

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Neston, Corsham

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126186

Headteacher: Mrs L. Davies

Reporting inspector: Ms H. Carruthers  
22167

Dates of inspection: 5 - 8 June 2000

Inspection number: 220331

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Rise  
Neston  
Corsham  
Wilts

Postcode: SN13 9SX

Telephone number: 01225 810478

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr T. Awmack

Date of previous inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ms H. Carruthers	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and achievements
		Art	How well pupils are taught?
		Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
Dr B. Wood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Mrs W. Jory	Team inspector	English	
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
		Under fives	
		Special educational needs	
Mr N. Sherman	Team inspector	Science	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information technology	
		Geography	
		History	
		Equal opportunities	

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Alexandra House  
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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a village primary school for boys and girls aged four to eleven years old, which is popular and growing in size. The number of pupils on roll has grown from 135 to 159, of which five are aged under five and taught within a reception class of 30 pupils. The last inspection in November 1997 judged that there were a number of serious weaknesses. Since then, there has been much change in staffing, the present headteacher was appointed in September 1999 after being the school's acting head for four terms. Five new teachers have been appointed during the last two years, three joined the staff in September 1999. The school serves the village of Neston with pupils coming from an increasingly wide area around it. This is now giving a broader range of attainment at entry, and overall, this is average for the majority of pupils. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and housing comprises of a mix of owner-occupied properties, rented and local authority accommodation. Some pupils come from the nearby service quarters. Due to increasing numbers, the school has received a government grant to appoint an extra teacher from September. Thirty pupils have special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. A number of pupils join from other schools, often in Year 6 with some pupils having special educational needs and others of higher ability, which influences National Curriculum test results and targets set. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average.

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

Neston Primary School has put many new initiatives in place. It has made rapid and successful progress in improvement, building on its strengths and is an effective school with many good or very good features. Expectations are high and planned improvement is very well documented in the school's development plan. The school gives good value for money.

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

- The standards in English and mathematics for eleven-year-olds are above average.
- Provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall.
- The provision for children under five is very good.
- Provides consistently good teaching for children under five, those in reception and pupils nearing the end of Key stage 2.
- The procedures for supporting and monitoring pupils' progress are very good.
- Provides a very good quality of information for parents and has very good links with the local community.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are very good.

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

- The quality of teaching towards the top end of Key Stage 1 and at the start of Key Stage 2.

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

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

The last inspection in November 1997 report identified five key issues and judged that the school had serious weaknesses. These issues have been tackled efficiently with very good progress made. Deficiencies in below average standards in the National Curriculum subjects of information technology, design and technology, music and religious education have been addressed and the curriculum now meets statutory requirements. Provision and teaching for children under five and planning for Key Stage 1 pupils has been enhanced greatly. New staffing appointments have brought much expertise to give to the school to take it forward. Numerous improvements to subject policies, schemes of work, planning and teaching and the monitoring of progress in these developments have been made. Health and safety items and any statutory requirements requiring attention have been addressed.

### **STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	C	B	C
Mathematics	A*	A	B	C
Science	A	C	C	D

  

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Taking the three subjects above together, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points scores between 1996 and 1999 was broadly in line with the national trend for eleven-year-olds. In 1999, eleven-year-olds attained the high targets set for them by the school in English and mathematics. The targets for 2000 have been set slightly lower to reflect the abilities of the cohort but evidence is that these will be exceeded and again give the school above average results in English and mathematics. The table above shows that when the 1999 test results are compared with similar schools these are average for English and mathematics and below average for science. A key target of the school is to continue to raise standards in English and mathematics at the higher levels of the National Curriculum and to develop science standards.

Judgements on standards made during the inspection indicate that in English and mathematics these are average for seven-year-olds, while for eleven-year-olds they are above average. In English, writing requires developing further for seven-year-old to reach higher levels. In mathematics, considerable emphasis placed on getting pupils to use different strategies to solve mathematical problems is making the eleven-year-olds use and apply what they know to attain these good standards. Standards in science are above average for seven-year-olds and average for eleven-year-olds. Across the school, in art and physical education, pupils' attainment exceeds the National Curriculum expected levels, with strengths in swimming. In information technology, design and technology, geography and history, pupils' attainment at seven and eleven meets expected levels. In music, pupils' attainment is as expected for seven-year-olds and above average for eleven-year-olds. In religious education, throughout pupils' attainment is appropriate to the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. By the age of five, most children attain what is expected for their age in language and literacy, mathematics and a significant number exceed this in their personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. Most pupils are keen and interested in their work. However, for a small minority of pupils at the top of Key Stage 1 and at the start of Key Stage 2 attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Most pupils behave well, being polite and courteous but for a small minority identified, behaviour is unsatisfactory being disruptive to others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Most pupils, particularly older ones show, respect, consideration and tolerance. Most get on well together and are keen to take on responsibility and show initiative.
Attendance	Good. The level of attendance has improved since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is reduced from its former high levels, though this in part is due to holidays now being recorded correctly as



	authorised absence. Pupils are very punctual in arriving at school and lessons begin promptly.
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The attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of pupils are major concerns for the headteacher and governors and considerable effort is being given to working with those parents involved to address this problem but, as yet, this is not completely successful.

## 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.*

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 90 per cent of lessons seen. It was satisfactory in 29 per cent of lessons, good in 41 per cent and very good in 20 per cent of those observed. Teaching was judged unsatisfactory in 10 per cent of lessons. The good or better percentage of teaching contributes effectively to the learning and progress that most pupils of all abilities make. However, when teaching is unsatisfactory, due to a combination of factors, such as insufficient knowledge and confidence in some subjects, lack of high expectations and difficulties in managing the behaviour of some pupils, the progress made by pupils is insufficient. Overall, throughout, teaching in English is effective in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and in mathematics extending mental arithmetic skills. Booster work provided in literacy and numeracy for Year 2 and Year 6 is helping to raise standards higher. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching in English and mathematics.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good for under fives and good at Key Stages 1 and 2. Much improved from the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided for older pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision with effective support provided both in and out of the classroom: a strong emphasis given to literacy and numeracy work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Pupils are given good opportunities for spiritual and cultural development and for their moral, social and personal development, provision is very good. Most pupils develop a strong understanding of their moral and social responsibilities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. A caring and supportive environment is provided for pupils, since the last inspection many improvements have been made to procedures.

Overall, the school works effectively in partnership with its parents. Many parents help in school in a number of ways. Good use is made of assessment information to set targets.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The very good leadership of the headteacher gives clear, educational direction for school improvement and provides a strong commitment to high achievement. The headteacher is well supported by a keen and enthusiastic team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very good understanding of management issues and fulfil their responsibilities very well. All governors have links with subjects and aspects of the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good analysis of results and use of monitoring to aid improvements to teaching and the curriculum. The school's development plan shows a very good awareness of priorities for improvement in subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good use of all resources to aid learning, particularly for under fives and in information technology. Good quality displays of pupils' work in all classes.

There are sufficient staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The use of the library area for a planned extra class will place restrictions on space but the overall accommodation is good. Resources are good and any small deficiencies are being addressed. Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection. Very good use of best value applied to all spending decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The behaviour of most pupils in the school is good.</li> <li>• The good quality of teaching overall.</li> <li>• The staff are welcoming and approachable.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• The responsibilities given to their children.</li> <li>• Their children like coming to school.</li> <li>• The way the school works with the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The behaviour of some pupils.</li> <li>• The use of homework diaries.</li> <li>• The work in information technology extending pupils' learning further.</li> <li>• More information provided on their children's progress and closer school links.</li> <li>• The number of extra-curricular activities provided.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support fully the positive views of parents. The inspection team looked into the few queries raised by parents. The team shared concerns about the behaviour of a small minority of pupils in the mixed key stage class. The headteacher and governors are engaged in a number of ways to improve this situation. They found that homework was sufficient and suitably managed and that the school's development plan for information technology aims to challenge pupils and extend learning. The school works closely with parents and the annual pupil reports are excellent in the amount of detail provided. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. Parents commented favourably on improvements to the curriculum, in provision for the youngest children, artistic activities, physical education and staff morale since the last inspection.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has increased its number on roll since the last inspection and takes pupils from an increasingly wide area. The range of pupils' attainment on entry is broader. The attainment at entry for the majority of children aged under five into the reception class is average. Most children under five reach the standards expected for their age in language and literacy and mathematics, and a significant number exceed what is expected in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. These areas of learning cover the Desirable Learning Outcomes, which form the curriculum for children under five. The indoor and outdoor curriculum is a considerable improvement for these children since the last inspection identified weaknesses in provision and the school now provides a rich range of experiences. A strong emphasis has been placed on developing early reading skills in order to raise standards. To extend learning further, an increased emphasis on developing early writing skills is required to push standards higher.
2. The 1999 National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds in Key Stage 1 in reading were well below the national average at the expected Level 2 or above and the higher Level 3 or above. The school has made improvements in reading, and for seven-year-olds, the inspection findings are that standards are now average with more pupils attaining the higher levels. In writing, pupils' test results for 1999 were close to the national average at Level 2 or above and well above the national average at the higher Level 3 or above. Inspection evidence indicates standards in writing are now average overall and with no pupils, particularly the more able, attaining the higher levels. This is recognised by the school, and identified as a key priority is the need to improve writing consistently at the higher levels. In mathematics, the 1999 test results for pupils were above the national average at Level 2 or above and below that at the higher Level 3 or above. Inspection findings are that standards in mathematics are average for seven-year-olds but still with improvement to make at the higher levels, although much effort is going into challenging the more able pupils with some success at attaining higher levels. In science the school experiences much success for seven-year-olds, teachers' assessments indicated that attainment by age seven at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was above the national average and inspection judgements indicate that standards remain at that level. In the past, the school has suffered from weaknesses in early years' provision, which has affected its bid to raise standards consistently in reading, writing and mathematics. New staff are improving standards and raising expectations but there is still some lack of confidence and at times expectations could be higher. The headteacher is instrumental in raising the expectations of teachers in Key Stage 1, analysing data to show exactly what needs doing to raise standards higher, particularly in writing. Extra booster work has been provided to support this drive for seven-year-olds in literacy and numeracy.
3. For eleven-year-olds the 1999 test results in English at the end of Key stage 2 were above the national average at the expected Level 4 or above and well above this at the higher Level 5 or above. Inspection findings confirm that standards remain at this level in English. In mathematics, the test results for eleven-year-olds at Level 4 or above were close to the national average and the percentage attaining the higher Level 5 or above was well above the national average. Inspection judgements find that standards in mathematics are above average overall for eleven-year-olds. The impact of the numeracy strategy and booster work and the high expectations of teachers being effective in making pupils use their knowledge through applying their mental recall skills to solve a wide range of mathematical problems successfully. This challenges pupils very well and consolidates and extends their learning to a good degree. In science, the 1999 test results for eleven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that standards were below the national average at Level 4 or above and above average at the higher Level 5 or above. Inspection judgements confirm that standards are average overall for eleven-year-olds. The school's development plan includes a clear action plan target to improve provision and standards in science, particularly for older pupils.
4. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests in comparison to all schools, based on average

points scores which combine the levels, show that standards in English and mathematics are above the national average for eleven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2 and average in science. In comparison with similar schools, results at Key Stage 2, in English and mathematics are in line with the national average and in science they are below average. At Key Stage 1, results in comparison to all schools in 1999 are well below the national average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. The results in comparison with similar schools in writing were average and in reading and mathematics, these were below the national average for seven-year-olds. It is clear that children are now making a good start as they enter the school and are leaving at age eleven with good skills in English and mathematics. However, maintaining this momentum at the end of Key Stage 1 is not yet consistent, particularly for the most able.

