrutiny of pupils' previous work it is evident that there is sometimes too much dependence on the use of worksheets with insufficient opportunities for pupils to record their own work. Teachers use computer programs particularly well to support and enrich pupils' learning in this subject. For example, pupils use a range of very good programs to help them understand flat and solid shapes and identify lines of symmetry. Pupils also display information they have collected using data handling packages. There are also good opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in history pupils in Year 2 record the age of toys on timelines and in science, using Venn diagrams, they display information about materials that can be frozen and those that can not. In geography, pupils in Year 4 record the position of places uses simple co-ordinates, and in science they record the distance a vehicle travels down a ramp. Teachers assess and record pupils' progress well and use this information to guide the next stage of learning.
85. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who regularly monitors pupils' progress, evaluates teachers' planning and supports the target setting process for pupils in Years 1 to 4. This makes an important contribution to the continuous drive to raise the attainment levels of the pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

86. The standards of attainment of seven-year-old pupils are above average. This view is supported by the 2000 teacher assessments, which showed that the percentage of pupils reaching and exceeding the national expected level was above that of most schools across the country. Preliminary results for 2001 show a further rise in the number of pupils exceeding national expectations. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' attainment was satisfactory. Standards achieved by nine-year-olds have been maintained and are above what is expected for pupils at this age. Pupils achieve well during their time in school.
87. By the age of seven, pupils show good scientific understanding and many have well developed science skills. By carrying out tests they have found out about reversible and irreversible changes, for example when bread is toasted and butter is melted. Most pupils were able to make sensible predictions when investigating where an ice cube would melt first. They carried out the test, recorded the results and used these to reach conclusions. In one lesson in which pupils were finding out which materials were magnetic and non-magnetic, Year 2 pupils were beginning to understand that not all metal objects are magnetic and that not all metals are the same.
88. By the age of nine, pupils have acquired a good knowledge and understanding of the different areas of science they have studied. They are developing good science skills. Year 4 pupils in both classes were able to plan a fair test to investigate how the surface material of a ramp might affect the movement of toy cars. They were able to



work out which factors should be controlled and which should be varied. Their predictions were sensible and based on their everyday experiences and knowledge. Several pupils suggested that movement over fluffy material would differ depending on the way the pile was facing. Others knew that the cars would 'pick up speed' faster over a smooth surface. Their responses showed a good understanding of the effect of forces on movement.

89. Teaching is very good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was good for older pupils and satisfactory for those aged five to seven. The high quality of teaching, especially the secure subject knowledge displayed by teachers, is a strong contributory factor to the high attainment of pupils. Detailed planning provides challenging work that meets the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment. For example, in a good lesson in a Year 1/2 class, work was planned so that most Year 1 pupils would understand that materials are magnetic or non-magnetic whilst older pupils and higher-attaining pupils would be able to consider if all metal objects were magnetic. Probing questions were used well in all classes to find out what pupils already know and understand and then extend their learning. After looking closely at a bicycle pupils in a Year 3/4 class were challenged to think 'How does friction work with brakes?' and 'Where else do you need to exert force?' Well-chosen resources in all classes helped to develop pupils' understanding. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because of the good learning support they receive. Teachers know which pupils need extra help with understanding concepts or expressing and recording their ideas and support is targeted well. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that occasionally average and higher-attaining pupils are constrained by the use of worksheets which close down the opportunity for pupils to clarify their thinking and develop their own ideas. The very good teaching contributes significantly to pupils wanting to learn. In most lessons there is a real sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm for work, especially when pupils are carrying out or planning scientific investigations. Pupils concentrate well and co-operate when working in groups. Their attitudes have a positive effect on their achievement.
90. Literacy skills are reinforced well in science. All pupils record their own work and this is usually well matched to their writing development. Teachers use correct, scientific vocabulary and this is evident in pupils' written work. Older pupils carry out research, for example they have made their own fact-files on the planets. Numeracy skills are satisfactorily reinforced. Pupils take measurements, record their results in tables and charts and interpret them. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to improve their computer skills in science lessons.
91. Planning is thorough, ensuring coverage of all areas. Much of the pupils' knowledge and understanding is gained through their own investigations and this is a strength of the provision. Although written assessments are carried out at the end of each topic there are at present no procedures for assessing and recording pupils' science skills so that they can be developed systematically, and this is a weakness. Management of the subject is improving because of the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator and the high profile given to science this year in the School Improvement Plan. In her science action plan the co-ordinator has correctly identified the need to improve the assessment and monitoring of pupils' achievements in order to raise standards further for all pupils.

