

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ST LEONARD'S CE (AIDED) FIRST SCHOOL**

Ipstones, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124381

Headteacher: Miss M H Bowers

Reporting inspector: Mr David Manuel  
21090

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 220324

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brookfields Road Ipstones Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST10 2LY
Telephone number:	01538 266292
Fax number:	01538 266093
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. C Scargill
Date of previous inspection:	1 <sup>st</sup> December 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Manuel	Registered inspector	English Information technology Music Physical education Religious education Under-fives	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
Tom Heavey	Lay inspector		Attendance Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art Design and technology Geography History Equal opportunities Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Quality and range of opportunities for learning Assessment

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Leonard's School is a small Church of England Voluntary Aided School situated in the village of Ipstones in Staffordshire. The new school building opened almost two years ago, most other circumstances remain the same. Children are admitted aged from 4 to 9 years. The school serves the local rural community. Some children come from isolated farms and have little or no contact with pre-school children. The school has 69 pupils on roll, well below average size, organised into three classes. The youngest class is for Reception children, who are admitted in the term following their fourth birthday. There were eight pupils aged under five at the time of inspection. The middle class is for Years 1 and 2 and the top class for Years 3 and 4. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught separately for literacy and numeracy. Seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is well below average. Four pupils are on the register for special educational needs; none has a statement of special educational need. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups and none speak English as a second language. Attainment on entry is wide ranging and broadly average in English and mathematics but a significant minority of children enter with limited pre-school experiences in other areas, such as social, creative and physical development.

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

Since the previous inspection in 1997, when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses, the school has made steady improvement. The opening of a new building has helped to raise the morale of the whole village. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Nationally expected standards have been maintained at Key Stage 1, while at Key Stage 2 standards have risen from expected levels to above expected levels in many subjects. Teaching has improved considerably and is good overall. Leadership and management is good and the school gives good value for money.

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

- By the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above the national average in mathematics.
- By the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school, standards are above expected levels in reading, mathematics, science, art, music and physical education.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is improved by a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits.
- Very good relationships and behaviour are evident throughout the school. Everyone wants to do well to improve.
- There are good levels of parental involvement and the school is an integral part of the village community.

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

- The lack of an adequate outside activity area and large play equipment for children who are under five.
- Some lengthy sessions result in teaching time not always being used purposefully.
- Insufficient use of assessment to regularly and closely monitor and track pupils' progress in learning in order to set challenging targets for the next steps in pupils' learning.
- The lack of long-term planning of school development, restricted by the headteacher's heavy teaching commitment.

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

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

The school was first inspected in December 1997 and was judged to have serious weaknesses. There

was a further inspection a year and a half ago which identified that some improvements had taken place but that improvements in other areas were too slow. Since then, most of the key issues identified in the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully and overall the school has made satisfactory improvement.

The quality and range of the curriculum have been improved by the provision of schemes of work in all subjects, and now meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and provision for under-fives. Good assessment procedures are now in place but there has been insufficient time for them to have an impact on tracking pupils' progress. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has been introduced and has contributed to the rise in standards at Key Stage 2 and improvements in the quality of teaching. The quality of annual written reports on pupils has improved from the unsatisfactory level seen in the previous inspection. The completion of the new school has resolved the difficulties associated with supervising children on two separate sites. The unsatisfactory procedures for recording injuries noted at the previous inspection have now been rectified and satisfy requirements. Effective action has been taken to improve these weaknesses.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	A*	A*	A	A
Writing	A	A	B	C
Mathematics	C	C	A	B

**Key**

very high A\*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards on entry to the school are broadly average in English and mathematics and below levels normally expected from pupils of this age in social, creative and physical development. By the end of the Foundation Stage, almost all pupils attain the levels expected from pupils of this age. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading continue to be well above average when compared to national averages and to similar schools. Standards in writing are above the national average at the expected Level 2 but no pupils attain the higher Level 3, which is below average. When compared to similar schools, attainment in writing is average. In mathematics, all pupils reached the expected Level 2 and above and the percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. When compared to similar schools, standards in mathematics were above average. Teacher assessments indicate that standards in science are similar to the national average. Trends over the past three years indicate standards are at least average and often above and well above average. However, it must be borne in mind that the numbers in each year group are small and slight variations in performance have a significant impact on percentages.

Inspection evidence indicates that standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are above levels expected nationally in reading and mathematics, and at expected levels in speaking, listening and writing. Standards in all other subjects are at expected levels. These are improvements from the previous inspection when it was judged that test results in English were above average but work seen during the inspection '...did not bear out the test results...' and writing was below average. Standards in design and technology were well below expected levels.

By the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school, inspection evidence shows that most pupils make good progress in learning and attain standards which are above average in reading, mathematics, science, art, music and physical education. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection which judged that progress at Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. In 1997 it was not possible to judge standards in music and physical education and standards in design and technology were well below expected levels. The school has improved its target setting, achieving most targets, and sets

challenging but achievable targets for individual pupils.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are enthusiastic in their work and clearly want to do well to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils have a clear awareness of what is expected of them and respond very well.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good and relationships between all members of the school community are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and has a good effect on pupils' learning. In lessons seen, 96 per cent were satisfactory or better, 12 per cent were very good, 49 per cent good, 35 per cent satisfactory and 4 per cent unsatisfactory. This judgement is a significant improvement from the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in only 72 per cent of lessons and 28 per cent was judged to be unsatisfactory. These improvements are due to good monitoring of teaching, good planning with relevant learning objectives to meet the needs of all pupils and higher expectations of what all pupils should achieve. Unfortunately, the permanent teacher responsible for the Key Stage 1 class was on long-term absence at the time of inspection. However, the quality of her teaching and planning was evident in the work of the pupils during the inspection. The quality of teaching of the under-fives is good overall. Particular strengths are the very good planning of stimulating and imaginative learning experiences. As a result, the quality of pupils' learning is good. Teachers show good understanding of the principles of the literacy and numeracy strategies and teach the necessary skills in English and mathematics well. Teachers plan and adapt work well to meet the different individual needs of pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and improved by a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits. It is relevant to the particular needs of pupils in a small village school, successfully preparing them for the next stage in their education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are offered the full range of the curriculum to support them in meeting their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual,	The school's Christian ethos and its strong links with the local churches support pupils' personal development well. The school's provision for

moral, social and cultural development	spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school achieves a satisfactory level of provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, together with the staff who all have key roles in the development of the school, provides good leadership and management. Together, they have achieved the expected improvements since the previous inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a good understanding of its strategic role and this is reflected in its practice by its effective contributions to the work of the school. The governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities and help to foster good links in the community.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The governing body has sound strategies for evaluating the school's effectiveness such as monitoring the school's National Curriculum test results.
The strategic use of resources	The number and quality of resources, including books, materials, computers and other equipment are good overall. The strategic use of resources is good and effectively supports teaching and learning. Relevant priorities are successfully managed and the principles of best value for money are effectively implemented.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like school.</li> <li>Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>The teaching is good.</li> <li>The school expects children to work hard.</li> <li>The school helps children to become more mature.</li> <li>The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>Parents feel comfortable approaching the school about problems.</li> <li>Children make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children do not get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>The range of activities outside lessons needs to be improved.</li> </ul>

The inspection team found evidence that strongly supports what pleases parents most. Many of these features are confirmed in the section about what the school does well.

With regard to what parents would like to see improved, the team observed small amounts of homework set in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 which were appropriate in time and amount for the ages of the pupils concerned. The team found evidence of extra-curricular activities in recorder playing, country



dancing, choir practice, craft club and cycling. Other extra-curricular visits and activities enhance the curriculum provision. The team agrees that the provision for outdoor activities for under-fives needs improving, particularly in terms of the provision of large play equipment.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to the school covers the full range, with children of higher and lower attainment, and is broadly similar to that expected from children of this age. Assessments show average levels in English and mathematics but a significant minority of children have limited pre-school experiences in social, creative and physical skills. Children enter the school in the term following their fourth birthday. At entry, boys and girls attain at similar levels. Children make good progress in their learning in the foundation stage as a result of the stimulating and supportive environment and the well-structured learning opportunities provided. By the time the children are five years old, most attain expected levels in all recommended areas of the Desirable Learning Outcomes currently required in English, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, creative and physical development.
2. In English, the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 and above in reading was well above the national average. The percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was very high when compared with the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. In writing the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was above the national average and average when compared to similar schools. No pupils reached the higher Level 3 which was below the national average. Results have been consistently well above national averages over the last three years. However, caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the data. The low numbers of pupils in each year group and small differences in capabilities between year groups have a significant impact on the variability of results from year to year in schools of this size.
3. Inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment across the whole range of work meets expected levels in speaking, listening, reading and writing. At Key Stage 2 most pupils make good progress in their learning and by the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school, almost all pupils attain levels expected nationally, with many pupils attaining above average levels in reading and a small proportion attaining above expected levels in writing. This shows improvement from the previous inspection when it was judged that progress in Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. These higher standards are due to the consistently good teaching. Girls and boys perform at similar levels in both reading and writing. This differs from the national trend where girls generally outperform boys in English.
4. In mathematics, the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that all pupils gained the expected Level 2 and above with 25 per cent of pupils gaining the higher Level 3. These results were well above the national average. When compared with similar schools they were above average. Results have improved considerably since 1997 when they were in line with the national average. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that by the end of Key Stage 1, and when pupils leave the school

at the end of Year 4, they attain standards that are above those expected nationally. Substantial minorities in both key stages attain standards that are well above expected levels. As a result of better planning and improved teaching this represents a marked improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2 where standards at that time were judged to be in line with expectations. Results over the past three years show that levels are above average.