5. The school has attained its 1999 targets for eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics. It is on course to do the same this year, although lower targets had been set due to the different abilities of the cohort. In particular, in mathematics, pupils are achieving at a higher level than that set by the targets for this year. This is due in part to the influence of extra booster work, the effects of the numeracy strategy, effective teaching, and more able pupils joining the class throughout the year. In English, pupils are maintaining the above average standards and exceeding the targets set.
6. The last inspection judged that the standards in English, mathematics and science for the then cohorts of pupils were broadly in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 and above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The trend over time in test results from 1997 to 1999 for English, mathematics and science for eleven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly in line with the national trend.
7. In this inspection in English, there are strengths in speaking and listening across the school with standards above average. Pupils respond well to questioning from teachers and are given good opportunities to talk about the different issues that are important to them in their lessons when personal and social matters are discussed. Work in literacy is aiding an improvement in reading as more emphasis is placed on reading in other ways rather than just individual reading. Pupils are now benefiting from a structured reading scheme as well as a broad range of books to be found in classrooms and the library to aid improvements. The school's range of fiction books is being extended but more are to be provided for its youngest pupils. Skills in writing are well developed by the end of Key Stage 2 and are above average. Pupils take part in numerous events to broaden their use of writing. At Key stage 1, there are some promising examples of extended writing but often basic mistakes in punctuation and grammar, although marked, are repeated over again, stopping pupils from extending their achievements and attaining the higher levels. Pupils, however, do well in learning spellings but extra effort is required to apply the skills learnt to the writing.
8. In mathematics, pupils, including higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2, are extended through challenging questioning consolidating what they know and applying this knowledge successfully. A good sample of pupils' work shows that they have made good progress across the mathematics curriculum to improve from Key Stage 1. There is some evidence of this challenging approach at Key Stage 1 and it is beginning to make an impact on improving attainment for more able pupils. The use of the numeracy strategy and its clear structure is effective at Key Stage 2 and is becoming so at Key Stage 1 although some class teachers are less confident in its use.
9. In science, there are strengths in the practical approach used at Key Stage 1 with pupils encouraged to investigate and to find out how things work. This approach is less well developed at Key Stage 2 as planning for activities is not so well matched to the range of abilities in the mixed age classes. This is identified for development by the school.
10. The school has made considerable improvements in pupils' achievements in information technology, design and technology, geography and music since the last inspection found serious weaknesses in attainment and progress. In information technology, pupils now attain average standards across the school and are benefiting greatly from the new suite of computers recently installed to enhance those already in all the classrooms. Many pupils have skills gained from their use of computers at home and the school is aware of the need to challenge and extend

pupils so that they achieve higher levels of competence, particularly in Key Stage 2. Greater use in literacy and numeracy lessons is required. The school is implementing its development plan strategy at present with regards to improving standards and use of information technology further.

11. In music, pupils' attainments are average at the end of Key stage 1 and above this by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils benefit from the expertise now of a music specialist for work involving the school choir and performances and this raises pupils' achievements. All teachers teach music using a published scheme for support but not all are confident in being able to extend pupils' learning when using it.
12. In design and technology and geography, pupils' attainment is now average. Design work is linked to interesting topics, such as the Millennium Dome and evaluating designs, for instance those for torches. In geography, the use of field trips enhances pupils' learning. Greater use could be made of the school's grounds and there are plans to do so.
13. The school has maintained its above average standards in art and physical education at both key stages. Pupils use sketchbooks very well to record their observations and show a good use of their imaginations across the range of their work on display. In physical education, the clubs provided extend the range of provision very well. All pupils learn to swim and make good progress. Good attention is given to links with science through thinking about the effects of exercise on the body.
14. Religious education has improved considerably from its unsatisfactory position at the last inspection and now meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus with pupils attaining appropriate standards. The interesting lessons encourage pupils to deepen their understanding of how to appreciate each other's opinions and different religions.
15. Pupils with special educational needs attain in line with the targets set out in their individual educational plans. They are making good progress in their learning, due to the effective and knowledgeable support which they receive. Their individual planning has been tightened up since the last inspection found this an area needing improvement.

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

16. The last inspection report reflected the high expectations of the school and parents in this aspect. It stated that pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good. Relationships across the school were very positive, whilst the personal and social development of pupils were good, and helped by the school's provision for personal, social and health education and educational visits. The new inspection findings indicate that attitudes and behaviour are now good, but are depressed by some poor behaviour and attitudes at the end of Key Stage 1 and the start of Key Stage 2 by a small minority of pupils with highly challenging behaviour problems. The personal and social development of pupils is very good and is a significant strength of the school, and has a positive impact on the standards attained.
17. Overall, the pupils are eager to come to school, and their purposeful and happy attitudes are distinctive features. In the early years children respond well to their teachers and listen attentively. They like their work and concentrate well. Throughout the remainder of the school, most pupils realise the importance of hard work to produce good results. They listen well, concentrate on tasks and allow lessons to proceed with high expectations and pace, when good teaching takes place. They confidently express opinions or articulate their feelings in discussions known as circle time lessons. They move easily between tasks and areas of the school without loss of time. Only at the end of Key Stage 1 and beginning of Key Stage 2 are these qualities less evident. Then, some poor attitudes of a small minority of boys affects the pace and productivity of lessons and spoils, albeit sometimes temporarily, a positive school experience for their fellow pupils.
18. The headteacher and governors have not been able to implement sufficient positive behaviour strategies to accommodate this small minority of pupils and has had to use exclusions, at a low level, as an ultimate sanction. However, the behaviour of most pupils is good and at times very

good. Pupils and teachers work in a calm and productive work atmosphere. Teachers exert a discreet and clear control and pupils rarely over-react. Around the school pupils conduct themselves sensibly and have a good awareness of self-discipline. Bullying is not an issue and there are no indications of pupils fighting.

19. A very distinctive feature of the school is the integration between pupils, parents and staff, within a village community. Hence, the quality of relationships is very high. Staff represent good role models. They form a strong team in creating an ethos of mutual respect and harmonious relationships, and there is consistent evidence of trust and empathy, both in and out of the classroom. The school's environment is extremely conducive to the social development of the pupils, as there are many areas where pupils can explore nature together or have calm reflective moments. Boys and girls play well together and are mindful of their impact on each other. They genuinely value each other, listen to and respect each other's opinions, and work and eat together amicably. They can appreciate each other when successful and will show concern for each other across age groups if in difficulties. Hence, there is a good awareness of pupils with medical conditions, which could require urgent action. Pupils are courteous and polite and will always hold doors open for visitors, who they welcome easily into the school.
20. The personal development of pupils is very good throughout their time in school. Pupils are encouraged to display their achievements throughout the school and all pupils have a personal development file, which they keep from their first days in the school. Weekly praise assemblies and a termly headteacher award further enhance this positive aspect of school life. The school has made significant progress in developing pupils as independent learners. Both in the classroom and around the school, pupils take responsibility for routine tasks and discharge them willingly and sensibly. They are very protective of their beautiful environment, through litter collection, and there is no graffiti. At Key Stage 2, there is an abundance of clubs and the school continues to add to the extra-curriculum activities menu over time. Residential trips are a highlight of the school year when pupils show an impressive amount of independence and bonding. Trips into the local community and to the Millennium Dome have led to curriculum enrichment and good displays. The school participates in the Mid-Somerset writing and poetry festival where it receives many awards.
21. The school has improved its level of attendance since the last inspection report, and it is now good. All classes have attendance levels above the national average. Unauthorised absence is sharply reduced to national norms from its former high levels, though this in part is due to holidays now being redesignated as authorised absence. Family holidays are a significant reason for authorised absence. The staff efficiently takes registers at the beginning of each session, and pupils are encouraged to use this administrative time for private learning. Registers are overall statutory and show a dedication to the task. Pupils are very punctual in arriving at school and lessons begin promptly. The school is supported by the educational welfare officer. There are no indications of any truancy.

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

22. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 90 per cent of lessons seen. It was satisfactory in 29 per cent of lessons, good in 41 per cent and very good in 20 per cent of those observed. Teaching was judged unsatisfactory in 10 per cent of lessons. The last inspection report highlighted a proportion of unsatisfactory teaching for the youngest children but overall it was satisfactory and often better. The weaknesses from the last report for those in the early years have been addressed successfully. There is a similar pattern of effective teaching overall in this inspection with pupils making good progress in well over half the lessons seen. Since then improvements have been made to planning by teachers with a whole-school format introduced which in most lessons addresses the needs and abilities of all pupils successfully. There are particular strengths in planning for literacy and numeracy lessons. However, teachers are aware that planning still requires further refinement in some instances, in particular in science at Key Stage 2 to help improve pupils' progress in learning. Overall, teachers make good use of day-to-day assessment to support their lesson planning.
23. The teaching of children under five in the reception class was consistently good and is enabling them to now have a very good start to their schooling. Work is well matched to the range of

abilities of all the pupils in the reception class. The teachers that share the class are imaginative and enthusiastic in their teaching being knowledgeable in the early years' curriculum and efficiently organised with good management skills of children's behaviour. This enables good progress to be made in learning overall.

24. For the youngest pupils and those in Key Stage 1, teaching in over half the lessons seen was good. It was satisfactory in the remainder with two lessons judged as unsatisfactory at the top end of key Stage 1. When teaching is good, teachers are confident in what they are teaching and have secure subject knowledge and this enables pupils to progress in their learning well. However, the good start being provided in the early years is not always built on successfully with some lessons lacking pace and progress with insufficient challenges for those pupils capable of higher attainment. At times, teachers lacked high expectations and learning was not pushed forward sufficiently, for instance in developing pupils' writing skills at the higher levels. When teaching was satisfactory, pupils made suitable progress, but this could be extended.
25. In Key Stage 2, teaching was very good or good in over half the lessons seen and in just over a quarter of these it was judged very good. It was satisfactory in most of the remainder with two unsatisfactory lessons seen at the start of the key stage. In the very good teaching pupils made rapid progress due to teachers' good subject knowledge and use of this to probe and question to extend learning further. In these lessons, teachers had high expectations of pupils' learning. When teaching was unsatisfactory the management and organisation of the class was not always successful with insufficient progress being made by pupils due to an ineffective use of time. Teaching is consistently good or better in the two classes at the top end of Key Stage 2.
26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. However, occasionally when teaching is unsatisfactory in lessons, this affects the progress of these pupils as well as the others. The challenging behaviour of this small group of pupils is not always managed successfully by teachers but it is improved when more adult support is provided to give individual attention to pupils. At times, the unsatisfactory attitudes of a small minority of pupils in the mixed key stage class affects the progress of other pupils. The school is seeking the help of the behaviour support team in overcoming this. Overall, pupils are well supported by their class teachers and classroom assistants. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy lessons. Across the school teaching in literacy and numeracy is having a consistent effect on extending pupils' learning, particularly in the two classes containing older pupils towards the end of Key Stage 2. However, there is room for improvement in Key Stage 1 as teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently high in extending learning at the higher levels.
27. The teaching in English was consistently good for the youngest pupils and in the two top classes in Key Stage 2, but some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the other two classes. The strengths in teaching are that teachers provide good role models for speaking, they explain tasks clearly, and read with expression; hence standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. In mathematics, teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 with one very good lesson seen and is good overall at Key Stage 2 with two very good lessons seen. The headteacher, as co-ordinator for the subject, provides very good teaching to support classes at the end of both key stages and this has a good impact on the progress made by all pupils, particularly those capable of higher attainment. Overall, progress in pupils' learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good by the end of Key Stage 2. Appropriate use is made of homework to support and enhance learning in English and mathematics.

28. In science, teaching is satisfactory with good features at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The strengths at Key Stage 1 are in the teachers' abilities to promote investigative work well and this ensures good progress while, at Key Stage 2, more work is required to provide further challenges in planning but progress is satisfactory. Information technology teaching is satisfactory overall with one good lesson seen in Key Stage 1. Teachers are enthusiastic about information technology and make good use of the new computer suite but there is a need to link further the work in classes, particularly in literacy and numeracy, as the school plans to do.
29. In the other subjects, significant improvements have been made, with the exception of art and physical education, as most were not represented fully in the curriculum at the time of the last inspection. No direct teaching was seen in art and geography. In art, the teachers' good quality displays provided evidence of the good standards and progress made by pupils and the subject has maintained its strong position from the last inspection. In geography, indications are that teaching enables pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in learning and this is enhanced by visits and trips. In design and technology, teaching is at least satisfactory with evidence of good features, these being in the interesting variety of projects which cover cooking and designing and making items. These range from designing and making pencil cases to older pupils designing and building their own Millennium Domes. Teaching in history is satisfactory overall with one good lesson seen in Key Stage 2, good use is made of artefacts by teachers to enrich learning with satisfactory progress made. In music, the quality of teaching is mainly good but one lesson, where pupils from both key stages were being taught, was unsatisfactory because pupils were not managed successfully and there was a lack of challenge in what they were asked to do. Consequently, pupils did not make sufficient progress in this lesson, although it is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good by the end of Key Stage 2. In physical education, teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Pupils benefit from teachers' confidence and knowledge in teaching the subject and this enables good progress to be made. A good range of games and activities are covered and teachers pay consistent and appropriate attention to warming up and cooling down and to health and safety.
30. Teaching in religious education is good and often very good but one unsatisfactory lesson was seen in Key Stage 1. Pupils make sound and often good progress in their learning overall. In the best lessons, teachers extend pupils' understanding and awareness of moral issues and their knowledge of Christianity and other religions. Lessons are made interesting and capture the imaginations of pupils, as for example, when they make their own Torah strolls. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen pupils made insufficient progress in their learning due to the inadequate management of pupils.
31. Throughout, most pupils enjoy learning and are well motivated. Most pupils make good overall progress in well over half the lessons seen. However, when teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils make insufficient progress in their learning.