## ART AND DESIGN

92. Standards attained by seven-year-olds are average and by the time they are nine they are above what might be expected. They achieve well during their time in school. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
93. By the age of seven, pupils have worked with a range of media. Observational drawings encourage pupils to look closely at the world around them and their drawings of leaves and pinecones show good use of line and shading. Some work shows good detail in the intricacies of leaf veins. Pupils have experimented with mixing colours and know how to make colours darker and lighter, using paints and by layering tissue. Their work in the style of Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' shows bold use of colour and brushstrokes. Pupils have learned how to roll out and cut clay-marking patterns using clay-working tools. When making figures of 'Joseph' they were able to attach his 'dreamcoat' using slip. Much of their work is of good quality.
94. By the age of nine, pupils experiment with colour, texture and pattern. When studying portraits, they blend pastels to create authentic skin tones. They use observational studies to improve their skills in drawing parts of the face. Their efforts are then seen to good effect when completing a half-portrait. Observational drawings of leaves enable pupils to transfer the delicate tracery successfully on to clay leaf tiles. Pupils have many opportunities to study the techniques used by well-known artists and, as a result, they confidently experiment to create similar effects. This was seen when pupils used textiles to produce collages of Van Gogh's painting, 'Starry Night', using strands of wool to good effect to recreate the characteristic cloud formation. A current topic, 'Art in Nature', has resulted in pupils creating natural effects using different materials, for example collages were created by making silk paper for the background and using embroidery for the tree shape. The finished work was of a high standard.
95. No teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2. Teaching was good in a lesson in a Year 3/4 class. The very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher and support assistants, and the clear teaching of techniques, enabled the pupils to create work of high quality. Pupils used layering techniques to produce three-dimensional environmental pictures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. They worked with deep concentration and this had a positive impact on their learning. Time was used well; whilst pupils waited for their work to dry they were encouraged to research on the Internet for more information about the artist's work. However, the overall pace of the lesson was slowed when some pupils had to wait for resources to be brought and momentum was lost. Teachers in all classes make good use of computer programs to develop pupils' painting and drawing skills. Work in art benefits from links to other subjects and also makes a reciprocal contribution, especially in history and design and technology. This subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural and spiritual development.
96. Planning ensures that pupils are given a wide range of experiences. However, there are no procedures for assessing and recording pupils' skills so that they can be developed systematically. The role of the co-ordinator has not been fully developed due to priorities in other subjects and she has a limited affect on standards in other year groups.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. Standards attained by seven- and nine-year-olds are above the national expectation for their age. They achieve well during their time in school. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection.
98. By the age of seven, pupils undertake a good range of activities to promote their design and making skills. Pupils often produce well drawn, labelled diagrams showing how they intend to make, for example 'Joseph's Coat of Many Colours', creating a template from paper and the making the artefact from fabric. They stitched the pieces together and made patterns by gluing cut pieces of fabric. Some pupils created repeating patterns using a computer program and attached these to the coat. When making a puppet, for example pupils examine and consider how puppets are made and the materials that are used. They create a prototype and consider the difficulties that they might encounter. The final product is made from different fabrics sewn together and decorated. The pupils also make paper teddies, carefully measuring and drawing the length of the legs and body and creating movement by attaching the different parts with split pins.
99. The standards achieved in Years 1 and 2 are built upon well in Years 3 and 4. By the age of nine, pupils design and make glove and string puppets based on famous fairy tale characters, some of which are of very high quality. The head, hands and feet of the puppets are carefully crafted from clay and the features are painted accurately. The puppets, for example The Little Mermaid and Little Red Riding Hood, are dressed in clothes that are tailored to fit and accurately represent the character. The pupils make electronic games, some of good quality with clear planning instructions of how to make them and evaluations on how they might be improved. They design and create models that use pneumatics as a way of controlling the movement. In a good lesson in a Year 3/4 class, the pupils evaluated the pneumatic toys that they had made, and suggested creative ways in which they might be improved.
100. The teaching and learning in the one lesson observed in a Year 3/4 class, was good. The teacher effectively questioned the pupils encouraging them to evaluate the designs of their pneumatic toys and how they would seek to improve them. The teacher built well on the responses of the pupils, challenging their thinking and taking their learning forward. The pupils were well managed, the pupils listened well and responded quickly.
101. There is satisfactory guidance for the teaching of this subject. Since the last inspection the provision of food technology has been included in the planning. There is no whole school approach to the assessing and recording of pupils' skills. The co-ordinator is new in post and has not monitored the standards being achieved in the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