5. In science, the results of the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that almost all pupils gained the expected Level 2 with a significant minority gaining the higher Level 3. These results are in line with the national average but below average when compared with similar schools. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that almost all pupils currently approaching the end of Key Stage 1 are attaining expected levels. A smaller minority of pupils is working at higher levels than in 1999. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 standards are above those expected nationally. However, differences between year groups and the relatively low numbers of pupils within them have a significant impact on the variability of results from year to year. Since the previous inspection good improvements have taken place in teaching, the provision of resources and in the introduction of a scheme of work to support teachers' planning. These have made positive contributions to the rise in standards.
6. The school took the decision to teach literacy and numeracy to separate Year 3 and Year 4 pupils in smaller groupings. This has raised standards in Key Stage 2. The effectiveness of the school's strategy for literacy is good and is having a positive influence on pupils' attainment. Teachers in both key stages are aware of the importance of developing literacy skills in other subjects. As a result, pupils are using their skills effectively to raise the standard of their written work in most curriculum subjects. The effectiveness of the school's strategy for numeracy is good with a high priority placed on mental mathematics. This positively influences standards in other subjects, such as science. The small number of pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their set targets and most attain expected levels in numeracy.
7. In information technology, at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4, most pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and attain expected standards. The youngest pupils develop appropriate skills. Their skills are further developed at Key Stage 2. However, there are limited opportunities for them to develop their technological skills in links with other curriculum subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as a result of effective support provided by class assistants and other pupils, and attain expected levels. Standards in religious education are the subject of a separate inspection.
8. At Key Stage 1 in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and attain standards expected for their ages. At Key Stage 2, most pupils make good progress in art, music and physical education to attain standards above those normally expected for their ages. In design and technology, geography and history most pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and attain standards expected for their ages. This indicates improvements since the previous inspection in design and technology, music and physical education. The school has begun to set realistic and challenging targets for all pupils throughout the school.
9. Pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in relation to prior attainment and targets set in their individual learning programmes. Those in Key Stage 2 make good progress due to more challenging teaching and higher

expectations from teachers. These improvements since the previous inspection are due to well planned provision and support from teachers and classroom assistants.

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

10. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their personal development is good. Their behaviour and relationships with adults and with each other are very good. Almost unanimously, parents support the view that the school successfully achieves high standards of behaviour and helps their children to develop mature and responsible attitudes. The generally positive picture that emerged from the previous inspection has been strongly maintained and unsatisfactory elements, such as some aspects of behaviour, have been improved due to the consistent implementation of the new policy.
11. All pupils are enthusiastic when joining the school and settle quickly and purposefully to their lessons. They are well motivated and become involved eagerly in the wide range of opportunities presented by teachers, such as the teddy bear factory in Reception. They clearly want to do well and to improve. These very good attitudes have a significant effect on pupils' attainment, the quality of their learning in lessons and the progress they make over time. They are the positive outcome of good teaching, interesting tasks and teachers' clear expectations of work and behaviour.
12. The previous inspection report indicated that behaviour was satisfactory but with a '...significant number of noisy interactions in lessons'. In addition it was judged that pupils did not have a clear idea of what constituted right and wrong. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is now very good. A clear code of behaviour and class rules are displayed prominently and teachers consistently reinforce good behaviour to contribute to the school's positive ethos for learning. Pupils therefore have a clear awareness of what is expected of them and they respond well. During the inspection no aggressive behaviour, bullying or other form of oppressive behaviour was observed. In lessons this makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. In the playground, pupils are lively and although many are boisterous, they are self-disciplined, as they make the most of their breaks from lessons. Pupils play amicably together frequently in groups which include boys and girls, and older and younger pupils. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection.
13. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. Effective working relationships are demonstrated clearly when small groups of pupils co-operate by sharing resources. Very good examples of collaboration were observed in design and technology and science lessons where pupils worked together harmoniously and assisted each other in their activities. Pupils are confident and relaxed in their relationships with teachers who value their contributions in lessons. This encourages them to ask for help when required and clearly has a strong bearing on the quality of pupils' learning. In class and whole-school assemblies, pupils learn to reflect on their own feelings and behaviour and this encourages them to think about the effect of their actions on others. The school promotes a strong sense of integration and well-being at all times.
14. Pupils exercise responsibility and independence well by willingly undertaking helpful duties such as returning registers to the office, clearing up after lessons, acting as library monitors and older pupils helping younger pupils.

### **Attendance**

15. Though having fallen slightly since the previous inspection, attendance remains in line with the national average and is therefore satisfactory. There have been no exclusions and no unauthorised absences in the most recent full reporting year. Good punctuality

and the proper maintenance of the attendance registers constitute an improvement since the previous report.

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

16. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and has a strong influence on pupils' learning. In lessons seen, 96 per cent were satisfactory or better, 12 per cent were very good, 49 per cent good, 35 per cent satisfactory and 4 per cent unsatisfactory. This judgement indicates a significant improvement from the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in only 72 per cent of lessons and 28 per cent was judged to be unsatisfactory. These improvements are due to good monitoring of teaching and good planning with relevant learning objectives which are shared with pupils. These meet the needs of all attainment levels and teachers have higher expectations of what all pupils should achieve. Unfortunately, the permanent teacher responsible for the Key Stage 1 class was on long-term absence at the time of the inspection. However, the quality of her teaching and planning was evident in the work of the pupils during the inspection.
17. The quality of teaching of the under-fives is good overall. Particular strengths are the very good planning of stimulating and imaginative learning experiences and the high expectations of how children should behave. These encourage children's good personal development and positive attitudes and provide the necessary support for children to grow in confidence and systematically develop their self-esteem and the skills of independence. The teaching of language and literacy skills is good and successfully fosters children's interest in and enjoyment of books and listening to stories.
18. Methods and organisation of under-fives class activities are very effective. Learning objectives are relevant and clearly identified for each lesson. The children are managed effectively and sensitive support is provided for those with special educational needs. The teaching and non-teaching staff form a successful team. They have a very good understanding of how young children learn. This results in good progress in children's learning and promotes the development of very good attitudes which lay good foundations for future learning.
19. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and in Key Stage 2 it is good. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach are good, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Teachers show good understanding of the principles of the literacy and numeracy strategies and teach the relevant skills of calculation and mental arithmetic well. In English in Key Stage 2, the best teaching is characterised by high expectations, warm relationships and strategies that encourage pupils to express thoughtful opinions. Good use of formal and informal constructive comments enhances pupils' self-esteem. Teachers plan well to meet the different elements and also adapt work well to meet individual needs at all levels. Good use is made of assessment information collected on a day-to-day basis. This has a good effect on the rate of pupils' progress.
20. In mathematics, the quality of teaching is good. Although during the inspection teaching ranged from unsatisfactory in the one lesson observed in Key Stage 1, to being consistently good in Key Stage 2, teaching overall is good throughout the school. It makes a significant contribution to the good quality of pupils' learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, providing clear explanations and asking probing questions in order to extend pupils' understanding. Teaching is brisk and purposeful with clear and shared objectives. This was effectively demonstrated in a lesson on fractions and decimals. Good use is made of review sessions at the ends of lessons to reinforce learning. All teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their skills and

understanding by applying them to a range of problem-solving situations. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson when pupils' progress was insufficiently monitored.

21. In science, good improvements have taken place in teaching since the previous inspection and these have made a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' learning throughout the school, but particularly in Years 3 and 4. Thorough planning by teachers ensures that pupils' learning develops systematically and that overall they make good gains in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills as they move through the school. Introductions to lessons are often presented with great enthusiasm, with the result that the pupils are highly motivated in their learning. In information technology, teachers and support staff have a satisfactory knowledge of computing. Inspection evidence indicates only limited links with other subjects such as English, mathematics, history and art. Teachers' subject knowledge in other curriculum areas is good, particularly in art, music and physical education.
22. In a significant majority of lessons, teachers make effective use of time and resources to meet the needs of all attainment levels, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Lessons get off to a prompt start, often with stimulating introductions, and continue at good pace throughout. This has a positive impact on pupils' productivity. However, in a small minority of lessons which are too long, the whole time is not used purposefully and pupils' progress slows. Teachers have very good strategies to manage pupils. They make good use of praise to encourage the pupils and to acknowledge good responses to their questions. Teachers convey that they value the pupils' contributions and this does much to raise pupils' self-esteem and promote very good attitudes to school.
23. The teaching of the small number of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers make good provision in their planning to meet their varying needs. These pupils are given helpful and sensitive support enabling them to make good progress, not only in learning, but in meeting their social and emotional needs as well. However, individual education plans do not show clearly enough the concerns, particular needs, nor progress of pupils through the stages in relation to the register for special needs.
24. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment to inform short-term planning is good. It enables teachers to plan effectively for what pupils need to learn next and set appropriately challenging targets. However, the good procedures have been in place for less than a year. There has been insufficient time for them to become firmly embedded as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Pupils' work is marked regularly and in English especially there are helpful and constructive comments, enabling pupils to improve the quality of their writing. During the inspection, homework was set regularly in amounts adequate for this age range. It was used well to support reading and spelling in English and mental arithmetic in mathematics. Pupils take books home on a regular basis to share with their parents.