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

32. The school fully meets statutory requirements in respect of the curriculum and all pupils are treated equally and fairly. Good progress has been made in terms of how the curriculum is planned since the school's last inspection identified serious weaknesses in this. Then the school was not providing pupils with a full and balanced curriculum and it failed to meet statutory requirements in a number of key areas, including religious education. The school has paid rigorous attention to addressing this issue. Of note has been the careful construction of a curriculum map for the subjects of the curriculum that ensures that pupils cover the various themes and topics in a balanced and thoughtful way. Detailed guidance materials for teachers to support the planning of each subject back these up. This effectively ensures that much of pupils' learning develops and builds on what has been covered previously as they move from class to class.



33. The curriculum for under fives in the reception class is of a very good quality. Again, since the school's last inspection, this is much improved. Careful consideration is given to the needs of the children and they are given every encouragement to learn through firsthand experiences and structured play. Planning is linked carefully to the guidance materials given to schools nationally for children of this age. The well-planned curriculum has a strong impact on the children's progress in their first few terms at school.
34. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils is good. The school has addressed the time imbalance given to certain subjects over the past two years yet, at the same time, has allowed sufficient coverage for the literacy hour and numeracy strategy to be implemented effectively. All pupils have daily access to these and they are having a positive impact on the standards that pupils attain and the progress they make. There is now full coverage of religious education and the school follows closely the materials given to them by the local education authority in respect of this. At present, while the school ensures that pupils have full coverage of the communication aspect of the information technology curriculum, less emphasis is placed on the monitoring and control elements part of this, particularly at Key Stage 2.
35. The school is careful to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have their particular learning and social needs addressed. Their individual learning plans are well structured and targets for improvement are clearly expressed. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when these plans were deemed not to be precise enough. Pupils are identified quite early and this helps to ensure that they make good progress towards meeting their targets. Where necessary, those pupils who have a statement of special educational need have their requirements fully addressed by the school.
36. The provision for out of school curricular activities is good. When planning the curriculum, all teachers are careful to include a day trip to places of interest to support the pupils' classroom learning. At present, while the range of extra-curricular activities for pupils after school is very good and covers sporting, musical and creative activities, they are limited to pupils of Key Stage 2 age. The school is aware of this and is currently considering ways in which the provision it makes could be extended to include the older Key Stage 1 pupils. There is a residential visit for all pupils in Key Stage 2 and this has a strong impact on their personal and social development. Complementing the curriculum further is the good use made by the school of visitors who have an interest or particular expertise to share with pupils. These have included a local artist, nurses and doctors, who give freely of their time to share aspects of their work with the pupils.
37. The provision made for pupils' personal and social education is very good. A well-planned programme of personal and social education takes place in many year groups. This includes regular opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of health and safety including the dangers of drug misuse and sex education. Of special note are the clear and regular opportunities provided for pupils to ponder and discuss issues that are of a personal nature to them. This is done through regular sessions where pupils in a class come together and sit in a circle to discuss and reflect how they may be feeling or how they could be more considerate towards others. There are some good opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. However, such opportunities could be more consistently provided in some classes. The new information technology suite offers clear opportunities for such skills to be developed once it is fully timetabled for use.
38. The school's provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Many very good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss issues of a moral nature and teachers are very sensitive to how certain subjects, such as English, can provide much scope for this. Assemblies complement this provision further with pupils, for example, being given the chance to discuss the importance of not wasting water and how water is so vital for others in different parts of the world. Pupils are given many very good opportunities to work and behave as members of a wider social group. These are visible through classroom activities, group discussions and the range of various sporting activities provided for pupils. The school has maintained its good provision in terms of developing the pupils' perception of culture. Religious education and art are effectively used in this respect to develop pupils' understanding of multiculturalism. Through assemblies, art, science, English and mathematics, pupils are given good opportunities for spiritual development, to ponder and develop their perception of the

beauty and wonder of the world in which they live.

39. The school takes its links into the local community very seriously and they are very good and positively contribute to the pupils' learning. The school's standing in the local community is high as it makes constant efforts to integrate, much to parents' delight. The Friends of Neston School provide an annual bonfire that has become part of the social calendar and the village is invited into the school at the summer parents' evening. There are very good links to the church of St Philip and St James, which is used for all religious festivals such as celebrating harvest, and the vicar is a governor. The school has good links with the village; for example, pupils participate in village events or sing, as part of the choir, to the older members of the community. Older pupils help to serve Christmas lunches to the Over Sixties Club. The school ventures further afield to enrich its curriculum particularly in history and geography and music and the use of the local swimming pool produces very good results. The school makes very good use of residential trips for very good learning and personal and social development opportunities, which produces a rich school ethos. Relationships with local schools are very good through the local cluster group, and this has led to effective art and mathematics development with advanced level students working in the school. Strong links with local schools ensure effective staff development and there are close links with the local secondary school. These have resulted recently in the creation of a large mural for children under five by older pupils from the local high school. Every opportunity is provided for pupils to raise funds for others less fortunate than themselves.

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

40. The last inspection report indicated that the provision for support guidance and pupils' welfare was good but had some weaknesses in special educational needs lesson planning, the monitoring of attendance, child protection, and had some health and safety problems as well as a non rigorous approach to recording accidents. The school has undoubtedly improved this aspect of school life through its efforts, and the overall provision is now functioning at a good level in line with its stated aims. However, there is still room for improvement in the application of good behaviour strategies and in some minor aspects of health and safety.
41. The high quality welfare agenda positively contributes to the good progress and development of all pupils. The headteacher and staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils through a close and secure integrated community. They display enthusiasm and dedication in discharging their pastoral role and in producing a strong and effective school ethos, which is greatly appreciated by parents. The close relationship of parents and staff in a village community helps to develop an encouraging teaching and learning environment and greatly assists the underpinning of the pupils and their personal happiness.
42. The knowledge and ability of the headteacher and staff to design individual strategies for each pupil's academic performance are effectively supported by procedures for monitoring progress and development. There is an improving implementation of the monitoring of progress and development of non-academic aspects. Each pupil has an achievement sheet, which contains details of all personal interests, and any deficiency in formal written procedures is adequately filled by discussions at staff meetings. The school has a good view of each pupil, so that outside professional agencies are appropriately involved for pupils with special educational needs. The school has good special educational needs provision, promoted by good individual educational plans that include attainable targets, which are reviewed termly with parents. All pupil-based information is well updated by the school administrative officer, and is sufficiently focused and meaningful to support any emergency. There is very good liaison and relationship between the village playgroup and Neston school before the transfer of children, and induction procedures are recognised as good by parents. The liaison with the secondary schools is especially good at transfer at age eleven, and parent and pupil anxiety levels are reduced to a minimum through the professionalism of the school.
43. The school has a sufficient range of support, guidance and welfare policies, which guide and direct its actions. There is an appropriate policy to cover equal opportunities, which is to be extended further with more detail relevant to the diversity of society today. Policies are implemented consistently across the school and with a good understanding by all staff to produce the desired results. The school welcomes outside agencies to support the pupils on a

routine basis or if there are specific problems. The input of the school nurse is especially effective and she provides invaluable help with parents regarding the sex education programme. The senior teacher co-ordinates child protection procedures and both procedures and vigilance are satisfactory. The school uses the Wiltshire guidelines and training for all staff has been adequate. There are appropriate support facilities from the outside agencies should this be required.

44. The school has high expectations on behaviour, and its procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour are good. The headteacher realises the importance of this issue and is in the forefront of promoting a positive behaviour culture in the school. The positive behaviour culture achieves very good results for most pupils, but the school's strategies are insufficient to counter some of the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and the start of Key Stage 2. Pupils are involved in developing or endorsing class rules at the start of the year, but the code of conduct is less well displayed throughout the school. The behaviour code is rich in rewards but is insufficiently balanced with appropriate sanctions for dealing with very challenging behaviour and now this is being tightened up by the headteacher and governors. Through the headteacher, the school is very vigilant in detecting and eliminating any bullying or inter-personal conflict.
45. The school has improved its attendance procedures and systems, which are now good. They are now producing good results in the last year, in which there has been an improvement in registers and coding of authorised and unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absence has sharply reduced to national norms. Parents are very aware of their statutory obligations and both pupils and parents are determined to attend school at the start of the day. However, the incidence of parents requiring holidays within the term is significant, despite the school's best efforts.
46. The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff, and the level of minor accidents is below national norms. This has been difficult to track, but the school has now recently corrected its former erroneous recording of minor accidents. The school has a trained first aider but this is insufficient for its growing number of pupils. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory but signs for fire instructions are variable in quality and fire extinguishers placement should be reviewed. The boys' toilets are well kept but there are only two toilet cubicles and a urinal for around 75 pupils including those under five. The grounds of the school are difficult to patrol but the school makes every effort to be vigilant and produce a safe environment. However, the school pond, although fenced, and sunken garden are still potential hazards for a determined child and the need for enhanced protection should be reviewed. The gate to the school's playing field, near the road, is not always kept closed for pupils' safety.
47. The school has continued to make good progress since its first inspection in respect of the ways that it assesses pupils' academic progress. As soon as children enter full time education at the age of five, they are assessed in terms of their early academic progress. This information is then well used by the two teachers of this class to plan work that matches their overall ability. At Key Stages 1 and 2, a range of procedures has been consistently implemented across the school to measure how pupils are progressing in many subjects of the curriculum. These include the use of various external tests to gauge the pupils' progress, for example, in reading. Teachers, on a half-termly basis, assess the pupils' progress at the end of each topic or theme that the pupils have been working on. From this, pupils may then be moved into different groups within each class for the next unit of work. This effectively ensures that the information gained is used to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Across the school, there is overall effective marking of the pupils' written efforts. In many subjects, for example, teachers are careful to offer pupils guidance as to how they may improve the quality of their work.

48. The school has good systems in place to report the degree of pupils' progress to parents. All pupils in the school have a reading diary and many parents take the time and effort to add comments of their own to this after they have heard their children read. The quality of end-of-year academic reports on pupils' progress is excellent. Not only do they contain all the information they should, but teachers take considerable time and effort in presenting parents with a full picture of the precise progress their children have made and what they could do in the subsequent academic year if the progress is to be maintained.