102. Standards attained by seven- and nine-year-olds are in line with the national expectations for their age. They achieve satisfactory standards during their time in school. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection.
103. By the age of seven, pupils know about different places; they compare them with Henlow and start to record their preferences. They draw simple plans of their locality. By the age of nine, pupils have effectively built on these skills. They use simple co-

ordinates to locate places on ordnance survey maps. They widen their awareness of other localities through the study of a Caribbean island and use appropriate geographical vocabulary.

104. Pupils practise their literacy skills well in geography. Throughout the school pupils make lists and reports, and pupils in Year 3/4 take the opportunity to improve their note taking skills. In Year 1/2, pupils use computers appropriately to make a block graph of places they have visited, comparing countryside, town and seaside.
105. Since no lessons were observed, it is not possible to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory, though it also shows that pupils of all abilities often tackle the same tasks. As a result it is probable that the higher-attaining pupils are not fully challenged while the achievement of lower-attaining pupils is limited if they struggle to complete work without a lot of support from learning support assistants.
106. The co-ordination of the subject continues to be broadly satisfactory but there is room for improvement. Teachers' planning is monitored regularly to ensure that it matches the overall plan, which is carefully designed as a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed-year classes. It is envisaged that pupils' work will be monitored but this has not started yet. The co-ordinator is aware that a simple system of recording pupils' knowledge and skills would be of value, and she has started to design one. Resources are satisfactory and used well.

## **HISTORY**

107. Standards attained by seven-year-olds are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. By the age of nine, standards are above what might be expected, with pupils making particularly good progress in Years 3 and 4. Pupils achieve well during their time in school. This constitutes an improvement since the last inspection.
108. By the age of seven pupils are achieving well and beginning to develop clear historical skills. They understand that life and objects were different in the past. For example, when they look at a range of toys they recognise those that were made long ago because of the materials they are made from, and they understand that materials used now were not always available in the past. They make a time-line of toys that belonged to their parents, grandparents and great grandparents and start to have an idea of the passing of time. Pupils in a Year 1/2 class last year studied Florence Nightingale and started to understand why people in the past acted as they did. Pupils who learn more slowly are well supported and achieve particularly well.
109. By the age of nine, pupils are achieving well and building steadily on their historical skills. They know a range of different ways in which the past is represented, such as pictures, broadcasts and reports. They are also aware that these may give very different interpretations of events depending on who made them. For example, British and German reports of bombing raids during World War 2 varied greatly and pupils start to understand why. Pupils start to understand that not all information may be reliable and, following a pupil's suggestion, compare reports looking for similarities as an indication that they may be true. Pupils made surveys of their grandparents' experiences as children during the war and compared them with their own

experiences. They now have clear understanding of similarities and differences of lives then and now. Generally they are pleased to be children nowadays and can explain why. For example, one pupil said, "They had fewer toys during the war, it was more difficult to buy toys then because people were doing things for the war effort."

110. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan clearly to cover not only the required range of topics, but also to help pupils to develop their historical skills. Teachers teach their lessons in a lively manner using a judicious mix of questions and information which keeps pupils alert, interested and curious to discover more. Teachers share the learning objectives of the lesson clearly, which prepares pupils well for what is to come and to concentrate. Teachers use a range of resources very well. For example in a Year 3/4 class, higher- and average-attaining pupils read, discussed and wrote about the survey they had made of their grandparents' experiences, while the lower-attaining pupils listened to a tape of an elderly man remembering his wartime childhood and then answered simple questions. Everyone felt confident and made good progress in their understanding during the session. The teacher in a Year 1/2 class produced a moment of wonder and sheer delight when she showed pupils a range of old and tiny dolls' house furniture. She also showed great faith in their ability to treat objects with care as she allowed a pupil to arrange it in the class museum. Learning support assistants give valuable help during the lessons. They explain difficult points in simple terms and ask clear simple questions, and this enables pupils who learn more slowly to keep up with the gist of the lesson and feel confident and included. Lessons finish well because teachers assess what pupils have learned and extend their understanding further. For example, the teacher in a Year 1/2 class discussed two old books, showing the illustrations and text, and pupils recognised that they did not look like modern books.
111. Good use is made of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in history. Pupils in a Year 1/2 class wrote labels and captions for the toys in their museum, while pupils in a Year 3/4 class answered questions about childhood in wartime, and the historical topic was well adapted for a literacy lesson. However, although there were clear tasks set during the inspection which were carefully tailored to suit the abilities of different groups of pupils, it was harder to see this in the work done last year. Pupils often had the same task and achieved it at varying levels according to their ability. This indicates that older or more able pupils were not challenged consistently, and that younger or less able pupils needed support to complete tasks. Information and communications technology is used well for research, particularly in Year 3/4. Pupils use the Internet to search for information, and they find photographs of bombing to illustrate newspaper articles that they write about the blitz in their literacy lessons. Pupils use mathematics in their time lines, they recognise large numbers in the form of dates and calculate the time between one event and another.
112. Management of the subject continues to be satisfactory, but some areas need to be improved. The co-ordinator sees teachers' planning, but does not monitor teaching or pupils' work at present. She understands the need for a simple system of recording pupils' knowledge and skills, and is starting to develop one. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and well augmented by material and objects brought in by pupils and teachers.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

113. Standards attained by seven-year-olds are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. By the age of nine standards are above what might be expected and pupils make good progress in developing their skills throughout the school. Pupils achieve well during their time in school. Attainment has risen since the previous inspection when standards were average compared to other schools. Significant factors in this improvement have been the commitment to staff development and the creation of the information and communication technology [ICT] suite, both of which have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
114. By the age of seven, pupils are proficient at using the mouse and have satisfactory keyboard skills. They write using upper and lower case letters, changing font, size and colour. They enter information on to a database and represent it using block graphs and charts. Pupils use painting and drawing programs to produce pictures. By the end of Year 2 they use CD ROMs to find information. Their skills in control technology are weaker. At present pupils have had few experiences in controlling the movement of a floor robot by entering instructions but this is planned for later in the school year.
115. By the age of nine, pupils have made good progress developing word processing skills and use the keyboard confidently. They use icons and menus to change the size, style, alignment and paragraphing of text and they incorporate graphics. By the end of Year 4, pupils use a publisher program to create and edit a presentation using Power Point. They are competent users of paint programs. High quality work was produced when pupils experimented with tools to work in the style of Van Gogh They have access to the Internet and use the World Wide Web and CD ROMs regularly to carry out research for other subjects. Pupils used 'search engines' to find web sites with information on the planets which they downloaded and used in science. In maths they collect and input information on to spreadsheets and they present data in a variety of graphs and charts. One class devised a questionnaire to find out pupils' views of the school. They used the responses to create data in the form of pie charts, which they then interpreted. In Year 4, pupils confidently write instructions to create geometrical shapes.
116. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers show strong subject knowledge, enabling them to teach with confidence. Teachers plan their lessons well and the learning objectives are made clear at the outset. Good use is made of the computer suite, where all teaching takes place, allowing teachers to instruct all pupils directly. Instructions for new processes are clearly and simply explained but teaching would benefit from the use of a large screen so that teachers can model the processes involved and pupils can watch. There is a good emphasis on the development of correct technical terms. Teaching is effective because the correct balance is achieved between the time devoted to the teaching of skills and the time allowed for pupils to practice them and this results in pupils making good progress. For example, when pupils in a Year 3/4 class were using 'new' tools on the 'Dazzle' program to create a symmetrical pattern they were given time to experiment with the thickness of lines, mixing colours and changing the sizes of shapes before they drew their butterflies. As a result their finished products were good. Effective support is well targeted by teachers and support assistants and this enables all pupils to make good progress, including those with special educational needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and praise was used well to emphasise achievement and to enhance self-esteem. Positive attitudes are important factors in the pupils' high achievement by Year 4. Pupils are keen to learn; the vast majority listen attentively during the teacher instruction and show their understanding by their eagerness to answer