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

25. The curriculum is broad and relevant to the particular needs of pupils in a small village school, successfully preparing them for the next stage in their education and life. The school provides a good curriculum for children who are under five and for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. The curriculum is well balanced between the different subjects and teachers carefully exploit the many links that exist between, for example, English and history, mathematics, science and design and technology and geography and history. At the same time, the school is committed to preserving the essential

elements of each subject and the time allocation and provision for each is good. Governors are regular and supportive visitors to the school, monitoring the implementation of agreed policies.

26. A key issue from the previous inspection was concerned with the lack of policies and schemes of work and National Curriculum requirements not being met in design and technology and physical education. Good progress has been made in rectifying this issue and all requirements of the National Curriculum are now being met in full. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced successfully. Good and detailed policies and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. All teachers have worked hard to produce detailed plans for their subjects wisely utilising the national guidelines. Consistency in planning is now provided by the clear and helpful format adopted by the school. Schemes of work are followed carefully by all teachers in order to ensure that pupils' learning builds successfully on their earlier experiences. The school's two-year planning cycle, which has been agreed in consultation with local schools, effectively ensures full coverage of the curriculum by pupils in mixed-age classes and that all have equal access to the whole curriculum.
27. Although curricular provision is broad and balanced there is a significant weakness in the length of a small number of the taught sessions in the school week. Some sessions are too long and restlessness and lapses of concentration were observed at the end of lengthy sessions in science and design and technology in Key Stage 1. In others, because of the way in which the timetable is arranged, teachers find they have fifteen minutes or so, at the end of a literacy lesson for example, which is not always used purposefully. These are issues that clearly have an adverse effect on the quality of learning opportunities that the school provides.
28. The school extends and improves its curriculum considerably through its involvement with the local group of small schools. Shared arrangements, for example for a puppet workshop, science theatre, Tudor music and an Indian day have made a significant contribution, not only to the quality of pupils' learning, but also to teachers' subject knowledge and to pupils' personal development. Sporting fixtures and music festivals give pupils suitable opportunities to extend their skills beyond the curriculum. Pupils meet socially with those from other cluster schools, including participation at the residential activity centre. In addition, the cluster group provides a very effective forum for the sharing and exchange of ideas and the mutual support of other member schools. There are plans to provide an information technology specialist for the group in the near future.
29. The school's arrangements for personal, social and health education are good. Provision in relation to the age of pupils is made for sex education and the headteacher deals satisfactorily with drugs' awareness teaching. Religious education is taught according to the Diocese agreed syllabus. Good use is made of the local area to extend pupils' learning in geography and history, and the curriculum is enriched by a good variety of visits and visitors. The school has successful links with the local community that make effective contributions to pupils' learning and social development. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities include craft and musical activities and a Sunday morning football club run by the site supervisor who is a parent. They contribute not only to pupils' learning but also to their personal and social development.
30. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. These arrangements have been improved considerably since the last inspection when provision was judged to be satisfactory overall.

31. The school's Christian ethos and its strong links with the local churches support pupils' spiritual development well and includes a Christian Club which is well supported. Within the school, the good spiritual development is promoted mainly through religious education, which is taught in all classes by the headteacher, and through assemblies. School or class assemblies and acts of collective worship take place daily and comply fully with statutory requirements. They are well planned and include opportunities where pupils are helpfully guided in reflecting on their own and others' experiences and feelings. The school values the regular contributions and support received from the local Church of England vicar and a team member from the local Methodist church. A particularly effective assembly was observed in which the headteacher focused on the life of Mother Theresa, encouraging even the youngest pupils to see themselves as the generation who were going to be responsible for pursuing world peace. These occasions make a major contribution to the promotion of pupils' spiritual awareness.
32. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. A strong moral code is evident in all aspects of school life and forms the basis of the very good behaviour observed during the inspection. Teachers are good role models, dealing with pupils in a calm and confident manner and therefore pupils respond in a similar way. The school's values are reflected in the school code, agreed jointly by the headteacher and pupils, and clearly reject bullying, harassment and dishonesty. The agreed code, KORIS (Kindness, Obedient, Respect, Inquisitive and Safety-conscious) is displayed prominently around the school along with class rules. As a result, pupils rapidly develop a clear understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable and they are consistently expected to consider the impact of their behaviour on others.
33. The provision for pupils' social development is good and is firmly rooted in the school's position as an integral part of the village community. From an early age pupils are encouraged to share and to co-operate and this is clearly evident in the good relationships formed across the age groups from four to nine. They understand that there are people less fortunate than themselves and raise money for charities. This caring attitude supports their social development well. A residential visit provides a very good opportunity for older pupils to extend their social interaction while enhancing their learning in subjects such as science, geography, history and physical education.
34. Overall, arrangements for pupils' cultural development are good. Pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions is very well promoted across the curriculum and is clearly evident in art, music, literacy and dance. The school extends pupils' understanding of other cultures through its links with an Indian family and through the curriculum in religious education, music and geography. It is effectively preparing pupils for the cultural diversity represented in contemporary Britain.

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

35. The unsatisfactory provision identified by the previous inspection in this area of school life has now been remedied. The school achieves a satisfactory level of provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils. Parents report that the school knows their children well, and that they themselves would feel comfortable in approaching the school with any problems or concerns relating to their children's welfare or progress. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to create a climate of renewed confidence and co-operation and a solid platform for learning that enhances the children's sense of wellbeing.
36. Completion of the new school has resolved the difficulties associated with supervising children on two separate sites. The unsatisfactory procedures for recording injuries noted at the previous inspection have now been rectified and satisfy requirements. The

headteacher is the nominated first-aider but several other members of staff now hold a current certificate. Good practice in recording injuries and reporting these to parents was observed during the inspection. Children requiring attention were escorted to the first aid station by one of their peers, where staff on duty administered the required care and attention.

37. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and she has undergone appropriate training. She is also responsible for health and safety matters and ensures that termly risk assessments, safety checks and fire drills are carried out. Health and safety aspects are also monitored closely by the site supervisor who is nationally qualified. All staff are aware of the strict arrangements governing the collection of children after school.
38. The good procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are reflected in the much improved behaviour of pupils and the very good relationships throughout the school community that make such a good contribution to learning. The awards and merits system is pursued with enthusiasm and contributes to the good progress in learning. The satisfactory procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour ensure that pupils are made aware of the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. Children report that there has been no harassment or bullying for a long time and that people are generally very friendly and polite to one another.
39. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have resulted in improved punctuality. Standards have been maintained in the absence of exclusions and no unauthorised absences. Attendance rates are included in children's annual reports and parents are regularly reminded in the Newsletter about their duty to ensure that their children attend regularly.
40. Procedures for monitoring personal development, which were judged to be unsatisfactory in the previous inspection, have improved and are now satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities to volunteer for odd jobs and extra responsibilities around the school. They stack chairs in the hall, prepare lesson materials, tidy up in the classroom and escort sick children to the library, reading a book to them to keep them company. The involvement of the pupils in a local radio station, in residential weekends and in raising considerable sums of money for the disadvantaged in society, are effective ways of educating them in the ways of good citizenship and a mature attitude to life.

## **Assessment**

41. Assessment was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection and a good start has been made on improving this key issue. However, the good procedures have been in place for less than a year. There has been insufficient time, therefore, for them to become firmly embedded as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. When children first enter the school they are carefully assessed and the information is used to form groups of similar capability and to plan relevant teaching programmes for them. In addition to the statutory tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, a useful range of optional National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science are administered in Years 3 and 4 to provide helpful information for use by teachers.
42. Throughout the school, assessment and recording sheets have been adopted in order to enable teachers to make judgements about pupils' knowledge and understanding in each subject when they complete a study unit in the scheme of planned work. These sheets are detailed and are referenced directly to the specific learning objectives taken from the subject schemes of work. This is an effective arrangement that is intended to



build into a clear picture of pupils' progress towards meeting the new nationally recommended Early Learning Goals for the under-fives and the National Curriculum levels in Key Stages 1 and 2. These records are also intended to monitor aspects of personal development such as attitudes, approaches to learning and behaviour in order to give teachers a fuller picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. At present, although all staff know their pupils well, there is insufficient recorded evidence to be helpful to future teachers. There has been no whole-school agreement about precisely what or when samples of pupils' work are to be retained in individual pupil portfolios. This clearly reduces their value to current and future teachers.