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

49. The last inspection indicated an overall satisfactory partnership with parents where most parents were happy with the school. The school was left with work to do in the area of parental complaints, improving information flows regarding pupils' learning and progress and particularly producing statutory annual reports for them and using the full talents of parents within the school. It has focused on many of these problems and now has an overall partnership with parents that is good.
50. The school has a very good reputation in the locality, with a growing number of pupils on roll with many making a significant daily journey from outside the catchment area. A very high level of parents now express approval for the school and they recognise and value the efforts of the headteacher, staff and the governors in developing all aspects. However, overall dissatisfaction levels persist at a moderately high level and two areas of significant dissatisfaction are now evident and have grown since the last inspection. There is a significant level of dissatisfaction regarding information on their children's progress, and on the school's working closely with parents. Approximately eight out of ten parents have very high expectations in these areas which, despite the school's very good efforts and major improvement, it cannot totally satisfy. These areas are also hangovers from the previous report.
51. The quality of information for parents is very good and is extremely detailed. Both the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are documents of high quality and are statutory documents with good presentation. Policies and procedures are well written and parents have free and uninterrupted access to these in the reception area. Other written communications are sufficient and respectful to the role of parents, and give them sufficient time to react. A major strength of the school's communications with parents is the access that they enjoy and the school has a strong commitment to be welcoming and listening. It is successful in allowing informal communications to flourish, particularly at the end of the day in the school playground or in classrooms, so those problems do not grow. It has now introduced an improved complaints procedure in its endeavours to try to reduce parents' anxieties. All formal open evenings are well attended except the annual governors' meeting for parents. The annual individual pupil reports to parents are excellent. The synopsis of the year's work is especially innovative and informative. Reports, at both key stages, give comprehensive and perceptive feedback into pupils' abilities in all subjects of the National Curriculum, and there is space for parents and pupils to express their feelings.
52. The school's aims wish to create a real partnership with parents and these are well implemented so that the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. It has an open door policy, whereby all parents are encouraged to enter the school at the beginning and end of the day and to come and play a role within the school. Parent volunteers and friends from the community provide an additional resource both inside and outside the classroom on a regular basis. Parents are an essential part of teaching pupils to swim, and they are seen around all classrooms and in the computer suite. Parent governors are enthusiastic, have curriculum or projects responsibilities, and show a good knowledge of the future challenges for the school. The Friends of Neston School are very active and play an important part in support of the school. They are hardworking and beneficial to the school, both financially and in terms of the integration of all parents, as well as enhancing the family ethos of the school.

53. The growth of the educational partnership is good. The majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement but a small rump of parents persists in having a minimal input to their children's education. The school has given instruction in literacy and numeracy for all parents and parents have a good view of topic work from the start of a term. Most parents approve of the present homework arrangements, but there is a fairly common agreement that they would benefit from homework diaries, to stimulate further a dialogue between teacher and parent. There is a close collaboration with the parents of special educational needs pupils and together they produce suitable individual educational plans, with targets which produce good progress.

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

54. The leadership and management provided by the recently appointed headteacher are very good. The headteacher knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well having previously been the acting head. The headteacher gives clear educational direction for school improvement and provides a strong commitment to high achievement in all aspects of the school's work. The school has undergone much change in staffing and to the curriculum since the last inspection in November 1997 highlighted serious weaknesses. In taking the school forward, the headteacher is well supported by a keen and enthusiastic staff. The close teamwork of all the staff and their shared commitment to school improvement is a strength of the school which has contributed significantly to recent developments in both provision and standards. The headteacher and most teachers have responsibilities covering the co-ordination of subjects and areas of school life. These they carry out in an efficient and enthusiastic way. There are two newly qualified teachers on the staff and as yet they do not carry any extra responsibilities; both are very well supported by the school. The leadership and management and the involvement of other teachers in taking on subject responsibilities have improved considerably since highlighted as weaknesses in the last inspection report. Together, they have made numerous improvements to subject policies, schemes of work and planning and monitor progress in these developments with the key aim of continuing to improve teaching and to raise standards higher.
55. The headteacher is an effective special educational needs co-ordinator. She knows all the pupils on the special needs register well and monitors the progress they make through the school. The headteacher carries out effective analysis of assessment data for all pupils and this is used to set targets for improvement in performance and to track progress. There is very good teamwork between the co-ordinator, teachers and classroom support assistants. This enables pupils to receive good support in the classrooms, especially in literacy and numeracy. The paperwork complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs and the planning for individual pupils has improved as it was considered to be lacking in detail at the time of the last inspection. The governor for special needs is well informed, meets the headteacher regularly and reports to the governing body. At present a key priority for the headteacher and governors is to work with parents to improve the attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of boys in the mixed key stage class.
56. The school's aims and values are very well reflected throughout its work and there is a very strong commitment to improvement. There is good equality of opportunity for pupils and a very good ethos for learning overall. The progress in improvements since the last inspection has been rapid and is very good. This inspection report identified five key issues leading to the judgement that the school had serious weaknesses. There were deficiencies in provision and in below average standards in the National Curriculum subjects of information technology, design and technology, geography, music and religious education. These have now been addressed and the curriculum and provision for religious education now meets statutory requirements. The provision and teaching for children under five and planning for them and those pupils in Key Stage 1 have been enhanced greatly to address what was lacking before. As detailed above many staff changes have taken place. In addition, the school has made improvements to items of a health and safety nature and any statutory requirements identified by the last report.

57. The governors contribute in many ways to the effectiveness of the school. They have a very good understanding of management issues and fulfil their responsibilities through the established committees very well. Governors and the chair of governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and along with the headteacher have a very clear direction for continued improvement and raising standards. The chair of governors has played a large part in taking the school forward from its position at the last inspection. Governors visit regularly and take part in a full range of school events. All governors have links with subjects and aspects of the curriculum. They are developing their monitoring role in this respect further with the addition of the literacy hour and numeracy strategy. Governors are aware of the school's performance in terms of National Curriculum test data and are involved in target setting. The governing body is meeting its statutory duties well. The governors' annual report to parents and the school's prospectus are both informative documents, which give a clear picture of the school. All appropriate policies are provided with terms of reference and a governors' handbook has been developed to support and clarify their role even further.
58. The school's development plan is a very good document, which identifies priorities for improvement and sets challenging targets to raise standards. It gives a clear and detailed plan for the subjects of the curriculum and identifies key targets to raise standards in English, reading and writing, mathematics and science at the higher levels. A key target is to expand information technology provision and raise standards. Other projects are included, such as the development of the grounds for scientific work and ongoing staff and governor training. Within this is incorporated the governors' action plan from the last inspection and it is well monitored by all involved to check on progress. The headteacher monitors teaching across the school and offers support as and when necessary as do the mentors for the newly qualified teachers.
59. The day-to-day administration of the school by the finance officer is very efficient and enables the headteacher to focus on teaching, supporting staff and curriculum developments, such as taking the lead in supporting the booster work and in teaching much mathematics. There is effective financial control and the minor recommendations from the most recent auditors' report, July 1999, have been acted upon. Indeed this report commented upon the high standard of efficiency in place. Financial planning is well organised and the headteacher and governors are clear about their spending priorities. The school has a very good understanding of the principles of getting the best value from all spending. Spending is monitored carefully and the school keeps a small contingency from its budget to cover any additional needs. Effective use of information technology is being used to support the efficiency of the school and it is being developed to improve pupils' learning. This aspect of the school's work has maintained its strong position since the last inspection.
60. Grants are being used very well, with the school recently successful in obtaining funds for information technology, grounds improvements and an additional teacher from September to reduce class sizes in this popular school. The school seeks to provide good quality resources and experiences for its pupils. Funding for pupils with special educational need is used effectively with additional support provided for all classes. It is noticeable that difficult pupils often respond better when supported individually or in small groups.
61. There are sufficient and suitably qualified staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and for under fives. Staff training and staff development take place linked to the school's development plan and identified individual needs. Teachers have much subject expertise between them but there is some lack of confidence in teaching some subjects, although staff are keen and go on courses to improve their expertise. Appraisal was not taking place at the time of the last Inspection but this has now been remedied. The staff handbook sets out clearly school routines.
62. The accommodation for teaching and administration is good. However, the addition of an extra class in September to ease the pressure of large classes, particularly the mixed key stage class, will take up the library area and this will be moved into a small room, which is now used for group and individual work. This means that the school will be very tight for space and the addition of an extra classroom would ease this. In the past the governors have succeeded in getting the school modernised in keeping with the surrounding area and a hall and new classrooms added to replace temporary classrooms. The whole school is well maintained providing a learning environment which is of a very high standard. There are extensive grassed

areas and sufficient hard surfaces for play and games, which include a playing field, under fives outdoor area and a pond. The provision and use of an under fives outdoor area was a weakness at the last inspection. This is now used daily for good quality planned outdoor play.

63. The school is well resourced for learning. Deficiencies identified at the last inspection have been addressed. In particular the school has invested in books and equipment to meet the needs of the literacy hour and numeracy strategy, a well-stocked library and an excellent computer suite. The school uses the County Loan Service well to supplement books and artefacts for work in geography and history and religious education. However, there is a shortage of artefacts in some areas but the school plans to develop these. Overall resources are good and there is good use of these to support learning, particularly for under fives indoors and outdoors and in information technology. The good quality display of pupils' work provided throughout the school enriches learning. The school has fairly high unit costs per pupil due to being smaller than average. However, it provides very well for its pupils in many aspects and overall achieves good attitudes, with much effective teaching and learning, and gives good value for money.

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

64. In order to raise standards higher and continue to improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should implement the school development plan as agreed and address the following:

- Improve the quality of teaching towards the top of Key Stage 1 and at the lower end of Key Stage 2 by:
  - Tightening up planning to extend learning for pupils of all abilities;
  - Making effective use of time and pace in all lessons;
  - Increasing teachers' knowledge and confidence in certain subjects;
  - Improving and extending strategies for managing pupils' behaviour;
  - Raising teachers' expectations, particularly in developing pupils' writing and providing greater challenge for the most able pupils.

*(Paragraphs: 2, 4, 7- 8, 11, 17, 24-26, 29-30, 40, 61, 79, 82, 123-125, 137-138)*

- In addition to the key issue above, the following minor points for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:
  - Attending to the minor health and safety issues raised in this report and increasing the number of qualified first aiders.

*(Paragraphs: 40, 46)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	41	29	10	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	159
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	30

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	11	4	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	3	4	4
	Total	11	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (59)	87 (67)	93 (82)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	11
	Girls	3	4	4
	Total	11	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (62)	93 (77)	100 (62)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	10	6	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	9
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	13	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (75)	75 (75)	75 (80)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (72)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	2	3	3
	Total	10	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (70)	75 (80)	75 (90)
	National	68 (65)	69 (59)	75 (69)

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	128
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	31.8

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	279,024
Total expenditure	275,592
Expenditure per pupil	1,734
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,019
Balance carried forward to next year	11,451

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	156
Number of questionnaires returned	80

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	38	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	46	5	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	67	9	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	54	13	1	1
The teaching is good.	52	43	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	47	22	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	34	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	58	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	32	48	18	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	34	56	6	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	54	3	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	47	12	3	6

*Due to rounding up not all percentages add up to 100.*

### Other issues raised by parents

There were 17 parents present at the parents' meeting. The inspection team looked into the few queries from parents. The team shared concerns about the behaviour of a small minority of pupils in the mixed key stage class. The school is working at ways of improving the behaviour of these pupils. The team noted that some parents would appreciate the use of homework diaries. They found that homework was sufficient and suitably managed. There was some concern if sufficient progress was being made in information technology despite recent improvements. The team found that the school's plans for information technology aimed to challenge pupils and extend learning. It found that the school works closely with parents and the annual reports written for individual pupils to be excellent in the amount of detail and National Curriculum levels given. The team judged that the school provides a very good range of after school clubs.