questions or demonstrate their skills. This contributes to their progress when working on the computers. Working in pairs, they show good co-operative skills when composing documents and wait patiently for their turn to use the keyboard.

117. The very good use of computers to support pupils' learning in other subjects is another factor in the high standards achieved. Pupils constantly use their skills for a purpose, notably in literacy, mathematics and art. Poems and other written pieces of work are often word processed, sometimes incorporating borders, shading or graphics. Older pupils derive great benefit from having the computer suite directly outside their classrooms as this enables them to use computers whenever the need arises.
118. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator provides strong leadership and direction for the subject and is well aware of what is needed to raise standards further. The previous inspection identified significant weaknesses in the subject. These areas show good improvement, particularly the confidence and subject knowledge of staff and the adequacy, quality and range of hardware and software, which is now good. Because of the rapid rate of development since the inspection there is no scheme of work at present although good use is made of national guidance. Assessment is not yet used to ensure the systematic development of pupils' skills and this is a weakness. However, it has been identified as an area for development.

## **MUSIC**

119. Standards of attainment of seven-year-olds continue to be satisfactory, but there is not enough evidence to judge the attainment of nine-year-olds. The previous inspection found that standards of attainment in music were satisfactory throughout the school. A specialist teacher gives every class two lessons a week, one in singing and the other to promote performing, composition and appreciation skills.
120. By the age of seven, pupils enjoy singing, enunciate clearly and as a whole group they keep in time well as they sing 'Frere Jacques' and 'Three Blind Mice' in two part rounds. It is both effective and tuneful. They recognise and move with increasing accuracy to a rhythm of three beats, and they choose appropriate instruments to emphasise the strong and weak beats in the rhythm. Singing in assemblies is satisfactory, but the lack of accompaniment makes it very hard for "growlers" to keep in tune, so that opportunities are missed to raise performance above the mundane. Pupils hear a good range of music from Europe and other cultures at the beginning and end of assemblies as well as during their music lessons and they start to recognise different composers and different kinds of music.
121. Teaching in the one lesson observed was of good quality. The teacher had prepared carefully and provided a good range of activities that kept pupils alert and interested. There was a small element of silliness from some younger pupils, which the teacher controlled very well. Pupils selected instruments with care and in groups produced recognisable three beat rhythms with increasing emphasis on the first beat. They moved to and sang a singing rhyme with fair accuracy. During the singing part of the session the teacher taught strategies for listening to their own singing and the standard of tunefulness improved noticeably. The presence of a learning support assistant during this part of the lesson helped the pupils to hold their parts. Pupils of all attainment levels are well included.

122. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The teacher plans effectively to cover all the required areas of the curriculum. Pupils' attainment is recorded simply and clearly to show the development of their skills. Resources for music continue to be satisfactory and of good quality.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