43. Because these initiatives are new, their use to guide developments in the curriculum and to improve the quality of teaching in order to raise standards further is currently limited. The headteacher and co-ordinators have begun to analyse results of National Curriculum tests in order to identify and address weaknesses in teaching and learning. However, the school recognises that these are long-term benefits to be gained if the procedures outlined above are implemented consistently over an extended period of time. The school will soon install a computerised assessment management system to improve its procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' attainment and progress. Currently the effectiveness of these procedures are unsatisfactory, as there is no means by which individual progress can be accurately tracked as pupils move through the school. Although the ethos of the school encourages pupils to try their best and pupils want to improve, there has been no agreement about how this tracking is to be achieved. There is no guidance on ways in which individuals can be supported once assessment data has been gathered and analysed so that individual pupils can share responsibility for extending their own learning. Although there is some informal target setting, and to the school's credit pupils have been involved in this, the school is only just beginning to explore its potential.

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

44. The school has maintained its good links with parents based on the provision of good quality of information and the good level of parental involvement in school. Such a good partnership makes a significant contribution to raising standards.
45. High proportions of parents report that St. Leonard's is a good school where their children make good progress, where behaviour is good, where their children grow in maturity, where the teaching is good and where a good partnership has been established with parents. They are unanimous in declaring that their children like coming to school. Parents feel that they are kept well informed about their children's work. Parents at their meeting spoke of a much happier atmosphere over the past three years, better teamwork, better relationships and more trust between them and the school.
46. There is a good quality and range of information provided for parents, supporting their view that they are kept well informed on school matters. The regular monthly Newsletter is the main channel of communication about school events and often includes information on matters such as the home/school agreement, book week, national test results, the homework policy and termly teaching plans. The much improved annual reports on pupils' achievements now include descriptions of what they know and can do and their areas of strength. They are less consistent in identifying areas for improvement and do not incorporate a facility for parents or children to add their comments on the report. However, parents have the opportunity to discuss the reports at the parents' evening near the end of the Summer term. There are also consultations by appointment during the Spring and Autumn terms along with the more informal exchanges that take place with teachers before and after school. Additional

information for parents is contained in the clearly written prospectus, praised by parents at the meeting, and in the governors' annual report to parents.

47. Parents for their part involve themselves to good effect in the life of the school and in their children's learning. Up to twelve parents or grandparents assist directly in school on at least a weekly basis, while many others help out with school trips or support school events such as those organised by the active parent/teacher association.
48. The good contribution that parents make to their children's learning in the classroom, is supplemented by the help they provide at home. They support their children's reading and other homework in line with the home/school agreement. It formalises what is already agreed by both parties to be a much improved partnership. This good contribution to their children's learning is facilitated through the use of reading diaries and homework diaries, in which parents write comments, as channels of communication between home and school. In these various ways parents make a good contribution to school life and have a positive impact on their children's education.

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

49. The headteacher, together with the staff who all have key roles in the development of the school, provides good leadership and management. She gives the school a clear educational direction. Following the previous inspection, it was judged that the school had serious weaknesses and a further inspection in October 1998 identified some improvements had taken place but that improvements in other areas were too slow. Most of the key issues identified in the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully and overall the school has made satisfactory improvement.
50. Strengths include improvements in the quality and range of the curriculum, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, the quality of teaching and better annual pupils' reports. These have made good contributions to pupils' learning and a marked rise in standards attained by pupils in Key Stage 2. Good assessment procedures are now in place but are relatively recent initiatives. There has been insufficient time for them to become an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The overall rate of improvement has been much as expected but the headteacher's heavy teaching commitment restricts her time devoted to the development of long-term planning. Insufficient time is available for whole-school agreement on the priorities required to prepare a long-term school improvement plan, which builds on the present good situation.
51. The governing body has a good understanding of its strategic role and this is reflected in its practice. Individual governors attend a range of appropriate training courses, including those on literacy and numeracy. The governing body has sound strategies for evaluating the school's effectiveness such as monitoring the school's National Curriculum test results. In addition, governors pay regular visits and hold regular meetings to monitor the progress of current priorities and make effective contributions to the work of the school. The governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities and help to foster good links in the community.
52. The monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is good overall. The headteacher regularly monitors curriculum planning and scrutinises pupils' work to check levels of attainment and rates of progress. She also observes and evaluates teaching in all classes. Monitoring is closely linked with the school's own appraisal procedures which meet statutory requirements. Staff have individual strengths in subject knowledge and these are successfully shared to contribute to whole-school development in the curriculum and teaching. The English and mathematics co-ordinators have monitored the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies well and have provided a good

evaluation of successes and difficulties in their implementation. The roles of other subject co-ordinators are also effective and have made significant contributions to the good provision for under-fives and both key stages by monitoring teaching and curriculum planning.

53. The school's aims and values are appropriate and well communicated, particularly through the day-to-day practice and good role models of teaching and non-teaching staff. These aims are clearly reflected in the teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning and to one another. A strong feature of the school is its very positive ethos and caring support for all pupils, who are valued and have equality of opportunity. Very good relationships are fostered and these are greatly valued by parents.
54. Provision for the under-fives is managed effectively and positively influences their learning. There are suitable procedures for admitting children and they settle quickly into class routines. The management of the small number of pupils with special educational needs is effective and supports their learning and personal development well. The overall efficiency of the school is much improved with relevant priorities successfully managed and the effective implementation of the principles of best value for money. This is evident in the decision to separate Years 3 and 4 for teaching sessions in literacy and numeracy. This contributes significantly to the improvements in teaching and learning at this stage. Better efficiency is also evident in the carefully selected new resources which have been purchased over the past two years. The use of information technology is satisfactory throughout the school to improve efficiency and the curriculum. However, until recently there have been limited resources. Two new computers have been purchased and there are plans to extend learning opportunities for pupils.
55. The school's day-to-day financial controls are good and have enabled the headteacher and governors to closely monitor and evaluate spending decisions, such as the purchase of new resources in English, mathematics and physical education. The few minor recommendations, identified in the most recent audit, have been responded to fully. The committee structure of the governing body effectively supports school development. The school development plan has been a useful document in guiding recent improvements but only covers one year. There is a lack of a longer-term development plan linked to medium- and long-term financial planning, necessary to identify the key priorities for future development in the curriculum and assessment and the maintenance of recent successful strategies.
56. The school has a suitable number of qualified and experienced staff, very good accommodation and a satisfactory range of resources to meet the requirements of the curriculum. The teachers have clear curriculum responsibilities. They work as an effective team with the support staff, including a nursery assistant, who contribute to the improvements achieved. Co-ordinator roles in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are effective in all subjects, particularly in English and mathematics.
57. The accommodation consists of a new building which opened nearly two years ago. Pupils in particular take great pride in their new school and express considerable concern on the few occasions when damage is caused. The accommodation is suitably enhanced with well-chosen, attractive and inter-active displays. The building and play areas are tidy, clean and well cared for, although there is no suitable area for outdoor activities for under-fives. The school is aware of this but has no resources to improve the provision.
58. The number and quality of resources, including books, materials, computers and other equipment are good overall. Resources are good in English, mathematics, music, art

and physical education but there are identified needs in science and information technology. The stock of books is good for this size of school and the area designated for the library is used effectively. There is insufficient provision of large wheeled toys and equipment for children who are under five. The provision of resources to teach the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is good and well deployed. The strategic use of resources is good and effectively supports teaching and learning. The school is now effective in providing a good quality of education, where pupils are keen to learn and standards of teaching and learning are rising.

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

59. After the previous inspection, the school had a considerable number of key issues to deal with. Satisfactory progress has been made in many areas since. To improve the quality of education still further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) provide a wider range of outdoor activities and large play equipment to improve learning experiences for children who are under five; (paragraph 66)
- (2) extend the use of assessment to more regularly and closely monitor and track pupils' academic progress in learning and to set individually challenging targets for all pupils; (paragraphs 41, 42 and 43)
- (3) create a longer-term school development plan for the next three years, closely linked to the agreed priorities for improvement; (paragraph 55)
- (4) make more effective use of teaching time in the longer lessons to increase the rate of pupils' progress. (paragraphs 22 and 27)

Minor weaknesses which should also be addressed in the school's action plan:

- Develop pupils' information technology skills more effectively by consolidating and extending them in more regular links with other curriculum subjects. (paragraphs 21 and 112)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12	49	35	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	2	67
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	4

#### 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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	5	7	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (100)	100 (79)
	National	82 (81)	83 (79)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (81)	92 (85)	92 (86)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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	69
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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: YN – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6
Average class size	22

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	14

#### **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	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	12

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.9
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	148671
Total expenditure	146029
Expenditure per pupil	2117
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	2642

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	69
Number of questionnaires returned	24

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	54	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	75	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	50	25	4	0
The teaching is good.	46	46	8	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	54	8	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	25	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	50	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	50	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	17	71	0	4	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	42	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	63	17	0	0