## **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**

65. The previous inspection found that children in the early years were not reaching the standards of which they were capable because teaching was unsatisfactory and there were a number of weaknesses in provision. Weaknesses identified included, limited learning outcomes in planning, insufficient opportunities for outside play, too much time spent on unstructured activities with a lack of adult intervention in children's learning, a lack of a structured approach to the teaching of reading and writing and poor management of children. This area has been a priority for improvement and now the provision in the reception class is very good and a strength of the school.
66. The reception class has 30 children and the two teachers who share the post are supported by a classroom assistant for most of the day. A significant number attend playgroups before joining the school. Children with Autumn birthdays are admitted in the September after their fourth birthday and others in January. In September 2000, all will join the school in the September after their fourth birthday. Children come to the school with a range of experiences, but overall, attainment on entry is average when compared nationally. This is borne out by the assessments carried out within the first few weeks. These early assessments provide teachers with a baseline for planning work and the continued assessment of progress. By the time they are five, most children are reaching the standards expected for their age in language and literacy and mathematics and a significant number exceed what is expected in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Progress overall is good because teaching is effective and there is a rich curriculum provision. At the time of the inspection, only five children were aged under five.
67. The progress made in personal and social development is good because the staff have effective skills in developing relationships and motivating children to participate. Both teachers are consistent in their positive approaches to children and set ground rules for behaviour and organisation, which they firmly insist upon. They plan daily activities for the development of children's personal and social skills, which will increase their independence and enable them to work successfully together. The staff are warm and encouraging with all children so that they feel secure quickly and become confident learners. Children talk happily to each other as they take part in activities and co-operate well as they play. They concentrate for quite long periods in whole-group sessions, for example in literacy and numeracy, and contribute eagerly to the discussions. They are responding well to whole-group times and learning not to call out even when they are bursting to speak. In a circle game, when only the child holding the pebble could speak, all the children expressed a rhyming word and they listened to each other well. In group activities they try hard and are good at taking turns and sharing resources. Their behaviour is good and they respond to instructions well. They are confident with the routines of both the classroom and around the school, for example, the assemblies and meal times. When starting tasks, they are able to find their own resources, such as scissors or glue, and they are good at managing their resources and respond quickly when told to put things away. Children are developing good attitudes to their work because the staff have high expectations for perseverance, concentration and independence. They are managing their belongings appropriately when changing for physical education and most can undress and dress themselves without much help. Overall, the children in reception are happy learners, confident and eager to achieve and a significant number are exceeding the learning outcomes expected by the time they are five. The teaching of this aspect is good. Teachers ensure that they provide opportunities for children to develop confidence, express their views, make choices and learn to co-operate successfully with others. Relationships are good.
68. In language and literacy, standards are broadly in line with what is expected for the age group and the majority are reaching the outcomes expected by the time they are five. A few children exceed these expectations in speaking and listening and reading. However, a significant number of children could be attaining more, particularly in writing. All the children know how to use books and that print carries meaning. They know basic words and use the pictures well to follow the story. They have knowledge of a range of stories and rhymes as they listen to these

on a daily basis. They are learning the names and shapes of letters and the sounds they make. There are some examples of children's early writing and, even those whose skills in forming letters are least developed, are trying hard because the tasks are made fun and enjoyable. The children are making progress because they experience daily literacy lessons, which are structured and well taught. They listen well to stories and are beginning to recognise patterns in rhyming words. Children are confidently answering questions and many express their views quite well by the time they are five. They listen well to explanations and instructions and are becoming accustomed to listen to each other. When working in groups or pairs there is a significant amount of interaction and talk. Reading skills are developing through literacy work, reading together familiar stories, working at letter sounds and learning common words. Children know a good range of stories and rhymes and when reading their early readers, they use the pictures well to tell the story. A few are using their knowledge of first letter sounds to guess words. By the age of five most can write their name. In language and literacy, children make good progress because the teaching is effective. A good range of group activities is provided to reinforce the whole-class work. Reading is fostered through the home-school reading scheme and parents are contributing well to this aspect of children's development. However, although a few children are writing a short sentence by the time they are five, overall the potentially higher attaining children could be writing at a better standard.

69. Children make good progress in mathematics because the teaching is good and they experience daily activities covering all aspects of the curriculum. By the time they are five most are attaining the outcomes expected and a few exceed them. They have a sound understanding of numbers to ten and can add on one or take away one successfully. When matching teddies, they demonstrate an understanding of big and little and when using computer games they show that they are learning the difference between longer, shorter, taller and smaller. They have a sound knowledge of common geometrical shapes and are gaining further knowledge using puzzles and construction toys and number matching games. They are learning to put sets in order and make simple repeating patterns and understand how to make pairs of objects. The daily teaching in numeracy lessons is good and carefully planned to build on previous learning. Teachers are skilled at questioning and ensure that children are learning appropriate mathematical language. Tasks are made fun and the children enjoy them and concentrate well. Tasks are suitably matched to the differing abilities and children are supported well to make the progress intended.
70. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, by the time they are five children are exceeding the Desirable Learning Outcomes, because the breadth of learning is good in the reception classes. When using the computer, children are becoming confident with the use of the mouse and can access a program by using the icons. They know the names of most colours. They are learning about the passage of time through the history of their close family. Good use is made of displays, such as of the 'Seaside' with old photos and artefacts for the children to explore. The early geography work is enabling children to learn about the weather and seasons and simple maps and plans. In science, they are learning about the need for light in order to be able to see and the changes that occur when shadows block out the light. They have drawn pictures of the things they do at night and gain much from an interactive display of bulbs, wires and batteries. Children have good skills in using materials to design and make and manage to join them together successfully; for example, to make collages and simple mobiles on display. They manage glue and scissors with confidence when making. They enjoy using construction sets and are imaginative with their play. The teaching is good and provides a rich learning environment to stimulate children's interest through much practical experience to develop their investigative skills.
71. Physical development is fostered through good teaching in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities. Most children make good progress and exceed the expected Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. Children become confident with scissors, paint brushes and pencils and use them safely. They can manipulate materials and join construction resources together with considerable dexterity. During outdoor play, they play safely using a range of apparatus and ride on toys well and with confidence and enthusiasm. Indoor physical education lessons are used well to familiarise children with a large space, and to develop their ability to move and stop according to instructions. Children are making good progress with body control as they balance, jump, stretch, curl and run. They learn to play simple games, such as a tag game with a ball target. Good use is made of demonstration and there are high expectations of

concentration and effort.

72. In the area of creative development, teaching is good and often very good with the results that children make good progress and a significant number exceeding the Desirable Learning Outcomes, particularly in the aspect of music. Music is taught each week. Children are developing a good sense of pitch through singing well planned songs and can follow a simple beat when playing instruments. They enjoy the challenge of the work and are very attentive. In artwork children have a wide range of experiences as well as the opportunity to paint and express themselves freely. By the time they are five, their drawings have a sense of form and details show that they are developing observational skills. They mix and manage paint with a good degree of control. In the imaginative play areas, such as the 'Bears' Cave', children have good opportunities to create and use their own ideas. Their attitudes to learning are good as they work together well.
73. The long-term curriculum for the under fives is very good providing a range of topics that enable all aspects of learning to be covered. They are appropriate in content for the age group. The policy for early years' development is a useful document, which supports the school's philosophy for the teaching and learning of under fives. The early years' co-ordinators have good knowledge and ensure that resourcing is good. In the reception class, time and resources are used effectively, including the classroom assistant and parent helpers when available. The pace of lessons is good and there is a good balance of teacher directed work and opportunities for children to choose activities and work independently. Lessons are carefully planned with clear outcomes for learning. Expectations for behaviour, attitudes and effort are high. The school's policy for positive behaviour management is being successfully implemented. Children with special educational needs are well supported by the effective teaching.

## **ENGLISH**

74. The previous inspection report stated that standards were well above the national average by the time pupils leave the school and average at the end of Key Stage 1. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show that the school is maintaining the good standards at Key Stage 2 with the percentage attaining the expected Level 4 or above, at eleven, above the national average, and the percentage attaining the higher Level 5 or above, well above average. These results were average when compared with similar schools. The Key Stage 2 trend in the school's average National Curriculum points scores for English from 1997 to 1999 is that the subject was broadly in line with the national trend for eleven-year-olds. At Key Stage 1, standards have fallen since the last inspection in reading but are similar in writing. In the 1999 test results in reading the percentage attaining the expected Level 2 or above was well below the national average and the percentage attaining the higher Level 3 or above was below this. In writing the percentage attaining Level 2 or above was close to the national average but that of Level 3 or above was well above this. When compared with similar schools standards in writing are similar but are below average in reading.
75. The school has given priority this year to the development of writing skills in order to raise standards at the higher levels. The work seen during the inspection indicates that above average standards are being maintained in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, standards are average overall but, particularly in writing, the potentially higher attaining pupils are not reaching levels of which they are capable. In reading, improvements have been made and, although a significant percentage are now reading at Level 3 or above, fewer pupils are reading within the higher range of Level 2 or above. Many pupils demonstrate higher than average achievement in speaking and listening in both key stages which reflects the judgement in the last report. Pupils with special

educational needs make good progress. They are helped by teachers and classroom assistants to clarify their ideas and are well supported both in the classrooms and when withdrawn for additional help.

76. In the reception class and in both key stages, pupils make good progress in the skills of speaking and listening and standards are above average overall, with slightly better attainment in listening. The good progress is the result of regular opportunities for discussion in whole-class sessions, which occur daily in most subjects of the curriculum. Pupils listen with interest and because the pace is usually good, the interaction between teachers and pupils is lively, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils speak confidently about their work and can explain their ideas well adding relevant detail. Higher attaining pupils are very articulate and confident. The weekly planned circle time discussion sessions, for talking about personal and social issues, are developing pupils' skills in expressing their ideas. Pupils listen carefully to the comments of others. In the reception class, the planning for the development of speaking and listening skills is included in all lessons and the pupils are being taught effectively. In the Year 4 and 5 class the teacher is skilled at probing pupils' understanding and in several lessons there were good examples of high expectations for specific descriptions and improved explanations by pupils, for example in mathematics when defining parallel lines and lines of symmetry. The teachers themselves provide good role models for speaking, explaining tasks clearly, reading with expression and articulating with clarity.
77. In Key Stage 1, there has been an improvement in the standards of reading. The indications are that pupils are making more rapid progress in reception and Year 1 as a result of the recently introduced reading scheme in the reception class and the good teaching of word patterns, rhyming words and spelling. There are useful systems for assessment in order to ensure that lessons build on learning progressively. However, in Year 2, the tasks set in the literacy hour are often not sufficiently challenging for the most able group and teachers' expectations are often not high enough. Listening to a range of readers individually and observations of reading in lessons indicates that standards in reading, although average, are not as high as they could be. The home-school reading scheme provides for pupils to take home books regularly and parents are usefully supporting reading and spelling. In reception, pupils are becoming confident with the building of short rhyming words and a small number of common words. Almost all know the letters of the alphabet and sounds. In Year 2, pupils are reading a range of texts linked with many areas of the curriculum and the majority manage to use their skills to access the computer, read simple mathematical instructions and investigate simply written text books to retrieve information, albeit they rely heavily on picture cues. They enjoy the textual work of the literacy lessons and have a sound knowledge of letter sounds when meeting new words and when reading individually. In Key Stage 2, pupils make more rapid progress as they move into the two top classes because the teaching is consistently good. Year 6 pupils, when reading texts which advertise commodities, demonstrated their competence when reading aloud, of their understanding of the text and ability to use skills such as skimming. Many individual pupils read with expression, fluency and confidence. Their good skills enable them to work more effectively in other subjects, for example mathematics and history.
78. A major investment in books both for the classrooms and the library is supporting pupils' interest in reading and books. Individual pupils who read to the inspectors stated that they enjoyed books and many could talk about favourite authors. Pupils enjoy reading in whole-class sessions and opportunities to use the library.
79. The development of writing and raising standards has been a key target for the school this year. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is good and, while satisfactory in Key Stage 1, a significant number of pupils are not consistently producing work of a higher standard. In reception, pupils are writing a few short sentences but, at this end of the year, extended work could be expected from many. In Year 1 writing is progressing well. Pupils can spell a number of common words, put in full stops and capital letters and write with a sequence of ideas. In Year 2 pupils write for a range of purposes; letters, stories, sets of instructions, descriptions of characters in their stories and poetry. They can use simple dictionaries. While progress is overall satisfactory in lessons, many pupils make the same kinds of errors in their work and do not improve with practice,

for

example, able pupils omitting the use of full-stops and capital letters. Pupils in Year 2 are becoming practised at writing poetry. They find this enjoyable and are developing a good sense of rhythm. However, work produced in lessons was not of a high quality because teacher expectations were low. Literacy lessons are supporting pupils' understanding of grammar and punctuation successfully but this is not always translated into their writing. Teachers provide interesting tasks for pupils to consolidate their learning and support writing with useful word banks and other resources. In the Year 1 and 2 class, tasks often provide opportunity for group work and while this is useful pupils do not always have sufficient time to work alone as it is easy for the dominant pupils to do most of the work. Overall the teaching is effective for reception and Year 1 but it is not always sufficiently structured and demanding for Year 2.