123. Standards attained by seven- and nine-year-olds are in line with the national expectations for their age. They achieve satisfactory standards during their time in school. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection in Years 1 and 2 and have been maintained in Years 3 and 4.
124. By the age of seven, pupils jog, skip and jump following the direction and movements of a partner. They display satisfactory levels of hand and eye co-ordination as they bounce, throw and catch a ball with a partner. They display satisfactory levels of control as they roll a ball or hoop and then collect it. They know about the benefits of exercise and understand some of the effects of exercise on their bodies.
125. By the age of nine, pupils move around using their hands and feet, walking, jumping, tummy down and tummy up. In a lesson in the Year 3/4 class, the pupils effectively combined various movements, travelling forwards, backwards and sideways on the floor, many showing good awareness of the space around them. They execute a number of different types of rolls working at different levels and speeds, effectively linking one to another. Pupils create balances on one or more parts of their bodies and then link these to the rolls to create a series of movements. Higher-attaining pupils display good levels of control and co-ordination, creating strong shapes at the beginning of sequences, moving smoothly and elegantly from one position to another and then exploding into a jump at the end. Pupils understand the principles of attack and defence when playing team games, for example hockey.
126. Teaching and learning are good. This constitutes an improvement since the last inspection. In a very good lesson in a Year 3/4 class the teacher planned and organised the lesson extremely well. The lesson was very well constructed, with pupils' individual movements being built up into a sequence. The teacher displayed very good subject knowledge as she explained what the pupils were to achieve. She intervened at appropriate times, using good demonstrations, and provided the pupils with a range of innovative ideas of how they could improve their performances. High expectations of effort and performance were reinforced throughout the lesson. Pupils in this lesson worked effectively in groups and in pairs mirroring each other's movements. Most worked with great energy and concentration and achieved very well. Elements in lessons that are not so successful but are nonetheless satisfactory overall relate to weaknesses in organisation that allows the pace to slacken and the insufficiently high expectations of pupils' attention and behaviour. On these occasions pupils make satisfactory progress but do not achieve as well as they could.
127. There is satisfactory guidance for the teaching of this subject. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and well informed and has worked particularly hard at providing teachers with more detailed guidance to cover all elements of the subject. As a result teachers are becoming more confident when teaching this subject, but the co-ordinator acknowledges that there is still more work to be done. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning but does not visit lessons to support colleagues or assess the achievements of the pupils. Some teachers assess and record the achievement and progress pupils make but this is not to be found in all classes.



There is a successful football club which is run by parents and which is attended by both girls and boys. Plans are in hand for a netball club to start soon. The quality and range of resources are good and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

128. Standards match the expectations of the local agreed syllabus for pupils at the ages of seven and nine years. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards during their time in school. This maintains the standards seen during the previous inspection.
129. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Christian festivals and the life of Jesus. They have visited churches and know important features such as the altar and the font and about the work of a vicar. They have learned about other religions, for example the life of Mohamed and Guru Nanek. Year 2 pupils showed a good understanding of the similarities between religious customs when they compared Christian and Hindu wedding rituals.
130. By the age of nine, pupils' knowledge of Christianity and other faiths has developed satisfactorily. Pupils have some understanding of the influence of religion on the way people choose to lead their lives and they are aware of the importance of the Ten Commandments to Jews and Christians. They are beginning to relate religious teaching to their own lives, for example when using the story of Jonah to discuss how people learn to face difficult problems. Most pupils realise that running away does not help to solve them.
131. Only one lesson was seen and the teaching was good. Good planning led to a very clear input which emphasised the similarities between Christian and Hindu weddings as well as noting the differences. Good use was made of first hand experiences. The class teacher and head teacher talked simply and clearly about their own wedding days, with good use of resources such as the wedding dress and wedding sari, photographs and invitations. As a result pupils were very interested and involved, listening attentively as the teacher related their experiences. A loud "wow!" went up as the headteacher showed the beautiful silk sari. Many questions were asked and this extended their learning. Good use was made of a well chosen part of a video of a Hindu wedding and this helped to explain the symbolism of walking round the fire. Discussion in pairs allowed pupils to clarify what they had found out; as a result the end of the lesson was successful in drawing together what the pupils had learned and re-emphasised the main teaching point. Occasionally teacher input was too long for younger pupils and they lost concentration but they soon regained interest when dresses, photographs or the video were shown. Pupils' completed work shows religious education is used well in the school to relate religion to their own lives, for example the Ten Commandments led to considering how people should behave to one another. The teaching of religious education makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
132. The role of the co-ordinator has not yet been developed. She oversees resources, plans for Year 1/2 classes and checks other planning but has no role in monitoring standards. Some effort has been made to incorporate visits to religious buildings and to invite visitors from the major faiths. However, little has taken place in practice. A wider range of visits and first hand experiences would enrich the provision and help to raise standards.