### **Other issues raised by parents**

None



## 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

60. Children are admitted to the school in the term following their fourth birthday. They are catered for in the Reception class, initially on a part-time basis of three afternoons a week. From the September following entry, children are offered full-time places. At the time of inspection eight children were still under five. The curriculum offered is suitably broad and balanced and has been updated already to cover all areas of the Early Learning Goals which will be statutory from September. Assessment on entry indicates that children join the school with the full range of attainment and with levels similar to those found nationally in English and mathematics at this age. A majority of children benefit from pre-school provision but a significant minority have limited pre-school experiences in social, creative and physical development. Children make good progress in their learning in the foundation stage as a result of the stimulating and supportive environment and the well-structured learning opportunities provided. By the time the children are five years old, most attain expected levels of the new nationally recommended Early Learning Goals and in all recommended areas of Desirable Learning Outcomes currently required.
61. The previous inspection judged that the school did not meet the requirements of the nationally recommended areas of learning for children who are under five. There has been good improvement since then. A clear Early Years' policy and detailed scheme of work provide clear guidelines for teaching and support staff involved with the children. A good assessment scheme has been in place this academic year and is used to monitor each child's attainment when starting school. This scheme provides a useful method to record ongoing progress in learning and to link Desirable Learning Outcomes to the National Curriculum provision at the statutory age when pupils transfer to the main classes.
62. A significant minority of children enter Reception with less than expected levels in personal and social skills. All children make good progress in **personal and social development** and by the time they are five, almost all attain expected levels. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers and classroom assistant make good provision for personal and social development. They have high and consistent expectations of how children should behave, encourage positive attitudes and provide good role models. Learning experiences are stimulating, imaginative and well planned. They provide the necessary support for children to grow in confidence and systematically develop the skills of independence. As a result, the children are well behaved, learn to take turns and share resources with others. Most children work well as part of a group when supported by an adult and when required to work independently, often choose to work and play alongside one another. This they do well, as was shown to good effect when trying out all the activities involved in their 'toy factory' afternoon. All children are aware of routines in the classroom and school. Children express their feelings clearly and have a growing awareness of the difference between right and wrong.
63. Provision for the development of **language and literacy** is good. Most children make good progress and by the time they are five, almost all reach expected levels with a small proportion above expected levels. Many children listen attentively whilst sitting in a group for acceptable periods of time. They sing songs and rhymes from memory. They readily talk about their experiences and demonstrate an appropriate range of vocabulary and early sentence structure. By referring to pictures, they correctly

sequence stories such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They also realise that a reference book about toy making does not convey stories. A few children talk about their own opinions confidently while others are developing these skills at a slower rate. Most children know that pictures and print carry meaning, they recognise all letters of the alphabet, learn to identify letters by shape and sound and know most sounds. According to their different stages of learning, children develop early writing and mark making skills, with most writing their own names correctly. The quality of teaching is good. The introductions to literacy sessions, when children share books or prepared text, are used very effectively by the teacher to reinforce basic literacy skills. This has a positive effect on learning. Lessons develop at a brisk pace and children are stimulated by the use of interesting material, including books, illustrations and even videos.

64. Children are provided with good opportunities in **mathematics** to explore numbers, shape and measurement and they make satisfactory progress. By the time they are five, almost all children reach expected levels. Many use resources effectively for sorting, matching, counting and pattern making. They enjoy reinforcing knowledge of numbers when learning songs. They recognise and name basic two-dimensional shapes, such as triangles, circles and squares. They count and order numbers to ten accurately and calculate missing numbers in short sequences. All have a sound understanding of 'heavier than' or 'lighter than' when comparing objects and were observed selecting sensibly when using balances to find which objects were the same or nearly the same as each other. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers place due emphasis on the correct writing of numbers, using different resources well and regularly reinforcing mental arithmetic skills. Good use is made of review sessions to check the accuracy of children's calculations and in particular their understanding of subtraction. Good use is made of singing songs and rhymes to reinforce learning about number.
65. Children make good progress in their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. By the time they are five almost all meet the expected levels. They use computers confidently, using the mouse control to select items on the screen. They reinforce their language skills by following parts of stories in sequence and produce word sounds and animal noises to improve their understanding of written and oral text. They also enhance their enjoyment of books by using tape recorder stations to listen to story tapes while looking at illustrations and text. They talk knowledgeably and excitedly about their experiences in the local area and seek to discover, investigate or ask questions about the world around them. They remembered their recent visit to the toy museum and talked excitedly about it. The quality of teaching is good. Children are offered a range of experiences, for example the history of teddy bears and how they and other toys are made. Children respond well to challenges, such as the one during the inspection week, which required them to participate in a whole range of exciting activities related to making their own toys in their own factory. They made sketches, painted and designed bears and their outfits in an imaginative way, answering questions about them confidently. Opportunities to explore the world around them include visiting a nearby Toy Museum and going on a Teddy Bears' Picnic.
66. A significant minority of children enter the school with limited **physical development**. All children make at least satisfactory progress and by the time they are five, almost all reach the expected levels. Children use scissors, paint brushes, crayons and pencils with increasing control. They also develop increasing control of their own bodies and move well, especially when enacting a day in the life of a teddy bear. This was demonstrated well in a lesson promoting a range of expressive stretching and curling movements while they, as teddy bears, woke, dressed, walked, played and returned home. Most children effectively initiated expressive movements whilst developing their sequences. The quality of teaching is good. Good provision is made for children to

practise their skills, to be aware of the space around them in the hall and respect other children's activities. The provision for outdoor play is restricted. Although the building is new, being completed only two years ago, there is no designated outside play area. Although outside areas away from the building are used to promote limited outdoor activities, the provision of an outdoor area and large play equipment is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this but has insufficient funding at present to improve provision.

67. On entry to Reception, a significant minority of children have limited creative skills. Children make good progress in **creative development**. By the time children are five, almost all reach the expected levels. Most children name the primary colours and some of the secondary colours correctly. They select variously coloured paints during their work and suitably use a range of techniques to make pictures, for example when painting teddy bears. They develop their ideas through art using a range of malleable materials and their imaginations. This was demonstrated well when children designed outfits for teddy bears. The quality of teaching is good. Imaginative learning opportunities are provided to enable children to use a variety of materials to make, build and model, for example Lego structures and toys in their factory. A good range of small equipment and materials is always made available for these purposes. Children play creatively and readily invent stories for imaginative play either with small toys or in role-play situations, such as in the shop.
68. Teaching is good in all areas of the curriculum and is effective in enabling children to sustain progress in a range of skills. There are very good working relationships between staff and children. Discipline is firm but with a sense of humour and expected patterns of behaviour are consistently reinforced. Lessons are well planned and tasks well matched to the needs of all children. Lessons have clear objectives and build on what children already know and understand. A wide range of resources is available and used effectively to support learning experiences.

## ENGLISH

69. The 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards in reading are well above the national average and standards in writing are well above average. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils attain standards in English which meet nationally expected levels in speaking, listening and writing and a significant minority attain above expected levels in reading. At Key Stage 2 most pupils make good progress in their learning and by the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school, most pupils attain expected levels overall, with many pupils attaining above average levels in reading and a small proportion attaining above expected levels in writing. This shows improvement from the previous inspection when it was judged that progress in Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. This improvement is the result of better planning and teaching.
70. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully. Teachers place a high emphasis on pupils' choice and use of vocabulary and this is having a significant impact upon further enhancing the quality of pupils' speaking and writing. Girls and boys are performing at similar levels in both reading and writing, maintaining similarities assessed on entry. This is against the national trend as girls generally outperform boys in English.
71. Standards in speaking and listening at Key Stage 1 meet expected levels. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other's contributions. Good use is made of the introductions to, and the review sessions of, literacy lessons for pupils to discuss their recent literacy work. For example, pupils in Year 2 read versions of their own stories based on 'Oops'. Pupils listened attentively during these sessions. At Key Stage 2, the

teacher has high expectations of pupils and constantly invites pupils to explain their ideas and justify their opinions. Pupils are asked what a writer may have been feeling, and how the text makes them feel. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 extend their speaking and listening skills when they enjoy opportunities to have friendly argument and to debate issues, such as whether 'Football is a man's game' or 'Girls hate getting dirty'.