80. In Key Stage 2, older pupils in Year 4, and those in Years 5 and 6, are making good progress in their writing. This is because the work is well structured, carefully matched to pupils' ability and teaching is sharp and effective. The most able pupils in Year 3 are not producing work of which they are capable because teaching is not consistently building on skills. In all classes pupils use their writing skills across the curriculum well, which is supporting the development of their vocabulary and providing opportunities for different styles of writing. In both of the two top classes, there are examples of high quality writing. In Year 4 and 5 pupils have produced exciting newspaper articles using a direct reporting style with well-expressed complex sentences and description which interests the reader. These include stories titled, 'Kingswood critters take the lead', 'Blazing bonfire night', and 'Riotous rugby' where everybody had a brilliant time. In Year 6, there are examples of purposeful letters using good direct speech, the presentation of an argument for and against fox hunting and descriptive prose, such as 'Blizzard hits the west country.' Much of the work examined shows that language structure, spelling and punctuation are well taught and by the end of the key stage pupils have a good grounding in this. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson seen, pupils were using this to good effect when writing fliers to advertise. Handwriting improves as pupils move up the school and by Years 5 and 6 work is well presented and most pupils use a neat joined style.
81. Overall, pupils' attitude to English is good, in three-quarters of the lessons observed it was good or very good. They enjoy whole-class lessons and are enthusiastic when discussing texts. They are eager to answer questions and are good at taking their turn and listening to the views of others. However, in the mixed key stage class there are a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour who often disrupt teaching. Similarly, in this class, some pupils do not always give of their best and waste time. Most pupils move to activities quickly and settle to their tasks without fuss. Most work at a good pace particularly when the work is suitably challenging but within their capabilities. They persevere with difficult tasks, for example in Year 1, when groups of pupils found vocabulary tasks hard but tried their best to achieve. Pupils are learning to access books and dictionaries and manage their work sensibly.
82. The quality of teaching is consistently good in the reception class and the two top classes in Key Stage 2, but some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the other two classes. The daily planning is good, detailing what is to be learned, the methods for teaching and the different tasks for the differing abilities. A good strategy used by all teachers is that the main objectives for learning are displayed on the board and clarified to the class at the start of the lesson. Often, teachers make reference to these during the lesson in order to keep the pupils focused, for example in Years 5 and 6 when emphasising the aim of using persuasive language. Teachers are skilled at questioning and involving all pupils in class discussions. They are lively when reading from the texts and provide clear explanations. In all classes relationships are good and in most, pupils are managed well and staff have high expectations of concentration and behaviour. In the best lessons, activities are challenging and well matched to pupils' needs, groups are managed effectively and teachers use support staff to advantage. English resources are all used to effect and in most lessons there is a brisk pace and sense of urgency to achieve. In the unsatisfactory teaching, which occurred in the top end of Key Stage 1 and the start of Key Stage 2, the main weaknesses were linked with the management of pupils, and the planning for tasks and timescales. Furthermore, the scrutiny of work shows that in these classes there is sometimes insufficient challenge for the most able pupils and low expectations for higher attainment. The



literacy hour is planned appropriately in most classes. Teachers have a sound subject knowledge overall and use effective methods for teaching. Pupils' work is regularly marked and the very good procedures for the assessment of progress are being used well to plan for progression in learning. However, this aspect requires fine-tuning in order to provide more effectively for reading and particularly writing in Key Stage 1.

83. The subject has been given priority by the school since the introduction of the literacy hour and the present co-ordinator, who is new to the school, has been effective in providing very useful policy guidance for teaching and assessment and identifying further improvements for the staff. For example, providing a system of writing frameworks intended to support consistency in approach and progression in learning. The present targets for further improvement are useful resulting from the monitoring of pupils' work, teachers' planning and the results of the national tests. The systems for assessment and recording of progress are good. Teaching is supported by a good range of books and resources. The library area is attractive, contains good quality fiction and non-fiction books and is used well by all classes. While, overall, the subject is managed well, the weaknesses identified in Key Stage 1 are not yet addressed successfully, although extra booster work has been supporting this.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with the national average by the end of Key stage 1 and are above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. This presents a similar picture of standards as those reported on at the time of the last inspection.
85. The school's National Curriculum test results for 1999 showed that the percentage of seven-year-olds reaching the expected Level 2 or above was above the national average but at the higher Level 3 or above the percentage was below the national average. The average point scores, taking these levels together, give results below the national average and well below in comparison to similar schools at Key Stage 1. Inspection judgements, based on lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work and talking to pupils and the co-ordinator, are that standards are improving and overall are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. A key aim of the school development plan is to raise the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels and to challenge those capable of higher attainment to extend their learning even further. Much effort has gone into extra booster work being provided for some pupils in Year 2 and in developing pupils' mental recall abilities to ensure that they are able to apply different strategies to problem solving in order to improve the numbers reaching the higher levels.
86. At Key Stage 2, the test results for 1999 showed the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above to be close to the national average but at the higher Level 5 or above, results were well above the national average. The inspection judgements, based on lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work and talking to pupils and the co-ordinator, are that standards are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 for a substantial majority. The average point scores give results in line with the national average and average in comparison to similar schools. The Key Stage 2 trend in the school's average National Curriculum point scores for mathematics from 1997 to 1999 is that despite high results in past years, the subject was broadly in line with the national trend for eleven-year-olds. The school has attained the targets set for eleven-year-olds in 1999 and although these are set lower this year to reflect the abilities of the cohort, the indications are that they will be exceeded with pupils doing better than planned for. This in part is due to the effective teaching, booster work for Year 6 and the rigours of the numeracy strategy focusing on oral work, which consolidates understanding and makes pupils apply what they know to solve problems very effectively.
87. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. The strong emphasis being placed on pupils using mental recall skills to solve problems is ensuring that they think quickly and use the most suitable strategies to find out the answers. This consolidates pupils' knowledge and understanding across the mathematics curriculum and is becoming particularly effective for challenging and extending the learning of higher attaining

pupils at both key stages. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and this enables them to make good progress in line with their abilities.

88. Pupils are confident in their use of numbers. The youngest pupils can count on and back to 20. They can make patterns, for example of two using different coloured counters and beads. Pupils progress to counting using numbers up to and beyond 100, they make patterns using number squares and can count on and back from any given number. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can halve and double numbers. They have a sound understanding of addition and subtraction and shape and measurement work. As they move into Key Stage 2, pupils delight in taking part in mathematical challenges, such as planning a route using coordinates. They begin to work with bigger numbers, doubling hundreds, tens and units. Pupils' work in shape is extended to labelling lines of symmetry and finding out about irregular shapes. Pupils learn about angles and can find the area of different shapes. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils progress to working with fractions and decimals. They can place fractions into an ascending order of size and convert fractions to decimals. Pupils have a good knowledge of rounding up or down numbers. Effective teaching ensures that pupils have built up a good understanding of different mathematical concepts over past years and that they can draw on this to solve a wide range of problems. Pupils' work at Key Stage 2 is of a good standard and is well presented and shows good progression across the mathematics curriculum. For all pupils, there are good links with science and geography for work on handling data with pupils able to produce a range of bar charts and graphs of increasing difficulty as they progress throughout the school. There is evidence of use of information technology in this respect and for shape work and there are good plans to extend this further.
89. Pupils have good attitudes overall to their learning and most enjoy their lessons. Support for those pupils experiencing some difficulty in their work is good and has a strong impact on enabling them to succeed. Pupils at all levels are able to talk about their work with each other and share ideas when tackling tasks. Teachers encourage pupils to share their ideas.
90. Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 with one very good lesson seen. It is good overall at Key Stage 2 with two very good lessons seen. A key feature of the teaching is the very good support of the co-ordinator, the headteacher, in teaching lessons and supporting the work going on at the end of both key stages. In the very good lessons, pupils' learning was extended, particularly higher attainers, through challenging questioning which probed their understanding of mathematics effectively. Learning was made fun, pace was good and pupils were excited by the tasks set. In the lessons seen, teachers demonstrated a thorough understanding of the numeracy strategy and most could move with confidence between tasks, able to make pupils think of different ways to solve the same problem and to find the most effective methods.
91. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the strong position of the subject, particularly at Key Stage 2. It has built on this and successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and is extending its use of information technology for data handling. The subject is very well co-ordinated by the headteacher who gives very good support throughout the school in teaching, monitoring and mentoring new staff and those less secure with the new numeracy strategy. There is a good action plan for the continued development of mathematics and to make improvements in standards at the higher levels as these are not yet high enough, particularly at Key Stage 1, which forms part of the school's development plan. A key target for improvement is to increase the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 or above at Key Stage 1 and Level 5 or above at Key Stage 2. Assessment is well used throughout for the analysis of test data to track progress, set individual and whole-school targets for improvement and to aid planning for all abilities. A success this year has been the additional booster work provided in mathematics for seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds to raise standards in the levels achieved by pupils. The school aims to continue this initiative, funded by the government for the Spring term, from its own resources. There are good links with other subjects, such as art for pattern and shape work, and science and geography for data handling to store and extract information using graphs and charts. Homework is suitably used to consolidate and extend learning. The subject is well resourced and pupils are encouraged to use equipment to help them in their work.

## SCIENCE

92. The findings from this inspection indicate that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' overall attainment in science is above the national average. Pupils' investigation skills are higher than the national average. The results of the end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments for 1999 indicate above average standards and inspection findings confirm this. Inspection findings indicate that standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the national average. Although test results from 1996 show that standards have been above the national average, those in 1999 were just below the national average at the expected Level 4 or above but above the national average at the higher Level 5 or above.
93. The previous inspection report stated that standards were in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average by the end of Key Stage 1. This inspection indicates improvement at Key Stage 1 and maintenance of standards at the higher level by the end of Key Stage 2. The Key Stage 2 trend in the school's average National Curriculum points scores for science from 1997 to 1999 is that the subject was broadly in line with the national trend for eleven-year-olds. However, although results are better at the higher Level 5 or above for eleven-year-olds the pupils' test results for 1999 are below average for similar schools.
94. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. Progress slows a little in Key Stage 2, being satisfactory overall, due primarily to the specific planning of pupils' work to meet the ages and abilities of pupils in the mixed aged classes. Consequently, this affects the standards that pupils are currently attaining but the school has plans to address this. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support throughout and make sound progress in their learning.
95. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a very secure knowledge and understanding of what is meant by a 'fair test' and present the results of their simple investigations in a clear and logical manner. Their understanding of particular scientific ideas is good. Evidence from pupils' books suggests, for example, that not only are they able to explain the differences between natural and man-made light, but they know light travels quickly and in straight lines. Pupils are able to check the absorbency of materials such as sugar or tissue paper and in their knowledge of different materials, pupils are well aware that there are different types of rocks such as slate, pebbles and marble. Pupils know how to construct a simple circuit and that electricity can be dangerous yet many everyday objects need it as a source of energy. Pupils make good progress in learning scientific ideas as they move through Key Stage 1. This is significantly supported by the good use by teachers in using investigations as part of their overall teaching of science.
96. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make secure progress in their perception of exploring scientific ideas through investigation work. Many examples were seen of pupils recording their work through the careful use of charts, diagrams and bar graphs. Pupils have a secure grasp of living things and are aware of the need to lead and maintain a healthy lifestyle through eating sensible foods and taking regular exercise. Their knowledge of materials is satisfactory, and they are aware that many solids, liquids and gases consist of particles. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils considered the impact that the lighting of certain materials has on their structure and appearance. Most are able to draw simple circuits but talk less confidently about conductors and insulators. Pupils' current knowledge about the Earth in space is patchy. However, they have a secure awareness of magnets and forces and understand gravity is an example of a force. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the key stage but for higher attaining pupils this could be extended. In part, their progress is sometimes hindered by the fact that they are sometimes presented with work that is the same as for younger less able pupils and does not always extend sufficiently their lines of scientific enquiry.
97. Evidence indicates that teaching is satisfactory with good features in Key Stage 1. Effective use is made of learning resources to enliven activities and this ensures that the pupils develop good attitudes to the subject. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and often expect them to learn scientific ideas more commonly found in Key Stage 2. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and appreciate well the need for young children to learn new ideas through a 'hands-on' approach. In Key Stage 2, while some teaching is very good, the overall quality is satisfactory. In one good lesson for Year 4 and 5 pupils, the teacher made very good use of

questions such as 'Can you explain your answer in a more scientific way?' Such questioning strategies really probed and challenged pupils to think about and explain their understanding. Teaching could be enhanced in Key Stage 2 by greater recognition by teachers of the range of ability and ages of pupils when planning their work. Often the work is too similar for all pupils and this can slow the progress that higher attaining pupils in particular could be making. Regular assessment is made of the pupils' knowledge by half-termly tests at the end of a particular theme. This provides teachers with good information about the rate of progress pupils are making. At present, too little use is made of information technology to support pupils' learning, however, the extension of this is already planned for by the school.

98. There is purposeful management of the subject and developments continue to be made, for example in whole-school planning, since the school's first inspection. The co-ordinator is well aware of standards in the school and what aspects of the subject could be improved even further. As part of the school development plan an action plan for science has been devised and if implemented effectively, offers much scope to raise standards and the quality of provision even further. At present, the co-ordinator has limited opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching as this is not on focus, although she does monitor and evaluate the curriculum planning of her colleagues. The range of learning experiences is enhanced further by good opportunities provided for pupils to visit places of interest that offer a scientific slant such as the local 'Technique' Exhibition.

## **ART**

99. Due to timetable arrangements during the week of the inspection, no lessons were observed. Evidence from displays, samples of work, links with other subjects, talking to pupils and the co-ordinator, indicates that standards achieved are above what is expected for age and against National Curriculum levels by the end of both key stages. Pupils make good progress in their learning in all aspects of the art curriculum. There are good links to many other subjects, for example, English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology and religious education. The school has maintained its standards and built on its provision since the last inspection. It has improved weaknesses in teachers' planning across the school by tightening up on what is to be taught to give more consistency to lessons taught throughout all classes.
100. Pupils experience a rich curriculum across the school and are encouraged to use their knowledge of taught skills in a creative way, which develops their imaginations well and produces much individual work of a good standard. The youngest pupils are provided with many opportunities to paint, draw and make. They learn about the different styles of famous artists and delighted in making their own pictures based on the lines and squares favoured by Mondrian when using the computers. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are producing a range of work to a good standard; for example, pupils' pattern work showing contrasting light and dark tones. Throughout Key Stage 2, this good start is built on successfully with pupils showing considerable skills in their observational drawings when using pencil to convey different textures. Good use is made of sketchbooks for designing and recording observations. Pupils deepen their study of different artists and this ranges from the work of Van Gogh to the modern style of the artist, Andy Goldsworthy.
101. Evidence indicates that the quality of teaching is at least good overall. Teachers display pupils' work to good effect in their classes and around the school. Pupils appreciate the care taken over the display of their work and this encourages them to do their best and attain the good standards evident. Pupils enjoy talking about their work on display and explaining how they created their pictures. They have good attitudes to their work in art and appreciate each other's efforts. Teachers make good use of links with other subjects to enhance and extend pupils' learning; for example, pupils making drawings of stick people in mathematics to show an understanding of different angles.
102. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator who sets a good example in the standard of display expected throughout the school. Teachers are now supported by a policy and whole-school planning which provides for progression across all classes throughout the school. Teachers' planning is monitored to ensure consistency in pupils' learning. The aim is to develop

a greater use of three-dimensional work but there were some good examples of clay work on display during the inspection. Resources provided are sufficient and of good quality. Pupils are encouraged to look after them and this they do well. Good use is made of visiting artists and workshops to enhance learning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103. Evidence from one lesson observation, displays, samples of work, links with other subjects, talking to pupils and the co-ordinator, indicates that standards achieved are in line with what is expected for age and against National Curriculum levels across the school. Pupils at both key stages and abilities make satisfactory progress in their learning as they move through the school. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection found unsatisfactory standards and provision. Good links are made to other subjects, such as measurement and shape work in mathematics, the use of light in science and a drawing in art.
104. Pupils across the school learn to design, make and evaluate. The youngest pupils have designed and made various mobiles. They use construction kits to build with confidence. In Key Stage 1, pupils have designed strong structures and made different puppets. At Key Stage 2, pupils have designed and made pop-up books and wrapping paper. They have used their sewing skills and different materials to make up their designs for purses and pencil cases. By the end of the key stage, pupils have progressed to finding out about how to market their designs; for example, pupils have been marketing the sandwiches which they have made. Good use is made of sketchbooks to try out designs. All pupils have the opportunity to cook and learn about healthy eating and the value of eating fruits and vegetables.
105. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory with evidence of good features. In the lesson seen pupils in Key Stage 2 were encouraged to think about what makes a good design when studying the designs of a number of different torches. Teachers link work to pupils' interests successfully, such as when designing and making a Millennium Dome. A good range of the pupils' finished work is well displayed throughout the school. Pupils show good attitudes to learning and are keen to talk about their finished work and to explain the processes which they went through to design and make their products.
106. The subject is well managed by the present co-ordinator. Since the last inspection, whole-school planning has been developed to provide a consistent curriculum across the school. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance is used for a scheme of work and units of work are selected to use each term. Resources are suitable and there are plans to improve the storage of these.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

107. Pupils at both key stages and abilities make satisfactory progress in geography and attain the standards expected for their age in relation to the levels of the National Curriculum. The school has raised standards since the last report. At that time, they were deemed to be below average and the school was not teaching the subject in sufficient detail. Much work has gone into developing the subject since then and this has had a positive impact on the progress pupils make and the standards they attain.
108. At Key Stage 1, pupils are able to draw simple maps and know that on travelling to school they will pass particular geographical features such as farms and shops. They are aware that the capital of England is London and they appreciate the need for a compass. By the end of Key Stage 2, they are able to interpret maps with more assurance and appreciate why grid references are important features of any map. Of note, are the good opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of a moral and social nature in respect of their geographical understanding. Pupils discuss the impact of pollution on the landscape and the impact that housing and business developments have on the countryside. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the geographical features of Neston and the village in which they live. Pupils develop a sound appreciation of how people in other countries live their lives and they are aware, for example, that the lifestyles, landscape, climate and pastimes are different in the Gambia than in Britain. At present, there is some under-use of the school's grounds to develop

the pupils' knowledge of fieldwork. However, more opportunities of this kind are planned and these will assist greatly in pupils developing a more extensive range of practical skills.

109. No teaching of geography was seen during the inspection and no judgement can be given therefore on the overall quality. Evaluation of teachers' plans strongly suggests that the pupils get access to a sufficient range of geographical learning experiences. Pupils' work suggests that they have good attitudes to the subject and enjoy learning about the features and lifestyles of people in countries other than their own. In some classes, there is some evidence of over-use of commercially prepared worksheets and this can restrain the pupils' own ideas and lines of enquiry. At present, owing to the recent implementation of the new equipment, the impact that information technology can play in developing pupils' geographical skills and in terms of pupils presenting their work and researching information is less developed.
110. The subject has been well developed since the last inspection by the co-ordinator and teachers. A clear and comprehensive curriculum map which shows the topics and themes that pupils are to explore over two years is now in place and this is further supported by materials to guide teachers in their planning. Time for the subject has been enhanced since the last report and there are sufficient resources to support teachers. The local area supports pupils' geographical development well.

## **HISTORY**

111. Pupils at both key stages and abilities make satisfactory progress in history and attain the standards normally expected for their age in relation to the levels of the National Curriculum. Due to time constraints, the school has not been able to maintain the same high standards as noted in the previous report. However, this reflects the increased attention to literacy and numeracy and ensuring that other subjects receive a more equitable amount of time so that pupils receive equal and full access to a broader curriculum. This has resulted, for example, in increased time given to history in Key Stage 1 and this has had a positive impact on the standards that pupils attain by the age of seven.
112. Key Stage 1 pupils develop a sense of chronology by learning about famous people who have lived in the past. They recall famous people and what they are renowned for. They know, for example, that Florence Nightingale is famous for her work in developing nursing and that she performed sterling acts of nursing during the Crimea War. They appreciate well how housing has developed over the centuries from castles of the Norman era to modern day homes. Pupils know that facts about the past can be gathered and explored from a range of different sources that include books, photographs and, in many cases, from people older than themselves such as their grandparents. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 1.
113. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils gain an appreciation of how life in Britain has changed owing to the various invasions over the past millennium. Pupils know, for example, that Anglo-Saxons invaded this country, settled and farmed following the demise of the Roman Empire. They appreciate that the Vikings followed the Anglo-Saxons raiding, yet at the same time eventually settling and bringing their own culture to these shores. Pupils are able to describe how lifestyles such as food, clothing, pastimes and housing have developed over the years, through the Victorian era to the current day. As they move through the key stage, pupils can make inferences and draw conclusions about the past from exploring a range of historical sources. These include diaries, photographs, accounts and records. Pupils use books effectively as part of their historical studies. At present, however, owing to the stage of development in terms of where the school is in respect of information technology, pupils are not yet using fully such equipment to explore historical data in the form of compact discs, although this is planned for.
114. Limited teaching was observed during the inspection but indications are that it is satisfactory overall. In the one good lesson seen, which was, in Key Stage 2, particularly effective use was made of educational drama, as pupils had to explore, discuss and work in role as Vikings preparing to invade England. This effectively allowed pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, working collaboratively in a small group as well developing their knowledge of the past. Evidence from pupils' books suggests a slight over-dependence on commercially prepared

worksheets. Across the school, teachers are aware of the importance of display as a means of extending pupils' learning about the past. In many classrooms, displays consist of artefacts, photographs, accounts and books about the past. These have the result of stimulating pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject, which is good. At yet, limited use is made of information technology to support pupils' work although some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use a word-processing package to write in role. Good use is made of educational trips to support pupils' learning.

115. The co-ordinator, new to the role since the school's last inspection, has a good overview of the planning for the subject, but monitoring of teaching is less emphasised at present. An action plan has been devised for the subject's continued development and improvement, which includes the development of computer use. Careful thought has been undertaken by the co-ordinator and teachers, in ensuring that the history curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced for all pupils, which was noted as not being the case at the time of the school's last inspection.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

116. By the end of both key stages, standards of attainment are in line with the expected levels of the National Curriculum. The school has worked hard to improve the level of provision for information technology since its last inspection. At that time, standards and the quality of pupils' learning in the subject were found to be below what would normally be expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. Of major significance has been the way the school plans pupils' learning and, recently, the heavy investment by the school in providing a suite of computers that contains much up-to-date equipment.
117. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are confident in using the computer to support their learning. Their basic understanding of the keyboard is secure and many of them are able to use a mouse confidently in loading and accessing different parts of a computer program. Many use a word-processor to type simple text and then use the facilities within such programs to alter the size, appearance or colour of a piece of text. Pupils use simple art packages ably and their perception of control technology is developing satisfactorily through regular use of programmable toys.
118. By the age of eleven, pupils develop their knowledge of word-processing by being able to incorporate graphics into their text and manipulate this graphic in terms of its size or location on a page. Pupils check the accuracy of their text by using the spell checking facilities and improve the appearance of their typewritten efforts by using the alignment keys to centre or right align their address in a letter they may be writing. Their understanding of how computers can assist in the manipulation of data is secure. Good opportunities are provided for them, for example, to use a simple spreadsheet as part of this work. Pupils' understanding of control technology is the weaker aspect of their attainment. At present, few pupils are able to use programmable languages programs or use modelling equipment as part of their studies of science or design and technology.
119. In both key stages, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. However, that for higher attaining pupils could be greater. As they move through both key stages, pupils gain an increasing confidence in using the computer independently and in making choices as to the best program to use as part of their learning. Good gains are being made by many pupils, including those in Key Stage 1, in their understanding of how the Internet can be explored as a means of supporting their studies. Many examples were seen during the inspection of pupils openly interrogating particular web sites to gather information. Pupils make good gains in their learning of the impact that information technology generally is having on their lives. They appreciate well, for example, that e-mail is a quick and valuable tool for communicating and sending messages to all parts of the world. Overall, progress, particularly by pupils in Key Stage 2, in developing greater knowledge of control technology is less well developed. Older, more able pupils could handle more challenging work in this regard. The school is aware of this and a key part of its school development action plan for the subject is to challenge pupils of all abilities, to improve progress and to raise standards higher.
120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with one good lesson seen in Key Stage 1. This is

an improvement on that noted at the time of the last inspection. Through a well-planned staff development programme, teachers have gained increased confidence in using information technology equipment as part of their general teaching strategies. Work and activities are well chosen and reflect the pupils' ages and abilities. Teachers are enthusiastic about using information technology and this impacts well on the pupils' own attitudes to learning which are highly positive. The teaching of pupils to use and explore the Internet is good and this impacts well on the good progress many pupils make in this aspect of their learning. Teaching could be improved further if greater attention was paid to using information technology equipment during the course of other lessons – particularly literacy and numeracy. In addition, some lesson plans do not yet highlight sufficiently the specific skills pupils are to learn during the course of a lesson. The planning of learning for pupils with higher attainments does not yet sufficiently extend what many of these pupils already know, can do and understand.