72. The school places a high emphasis upon reading and the enjoyment of books. Teachers teach reading skills well and pupils are highly motivated to read with enthusiasm. Most pupils develop a good range of reading strategies through well structured literacy sessions as well as opportunities for individual reading. By the age of seven, most read fluently and accurately. The best readers cope well with quite demanding books and understand them well. They show a developing knowledge of authors, such as Colin McNaughton. They explain their choices of reading and know how to locate information and storybooks using the school library system. They understand alphabetical order. Year 1 pupils enjoy reading and read simple words correctly, using their knowledge of the letter sounds to help them with unfamiliar words. They use pictures successfully to gain meaning from the text and accurately retell stories. They express clearly their preferences for different sorts of stories. The lower attaining pupils use a good range of strategies to gain meaning from their reading, including sight vocabulary and contextual clues. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have clear views about their favourite authors, such as Roald Dahl, Jacqueline Wilson and Michael Rosen. Most pupils make regular use of the library. Year 3 pupils are expected to write about their preferences and predictions in books. Recently, every pupil in the school entered the Book Week Competition. Some eye-catching posters were designed, for example 'Don't watch TV, read a book' and 'Books! Yes!' During the week, all pupils visited Leek library to learn more about books. Year 4 pupils form their own opinions of writers' styles and compare the book version with a video film, such as 'Bill's New Frock', adding that they preferred the book because they could use their own imagination more.
73. Standards in writing at Key Stage 1 meet expected levels. Most pupils organise their written work and develop their ideas on paper to a satisfactory level. They use a neat legible script but very few use a joined up style. It is an agreed school policy that pupils should not be taught to use a joined writing style until Year 3. The focus on guided writing in the literacy hour contributes positively to improving skills. Pupils learn to express their feelings and have opportunities to do so, especially through poetry. They begin to use word books and dictionaries with increasing confidence. The majority of pupils write in sentences using capital letters and full stops consistently and correctly. The higher attaining pupils show a growing awareness of verb tenses, commas, speech marks and question marks. Standards in spelling are satisfactory, especially in the ability to spell simple, regular words. Spellings are usually accurate at the expected level. At Key Stage 2 by the end of Year 4, standards in writing remain at least at expected levels with a small minority attaining above expected levels. Pupils in Year 3 develop imaginative ways of writing rhyming couplets, tongue-twisters and nonsense words. Pupils in Year 4 confidently experiment with alliteration such as, 'Six silvery snakes silently slither slowly'. Year 4 pupils also wrote their own good quality and imaginative versions of 'Free The Sunbird', a play by Leon Rosselson.
74. At Key Stage 1 boys and girls at all attainment levels make satisfactory progress in their learning of English. The small number of pupils with special educational needs receive positive support from their assistants and make satisfactory progress. The better planning resulting from the National Literacy Strategy contributes positively to the consistent progress in learning made by pupils in Key Stage 1 and the good progress made in Key Stage 2. The school promotes literacy well through other subjects, such as geography when pupils write about what changes they would like to see in their

village and when they use research and study skills to enhance their knowledge about other places such as Mexico.

75. Pupils enjoy the literacy hour and are interested in the texts that they study. All pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well in lessons. They listen carefully to the teacher and work quietly with good levels of perseverance. When teaching is good, as in Key Stage 2, pupils are fired with enthusiasm and work extremely hard. These pupils are also very sensitive towards their peers, for example when listening to each other's stories and poems and showing due appreciation.
76. The quality of teaching is good. In lessons observed at Key Stage 1, teaching was satisfactory, but the scrutiny of teachers' planning and samples of work completed prior to the inspection, shows the influence of good teaching by the teacher currently absent. The teaching observed in Years 3 and 4 was good. Pupils were taught in small, separate year groupings and this contributed significantly to the good progress made in learning. The best teaching is characterised by high expectations, warm relationships and strategies that encourage pupils and enhance their self-esteem. Teachers mark written work carefully and write constructive and individualised comments that commend pupils' efforts and give them points for development. Teachers plan well to meet the different elements and also adapt work well to meet individual needs of all pupils.
77. The co-ordinator provides good leadership in the subject and her efforts have contributed well to its good development through the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers have good assessment procedures which have been in use for two and a half terms. They make good use of the information collected on a day-to-day basis to inform planning. However, the new procedures have had insufficient time to have an influence across the school. There is insufficient tracking of the progress of individual pupils over time to provide them with realistic and challenging targets in all the elements of language development. The provision of big books and texts for guided reading is good; these have been carefully chosen and many reflect multi-ethnic cultures and characters. The library has books of good quality and in good condition.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils gained the expected Level 2 and 25 per cent of pupils gained the higher Level 3. These results are well above the national average. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that by the end of the key stage, and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they attain standards that are above those expected nationally. Substantial minorities in both key stages attain standards that are well above expected levels. As a result of better planning and improved teaching this represents a marked improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2 where standards at that time were judged to be in line with expectations.
79. As a result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall in learning about number and in all other aspects of mathematics. The strategy has been particularly effective in ensuring that learning develops systematically and that tasks planned by teachers are closely matched to pupils' needs and prior attainment. However, the supply teacher currently working in Key Stage 1 has not had the benefit of the training and support provided for permanent members of staff. This accounts in part for variations in the quality of teaching and learning observed.

80. When pupils enter the school their attainment in mathematics is at the level expected for pupils of this age. In Key Stage 1, thorough long-term planning by teachers ensures that pupils make good gains in the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding of number and other important aspects of mathematics. By the time they are seven all pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the place value of each digit in numbers to one hundred, confidently adding and subtracting numbers up to and beyond twenty. They use standard and non-standard units for measuring, identify the particular features of common two- and three-dimensional shapes and compile tables and block graphs.
81. In Key Stage 2 pupils are taught in half-class sized groups. This arrangement, along with good teaching, contributes positively to the quality of learning and enables pupils to make more rapid progress. Pupils are keen to improve and respond positively to the many opportunities provided for them to practise and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in science they use line graphs to record water temperatures and use their measuring skills in design and technology when dealing with a variety of design-and-make tasks. By the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school, they solve number problems using multiplication and division, and have a good basic knowledge of fractions and decimal notation. They measure angles accurately and calculate simple perimeters and areas. Through the analysis of test results the school has identified the need to improve pupils' abilities to interpret data presented in graphs and diagrams.
82. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Although during the current inspection teaching ranged from unsatisfactory in the one lesson observed in Key Stage 1 to being consistently good in Key Stage 2, teaching overall is good throughout the school. It makes a significant contribution to the good quality of pupils' learning that is clearly evident both in their current attainment and in their earlier work. Teachers have good knowledge of mathematics and use it effectively to provide clear explanations and to ask probing questions in order to extend pupils' understanding. Teaching is most successful when it is brisk and purposeful, with clear and shared objectives which ensures that pupils remain on task for the whole of the lesson. This was effectively demonstrated in a lesson on fractions and decimals. Very good relationships based on mutual respect were established between the teacher and pupils and among the pupils themselves. As a result, they thoroughly enjoyed their work and were highly motivated by the competitive element of the lesson that was skilfully introduced by the teacher to promote good and speedy mental strategies. In a very small number of lessons, weaknesses sometimes occur when teachers do not monitor pupils' work closely enough. For example, while the teacher devoted time to one group, other groups and individuals took a long time to settle. Many did not persevere to complete the tasks and therefore made less progress than expected.
83. Mathematics is well managed by the headteacher. Her example as a teacher and commitment to high standards has helped to create a good ethos for learning. Good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are used in order to improve the tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school. Monitoring of teaching and learning by observing lessons takes place in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. With the move to the new building the range and quality of resources have been increased and they are used well to motivate pupils and to sustain their concentration.

## **SCIENCE**

84. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, show that almost all pupils gained the expected Level 2 with a significant minority gaining the higher Level 3. These results are in line with the national average

but below average when compared with similar schools. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that almost all pupils currently approaching the end of Key Stage 1 are again attaining expected levels. A smaller minority of pupils is working at higher levels than in 1999. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 standards are above those expected nationally. However, differences between year groups and the relatively low numbers of pupils in each, have a significant effect on the variability of results from year to year. Since the previous inspection good improvements have taken place in teaching scientific skills, the provision of resources and in the introduction of a scheme of work to support teachers' planning. These have made positive contributions to the quality of pupils' learning throughout the school.

85. Thorough planning by teachers ensures that pupils' learning develops systematically and that overall they make good gains in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and they identify correctly the more common bones and joints in the human skeleton. They compare the loudness of sounds and begin to link cause and effect, for example when appreciating that sounds become fainter with distance. Pupils carry out careful observations and use grids to record their findings when investigating taste. Higher attaining pupils understand the need to vary important factors when conducting a test to study the conditions necessary for plants to survive.
86. At Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress and good standards are attained by the end of Year 4 in all aspects of science. Throughout the school there is a clear emphasis on experimental and investigative work in lessons. In accordance with the detailed scheme of work these skills are developed systematically, ensuring that pupils move progressively from observing and describing events to explaining them, developing more sophisticated methods of recording their observations and communicating information, such as the use of information technology. Good links with mathematics have been established in work that involves collecting data and presenting results in tables and graphs.
87. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and in Key Stage 2 it is good. Teachers' knowledge of science is well supported by the school's good scheme of work that enables them to plan thoroughly to provide interesting and stimulating activities. Combined with pupils' very good attitudes to work this makes a significant contribution to the quality of their learning. In a successful lesson on the separation of solids and liquids, the teacher's good subject knowledge was evident in her use of accurate scientific vocabulary and in her very effective monitoring and support of individuals and groups during the practical task. She intervened at appropriate intervals to maintain good pace and to provide encouraging feedback to pupils to help them improve. Teachers select and manage resources carefully to promote effective learning as, for example, in the exploration of the similarities and differences between a variety of roots in their study of living things. Weaknesses in teaching occur when pupils' concentration lapses towards the end of some lengthy sessions and the continuity of the lesson, and therefore the quality of learning, is adversely affected.
88. The co-ordinator has had considerable influence over the teaching of science in the school. She has worked hard to organise the scheme of work to ensure that pupils' learning builds successfully on their earlier experiences and that they do not repeat work unnecessarily from year to year. This is particularly important in order to meet the needs of the school's mixed-age classes. Teachers use a clear and consistent planning format and assessment strategies are in the early stage of use. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to extend her management role by monitoring teaching and learning through direct observation of lessons in order to share the many strengths and to address weaknesses.