121. There is good management of the subject and a strong plan for improvement provided. New planning materials for teachers have been devised and this ensures that pupils' learning develops in a systematic way as they move through the school. The quality of resources for the subject is excellent. These have been improved recently by the use of additional grants given to the school and by further funds donated by the Friends of Neston School. These have enabled the creation of a bright and highly attractive information technology learning bay providing very good access and opportunity for pupils to use the equipment both as part of everyday teaching and in extra-curricular activities. The governors, and particularly the chair of governors, have spent much of their own personal time in ensuring that no time has been lost since the purchase of these and in letting the pupils get direct access to the equipment. Although this suite of computers has only just been recently added, it offers rich potential to ensure that the good progress the school has made in improving provision since its last inspection continues to be built upon in order to provide greater challenges and raise standards higher.

## **MUSIC**

122. Pupils are attaining the expected levels of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1. It was not possible to observe music in the Year 5 and 6 class but, from discussions with the co-ordinator and a review of planning, indications are that a significant number of pupils exceed what is expected by the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, progress in pupils' learning in music is good. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when standards were below expectations. The curriculum is now better structured and most teachers are confident with the subject. There are good opportunities for individuals to learn instruments as well as a thriving choir where the quality of singing is good. Most lessons are successfully promoting skills and knowledge in performing and composing and appraising and listening.
123. In the reception class, the five-year-olds are exploring different ways to make sounds with the instruments. They know how to hold instruments correctly and try to use these to fit the purpose. They have a good sense of beat for their age. They know a wide range of songs and are making good progress because their lessons are well prepared and carefully structured to build on previous work. In particular the pupils are developing good listening skills because of the effective teaching. Pupils are developing these skills further in Years 1 and 2. They can repeat quite complex patterns, accurately copying rhythms. In the Key Stage 1 weekly singing lesson pupils demonstrated good skills. They listen carefully when the teacher is demonstrating a new song and can repeat phrases accurately. They respond well to suggestions for improvement. The singing at this stage is of accurate pitch and average quality. In the Year 2, 3 and 4 class pupils are developing their skills in listening, composing and performing and show that they can construct a simple rhythm using a fixed number of beats to the bar. They use the instruments imaginatively. When singing the quality is more variable and many do not approach this aspect with the same vitality as they do when composing. In this class, pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable because the teaching is not as effective. The taped programme which formed the basis of a lesson was not used to effect and the lack of firm management meant that some pupils wasted time. In the Year 4 and 5 class, the good progress reflects the teaching, which has high expectations for pupils' effort and attainment. Pupils have a good knowledge of all groups of instruments, which they demonstrated when listening to Handel's Water Music. They express their ideas about the tone and the mood of music thoughtfully, using their knowledge of dynamics and timbre. Samples of written work in both of



the top classes show that progress in composing is in line with what is expected for the age group. In the Key Stage 2 singing lesson, pupils sang well. They listen carefully, learn new work quickly and respond to suggestions for improvement. The choir is developing good skills in singing and can perform quite challenging pieces in four parts. All pupils have opportunities to perform in productions, for example, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat or in the school's carol concerts.

124. In all of the lessons seen pupils are very excited by their music activities and in most they make great efforts to achieve. Most pupils listen carefully to instructions and are sensible with instruments. Overall, behaviour is good and attitudes to learning are best when the teaching is carefully organised and expectations for effort high, for example in the reception and the Year 4 and 5 classes. However, in one lesson pupils became restless when the teaching failed to motivate them sufficiently. The older pupils co-operate well in groups; they become engrossed in their tasks and discuss their compositions with enthusiasm.
125. The quality of teaching is mainly good but one lesson, where pupils from both key stages were being taught, was unsatisfactory because pupils were not managed successfully and there was a lack of challenge in what they were asked to do. Consequently, pupils did not make sufficient progress. In all the other lessons, pupils made good progress because lessons are well planned and structured to build on their skills and knowledge. The pupils are well managed and the pace of lessons is lively ensuring their interest. Most teachers are confident with the subject and use the resources well. However, a weakness in one class was the heavy reliance on the taped programme and insufficient interaction by the teacher to extend pupils' knowledge or provide additional opportunities for practise. In other lessons, effective use is made of demonstration both by the teacher and by pupils, and pupils are encouraged to listen purposefully when others are performing. In nearly all classes, pupils are firmly managed and there are high expectations of them for participation, effort and attainment. Lessons contain a sense of fun and much of the work contributes well to the development of memory and listening skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to make progress in line with their abilities.
126. The curriculum is managed effectively. The very helpful policy and guidelines enable teachers to plan for progression in learning. The programme of work covers the National Curriculum and the co-ordinator is usefully monitoring its effectiveness. The provision is enhanced by opportunities to listen to visiting performers as well as the extra-curricular activities. Procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress are being developed. There is a very good range of instruments including several keyboards and a good library of tapes and discs. The subject contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

127. The school is maintaining the good standards reported at the time of the last inspection. All pupils have opportunities for gymnastics, dance, games and swimming and Key Stage 2 pupils gain skills from extra-curricular activities in hockey, football, rugby and athletics. The programmes change in order to provide full coverage with each aspect being taught for two terms each year. The reception pupils swim only in the summer term while others attend for two terms. Pupils make good progress because lessons are well structured and the teaching is good. By the time pupils leave the school the majority have good physical skills and nearly a half of the year group excel in swimming, achieving the gold awards. In the past few years a small number each year achieve honours.
128. The younger pupils in their lessons in the hall and outside are building on skills which will develop all parts of the body. For example, in the tag game with balls they show that they are good at dodging and moving in different directions in order to avoid being caught. Ball skills are developing well and pupils can roll and throw aiming accurately. Pupils are developing confidence, co-operative skills and spatial awareness and many are finding imaginative ways to move which extend their ability to stretch, jump and climb. They are gaining confidence in the water and about twenty-five per cent can swim a width. Year 1 and 2 pupils are confident when using space and can run, move fast and slowly and in different directions. They are developing an understanding of teamwork and fair play. Their skills in controlling the beanbags in the games activities are average for the age group. By the end of Key Stage 1, about half of the

pupils can swim twenty-five yards confidently. In Key Stage 2, younger pupils are progressing suitably with skipping, running, throwing and catching. They are learning to evaluate their progress in order to improve their performance by watching the different demonstrations by groups. Pupils are throwing and catching with increasing accuracy and playing team games, such as rounders, well. By the time pupils leave the school they are physically strong, have good body control and demonstrate good skills in athletics as they practise relay work. Pupils progress well to working out their own strategies for effective teamwork and in evaluating and improving their performance as they practice. They time their performances in order to aim for better standards. When throwing and catching many pupils show good skills. They have a sound understanding of health and safety when working and the importance of warming up and cooling down when exercising.

129. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and almost all make great efforts to achieve and perform well. Most pupils stop on cue, even in reception, and use their time sensibly, working with concentration. Behaviour is good overall but with some inattention at the end of Key Stage 1. As they move through the school pupils are developing a good sense of fair play and the importance of teamwork. It is significant that in the rugby tournament, in which the school participates annually, the team has not won the cup for achievement but on several occasions has won the trophy for the best sportsmanship.
130. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. The curriculum has been well developed over time and teachers are confident with the structured approach. Lessons are carefully planned to build on the skills of previous work. The good range of resources are carefully organised and used effectively. Explanations are clear and teachers make good use of demonstration, both of their own performance and that of the pupils, to enable them to observe and improve. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and little time is wasted. Teachers are motivating, give appropriate praise and most manage pupils with firm control. They pay attention to safety issues and ensure that pupils are suitable dressed. In the swimming lesson observed teaching was effective and younger pupils were making very good progress with their skills.
131. The subject is well managed and teachers are supported by the very good policy and detailed programme of work. The school values the contribution of dance and physical activities to the curriculum and the provision for pupils is good. The very good range of resources is in good condition and the field is used well by all classes. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

132. The last inspection found pupils' standards of attainment below expectations and the school has taken successful action to improve its provision. Pupils are now attaining standards that are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. They make sound progress over time and often, good progress in lessons when teaching is very good.
133. The curriculum reflects the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the topics for each term in classes and in assemblies provide suitable content for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils study Christianity and Judaism until Year 5 when Islam is added.

134. Younger pupils are coming to terms with their own feelings of happiness, sadness, likes and dislikes and a significant number can express ideas about being a helpful friend. They are reflecting on their own actions and their effect on others, thinking particularly of behaviour in the playground and in the classroom. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have extended their understanding of feeling by developing a sense of reason for the things we do. The story of the Ugly Duckling was well used to help pupils understand about the things that make them sad and happy. Pupils have knowledge of the Ten Commandments and the need for rules in schools and in society. They know the main Christian festivals and some of the stories about the life of Jesus. For example, pupils know the main characters featured in the Easter story and their writing shows that they are having opportunities to express feelings about the events in the story. Some good pieces of writing include descriptions of pupils' need for a peaceful place, for example, 'I go into the garden when I am upset or have nothing to do.' In one lesson seen, pupils gained knowledge of how Jewish people prepare for and spend their Sabbath. Pupils have a clear idea of prayer and were able to make some comparisons with a Sunday in the Christian faith.
135. In Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils have a sound knowledge of the parts of the church, which they learnt about during a visit. Several pupils found the church to be a peaceful or special place. Past work includes discussions about, 'Belonging to a club,' 'What is a bully?' and 'What is God's World?' The teacher has usefully recorded pupils' comments showing that they were reflecting on the subjects and making thoughtful contributions. In one good lesson seen pupils' demonstrated their ability to discuss issues successfully when they compared the rules of the Ten Commandments to rules of our everyday life. The good background knowledge provided by the teacher about the Jewish law books in the Torah caught the imaginations of the pupils. This enabled them to write and make their own 'Torahs' expressing thoughtful and relevant ideas.
136. The work of pupils in the two top classes at Key Stage 2 shows that they have knowledge of festivals, ceremonies and customs in all three religions and have compared them to identify the similar patterns. When studying the impact of how we persuade our friends to do things they considered the meaning of bribery, threats, and blackmail. They linked this usefully to the persuasion in the media. When learning about the life of Jesus they have considered why the Jews wanted a king and what they hoped he would do. Written work often shows that pupils are using their knowledge to make mature responses. For example, a pupil said when writing about 'Values,' that "My heart tells me to do the right things". Following teaching about sacrifice, pupil clearly understood the meaning and how there are times when we should be unselfish and give up things for the benefit of others. Currently the Year 6 pupils are comparing the Synagogue and its contents with a Christian Church. In particular they are focusing on why it is a special place for Jewish people and the care with which the Sefer Torah is used. They demonstrate sound knowledge of the contents and the correct terminology.
137. Overall, pupils have good attitudes to religious education because the content is made interesting and lessons are well prepared. Older pupils listen to each other's views respectfully and younger ones are becoming more confident when contributing. However, in one lesson in Key Stage 1 pupils were inattentive and kept interrupting the flow of the discussion. In other lessons pupils behaviour was good. Overall, the subject is contributing well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
138. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and often very good. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson in Key Stage 1 because the weak management of the pupils prevented the content of the lesson from being fully explored. The pace became slow and the attention of the pupils waned. Most lessons are carefully planned to cover content, develop pupils' skills of observation, interpretation and communication. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and make the content interesting. They use the resources available to provide pupils with firsthand experience. They are skilled at questioning in order to probe pupils to think and reflect on the past or compare with their known experience. Most lessons move at a good pace and activities are interesting. Teachers often provide for opportunities in other areas of the curriculum, particularly in writing. In Years 4, 5 and 6 work is assessed each half term against attainment targets. Teachers maintain a useful folder of photographic evidence of pupils' work.
139. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Effective improvements in the curriculum to raise standards have been made by the co-ordinator and teachers since the last

inspection. The policy usefully supports the local education authority scheme of work, which provides for progression in skills and knowledge. The Locally Agreed Syllabus has been in place for about a year. Good use is made of the county loan service for resources and artefacts, there is an increasing demand for these, and the school is wisely building its own collection in order to provide more firsthand experience for pupils. Assemblies and collective worship are carefully planned to support the curriculum and the school makes effective use of the local church and clergy to enrich learning. Overall, the provision is good and trends indicate that standards of attainment are continuing to improve.