## **ART**

89. Although art occupies a regular place on each class timetable, it was not being taught during the period of the inspection. Therefore, where it has been possible to make judgements they are based on other evidence including pupils' previous work, discussions with teachers and their plans and other documentation. Standards have been maintained at the levels reported at the time of the previous inspection. In Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards that are in line with those expected for pupils of similar ages, while in Key Stage 2 standards are above those normally seen from pupils of this age and progress is good. The introduction of the new scheme of work to guide teachers' planning is making a significant contribution to the good progress pupils make as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in their learning and frequently produce work that matches the quality of their peers.
90. As a result of better planning, pupils experience a good variety of techniques in a broad and well-balanced curriculum. Art activities are planned to include work in each year in painting and drawing, collage and sculpture, printmaking and textiles. Pupils are introduced to the work and techniques of famous artists, which not only extends their knowledge of art, but also makes a significant contribution to their cultural development. This was demonstrated well by pupils in Key Stage 1 when painting colourful and detailed pictures in the style of Van Gogh. They make good use of different materials when experimenting with printing and explore a variety of techniques when considering the work of Seurat. The co-ordinator has identified the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to experience the work of artists from non-western cultures. Older pupils enjoy good opportunities to extend their skills in sculpture and textiles. They produce good quality masks emphasising different textures and show increasing control when constructing several different forms of weaving. The teacher makes effective use of a carefully mounted display, to focus pupils' attention on the techniques and vocabulary of these activities and to celebrate pupils' good achievements. All pupils have sketchbooks and their use is effective in developing techniques.
91. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, it is clear that effective teaching takes place throughout the school. The quality of pupils' work shows that it includes a balance between the direct teaching of skills, such as representing different textures and opportunities for pupils to demonstrate an imaginative and creative response. Teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to make judgements about their own work. This helps to develop their understanding of how they might improve and promotes a sense of pride in the quality of their work. In Key Stage 2 in particular, it is clear that the teacher encourages a careful and disciplined approach which is clearly evident in pupils' work.
92. The subject is managed well by a knowledgeable and well-qualified teacher. Since the previous inspection she has produced a good scheme of work that ensures full coverage of the essential aspects of the subject, and provides useful guidance for less confident teachers. Good procedures have been in place for two and a half terms to enable teachers to assess pupils' work effectively and raise standards further. She has compiled an interesting portfolio of pupils' work that provides clear evidence of pupils' attainment. However, because the samples are not referenced to the scheme of work or to pupils' ages, its use to support teachers' planning is rather limited.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. At the time of the previous inspection, provision for design and technology was judged to



be poor and standards were well below expected levels. The school has implemented a range of successful strategies, such as an effective scheme of work and increasing teachers' subject knowledge. These have been very effective in raising standards of attainment throughout the school. The majority of pupils now make satisfactory progress and attain levels that are in line with those expected from pupils of similar ages. They develop a satisfactory range of skills within the wide variety of opportunities provided by the school, and their knowledge of the design element of the subject is particularly well developed. Quite clearly this arises from teachers' good and improved understanding of the essential aspects of the subject.

94. In Key Stage 1, teachers create a learning environment in which the youngest pupils are effectively introduced to the particular skills of design and technology. Pupils experience a good variety of materials including paper, card, textiles, food, reclaimed materials and construction kits. They make satisfactory progress in their learning as they move through the school as teachers plan increasingly more complex tasks for them to complete. For example in Key Stage 1, they list the different materials needed and carefully follow instructions using a template, to stitch two pieces of fabric together to make a glove puppet. They persevere well to overcome difficulties in order to complete the task and show pride when recording why they like their finished pieces of work. In Key Stage 2, they work more independently to produce clearly labelled sketches. They draw on their own experience and their knowledge of the likes and dislikes of others when creating a sandwich that contributes to a healthy diet. They acknowledge difficulties in their written evaluations and learn from their errors.
95. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and in Key Stage 2 is good. In the better lessons, teachers demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the distinctive requirements of design and technology. In the previous inspection this was identified as a weakness. As a result of this improvement teachers now plan effectively to achieve a good balance between designing and making. They establish clear links with other subjects in order to make learning more purposeful and therefore pupils' learning in subjects such as mathematics, science and art is effectively promoted through design and technology. For example, pupils explore the possibility of using pneumatics to lift objects, incorporating their scientific knowledge and understanding into their designs.
96. As a result of the teacher's strong emphasis on an assignment approach, older pupils collaborate well to design and make a storybook that has moving parts. The task allows them to show initiative and encourages them to develop their own ideas. These skills are soon to be applied to making books about Egypt in links with their history work. Pupils share resources unselfishly and enjoy the well-organised practical work. This approach makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The only significant weakness occurred in a lengthy afternoon session. Despite the teacher's thorough planning, which provided a well-balanced range of experiences, the session proved to be too long to ensure that all pupils sustained full concentration.
97. The co-ordinator is an experienced and knowledgeable teacher who has a good understanding of her management role. She has identified the need to review, and where necessary, adapt the scheme of work which has been a vital factor in the very good improvements which have taken place. Although she has a clear view of standards of attainment in the school, there have been no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning directly in order to identify areas of weakness and to share the many strengths with colleagues. Overall, resources for the subject are adequate, although there is no software available in the school to enable the computer to be used to support and enhance the development of pupils' design skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

98. During the week of the inspection geography was not being taught. Judgements, therefore, are based on pupils' work, teachers' plans and other documents and discussions with teachers and pupils. Based on this evidence it is clear that pupils in both key stages attain standards that are in line with those normally seen in pupils of similar ages. These standards have been maintained successfully since the previous inspection. In addition, there have been some significant improvements to the school's provision for geography. These include the introduction of a detailed scheme of work that ensures pupils cover a broad geography curriculum and develop specific subject skills, such as map reading.
99. In Key Stage 1 pupils draw maps of imaginary places and, using a street plan of Ipstones, they develop and use a sound basic vocabulary to locate features in the village, for example across, opposite, up and down. This develops into more accurate positional language including the eight points of the compass. Their learning about a contrasting locality overseas focuses on Tocuaro, a village in Mexico, and is effectively supported by the use of pictures, photographs, maps and atlases. When talking about their work they have a sound understanding of geography as a subject. They know, for example, that it is about different places and that they use maps and pictures in their lessons. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.
100. In Key Stage 2, teachers make good use of the local area to support and extend pupils' learning and to ensure that their work is relevant and purposeful. As a result older pupils continue to make satisfactory progress, successfully extending and developing their earlier knowledge of the village by looking at settlements of different sizes. They are provided with good opportunities to use ordnance survey maps and to appreciate the need for symbols and scale. When investigating the impact that people have on the environment, pupils have interesting ideas about ways in which they would like to improve Ipstones. These include a baby sitting service, a teashop for the elderly and dog kennels. This work is also successful in extending their literacy skills. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to set targets.
101. The evidence available indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers set interesting and challenging tasks designed to develop pupils' research skills. Teachers' planning is thorough and it ensures continuity of development throughout the school with pupils' learning building successfully on their earlier experiences. Pupils are motivated by different approaches, such as fieldwork projects that enable them to acquire skills through first-hand experiences. They present their findings effectively in graphs, diagrams, tables and a range of thoughtful writing, which contributes significantly to the development of skills in literacy and numeracy. Good links are evident also with history. In an introductory lesson on Ancient Egypt, for example, pupils demonstrated good skills in the use of atlas, index and co-ordinates to locate Egypt on a world map.
102. Geography is effectively managed by the headteacher. She has good knowledge of the subject and through her teaching commitment in Key Stage 2 maintains a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. A particular strength is the scheme of work. It is followed closely by all teachers, and makes a significant contribution to the satisfactory progress pupils make in the acquisition of the important geographical study skills of enquiry, fieldwork and making and using maps. These skills are extended further in work at the outdoor activity centre. Good arrangements to assess pupils' attainment and progress have also been introduced in the past year, although they are not being fully implemented.

## **HISTORY**

103. In history, the school has maintained the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. The majority of pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress and attain standards that are in line with expected levels for pupils of similar ages. In the past year, improvements include the adoption and implementation of a good scheme of work that is used consistently by teachers to guide their planning.
104. Year 1 pupils learn about the recent past, and develop an understanding of the passing of time in relation to changes in their own lives and their own families. Teachers introduce them to the use of timelines from the earliest stages, and along with a variety of sequencing activities, these make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They acquire knowledge about famous people and events and by listening to stories they begin to appreciate the difference between fact and fiction. Pupils successfully use different sources of information and evidence, such as books and artefacts, making good use of opportunities provided by teachers. For example, when learning about toys from the past, they respond enthusiastically when using a good range of artefacts, such as toys provided by different families and enjoy a museum visit to support and enhance their learning.
105. In Key Stage 2, their emerging sense of chronology is effectively developed as they begin to recognise that the past can be divided into periods which have particular characteristics, for example Tudor Britain and Ancient Egypt. As a result of careful teaching, and again the use of timelines, they make suitable links across the different periods they study. In their current study, pupils become enthusiastic young historians. They collaborate well when asking and answering questions about the uses of a variety of interesting artefacts, sharing their acquired knowledge readily with partners and with the whole class. This makes a significant contribution to their acquisition of history study skills and to their personal development.
106. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject is a particular strength that is clearly evident in their skilful questioning and careful explanations. As a result pupils respond quickly and confidently because they know exactly what is required of them. It is also evident in the emphasis that they place upon the development of the specific study skills of history. Teachers manage resources well, including a good range of historical artefacts. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils were eager to listen and to get involved in the discussion when the teacher introduced a variety of replica Victorian toys, which stimulated great interest and promoted effective learning. In a successful lesson with Years 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher carefully monitored learning throughout the lesson, introducing new tasks and challenges to sustain pupils' interest and giving helpful and encouraging feedback to improve their learning.
107. The history curriculum is well balanced and supported effectively by a detailed scheme of work. Its consistent implementation throughout the school has a positive impact on the systematic way in which pupils acquire study skills. It is supported well by assessment arrangements introduced in the past year, although these have had insufficient time to impact across the school. The curriculum is enhanced considerably by relevant visits to places of interest, such as a toy museum and a Tudor hall, which promote a greater understanding of the concepts of change and continuity. The co-ordinator has an obvious enthusiasm for the subject and provides good leadership.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

108. Attainment by most pupils in information technology matches standards expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school. This shows that compared to the previous inspection, national standards have

been maintained at Key Stage 1 and there has been a drop in standards at Key Stage 2, which previously were judged to be above expected levels.

109. From an early age, pupils learn how to operate computers. They learn to access programs, use the mouse control and keyboard accurately and acquire a range of basic technological skills. Year 1 pupils follow instructions carefully and most successfully demonstrate how to assemble text to type poems and short stories. They know the basic commands required to move a floor model a given number of units in a chosen direction. In one particular demonstration, two pupils discussed the distances to be travelled but their estimations were inconsistent. Many Year 2 pupils use 'delete', 'capitals' and punctuation keys when entering text in their literacy work. They also change font size and underline text to emphasise features. Tape recorders and listening stations are used at selected times to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and enhance their enjoyment of literature. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils attain expected standards.
110. At Key Stage 2, all pupils use technology in suitable, but limited, links with other curriculum subjects. Suitable links are made with mathematics when using 'Roamer World', a program to create routes on screen and with art when using 'Colour Magic' to design illustrations. Word processing skills are extended when pupils write poems and scripts for persuasive writing in debates about issues such as whether men or women make better dancers or whether boys or girls enjoy getting dirty. They change the style and size of print to improve presentations. They are aware of the importance of information technology in their lives when accessing the Internet, for example when searching for information about whales. By the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school, most pupils make expected progress in their learning and attain expected standards.
111. This is a lower standard than in the previous inspection when standards were judged to be above expected levels. Pupils' current experiences are limited due to resources being less than adequate, a situation identified by the co-ordinator. Resources are being improved with two new computers having been purchased recently, but not yet in use. However, opportunities within lessons to develop technological skills have not been fully developed. Almost all pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. The small number of pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress and attain expected standards. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and enjoy using computers and other technological equipment. They work independently and in small co-operative groups with interest in their tasks and behave well. Often they help each other out when solving problems. They are confident in the use of computers and sustain their concentration well.
112. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers and support staff have a sound knowledge of computing but due to inadequate resources, make limited links with other curriculum subjects such as literacy, mathematics and music. Pupils work in mixed ability and gender groups and this successfully promotes pupils' social development.
113. Information technology is supported by a new scheme of work covering the range of skills necessary for each year group. There is satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and has identified the current priorities to improve the number of computers and increase staff confidence.

## **MUSIC**

114. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils make satisfactory progress in learning and attain standards similar to those normally seen from pupils of this age. This is similar to the judgement made at the previous inspection. By the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in learning and attain standards which are above those normally seen from pupils of this age. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when it was deemed that there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement. The subject is led well by a talented co-ordinator, who unfortunately has been absent for the past two months. However, the quality of her influence was apparent in the work of the pupils during the inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2.
115. All pupils enjoy singing in music practices and assemblies. Singing is lively and tuneful. Pupils listen attentively and learn to sing new songs quickly and accurately. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen to music with interest and have a sound understanding of the dynamics 'loud' and 'soft' and produce good examples of this when singing.
116. By the end of Year 4, most pupils perform well when playing recorders following the notation of a good range of tunes. In one session, Year 4 pupils played a selection of blues and classical music from a programme that had been performed in a recent recorder festival organised by the area schools' music association. They demonstrated quick and accurate fingering and performed 'Easy Go Blues' in an expressive blues tempo. Good attention was paid to the duration of notes and the timbre. Pupils played to a high standard.
117. Pupils develop a wide repertoire of songs and sing with good pitch and obvious enjoyment. Pupils of the school were recently heard on Radio Stoke performing in a half-hour religious service. The quality of performance was very good and many messages of praise and thanks have been sent to the school following the programme. In one lesson observed, Year 4 pupils were observed composing and performing their own pieces of body rhythm patterns, using slapping, clapping, foot-tapping and mouth noises. They recorded their own notation with symbols and letters and responded to the challenges set with enthusiasm. Pupils also use computer programs to extend their knowledge of composing using various simulated sounds to experiment with pitch, dynamics and tempo.
118. Teaching observed in both key stages was satisfactory. However, it is clear that the present good standards in Key Stage 2 are the result of good teaching by the talented co-ordinator. As a result, pupils respond positively and listen carefully in order to successfully identify notation, different note duration and loud and soft music. Pupils acquire new skills successfully, using a good range of resources. The very good attitudes, the very good behaviour and well-controlled use of instruments are the result of the teacher's high expectations.
119. Music plays an important part in the school and the community. Musical activities are well attended, as pupils enjoy reaching a good standard to help them perform for special assemblies, concert performances, entertainment for old people's homes and the singing of carols in the village. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and skills. She provides good leadership and has produced a helpful scheme of work which has contributed to the improvements in the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards similar to those normally seen from pupils of this age. In Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school, standards

are above those expected of pupils of the same age. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress and attain the same standards as their peers. Standards in Key Stage 1 are similar to those achieved in the previous inspection and in Key Stage 2 no judgements were possible at that time. The good standards in Key Stage 2 are in gymnastics and adventurous and outdoor pursuits, and are due to good teaching of skills related to the scheme of work which provides good guidance for teachers. Swimming, though not a requirement at this age range, is a strength, with all pupils in Year 4 being able to swim at least ten metres.

121. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils respond readily to instructions and understand the importance of warming-up at the beginning of the lesson and cooling down at the end. They collaborate well in dance when working in pairs or small groups performing travelling movements reflecting the characters of different animals such as elephants and kangaroos. By the end of Year 4, pupils make good progress in learning and attain good standards in gymnastics. Pupils are aware of the need for suitable clothing and footwear, following their teachers' good examples. They create imaginative sequences of balances, travelling and rolling, which they improve and refine following self-evaluation. Key Stage 2 pupils play a range of games such as football and 'Kwik Cricket'. They compete against other small schools, having just taken part in a local six-a-side tournament. Pupils enjoyed this experience which included girl and boy players. Year 4 pupils enjoy a three-day residential visit at a nearby activity centre, incorporating a series of adventurous activities such as orienteering, canoeing and archery. These activities effectively enhance pupils' sporting and social development.
122. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The majority of lessons have good planning with clear learning objectives. Pupils are fully informed of the aims of the lesson and listen carefully to the class teacher's clear introduction. In Key Stage 2, lessons are organised well to give pupils an opportunity to cover a wide range of skills through meaningful activities with helpful resources. Pupils respond positively to challenges, behave very well and work hard to improve their standards. They enjoy being chosen to demonstrate good examples of work, such as presenting a smooth gymnastic sequence using the apparatus and floor. Teachers use these demonstrations very well to emphasise good quality work and raise pupils' self-esteem. Through careful questioning they help pupils to evaluate their own work and the work of others. Pupils respect the opinions of others and continue to refine and improve their work following such discussions. Teachers have established good patterns of behaviour with the emphasis on quiet, safe working practices.
123. Standards of performance are good in response to the teachers' high expectations of effort and attainment. Through a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, teachers challenge pupils with ways to help them improve. Good examples were seen when pupils from Years 3 and 4 were praised for creating a smoothly joined sequence of movements, with a polished finish.
124. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and gives helpful advice when required. The policy and scheme ensure that pupils receive a balanced curriculum, with good coverage of the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. The hall provides good accommodation for indoor lessons and the supply and quality of resources are good. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances the skills of the good number of pupils who participate. These opportunities also contribute to the good development of pupils' personal and social skills.

