

INSPECTION REPORT

GRIMLEY AND HOLT C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Grimley, Worcester

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116815

Headteacher: Mrs S Crawford

Reporting inspector: Mr C Parker
11897

Dates of inspection: 11th – 13th March 2002

Inspection number: 223079

Full 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 primary

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Grimley
Worcestershire

Postcode: WR2 6LU

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Jukes

Date of previous inspection: 14th February 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11897	C Parker	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
9510	C Murray Watson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19387	M Powell	Team inspector	English Art and design technology Geography History Music Religious education Foundation Stage curriculum	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With 59 pupils on roll Grimley and Holt Church of England Primary School is much smaller than average. The pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Eight pupils are currently in the Foundation Stage and are taught with pupils in Years 1 and 2. All of the pupils are of white UK heritage and speak English as their first language. Their attainment on entry varies from year to year but, currently, is above average and the number of pupils on the special needs register is broadly average. No pupils take free school meals. At the time of the inspection, the pupils in Year 5 and 6 were taught by a temporary teacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The headteacher's strong leadership and clear direction have brought about many improvements in a relatively short time. Although there is much still to do, there is a considerable commitment to improvement. The school is now providing an effective education for the pupils and is well placed to improve and develop further because the teaching is good and standards are rising, particularly among the younger pupils. At the present time, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction.
- There is a strong commitment to improvement and the provision of a high quality education for the pupils.
- Standards in English and mathematics are above average at the end of Key Stage 1.
- The pupils are making good progress and achieving well because the teaching is good. It is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4.
- Most of the pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well.

What could be improved

- Standards in science and information and communication technology are not high enough.
- Information about the school improvement plan and its effectiveness is not communicated to the parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in February 2000, it has gone through a very difficult period with numerous staffing changes and associated disruption. The headteacher was appointed in January 2001 and a new teaching team arrived in September 2001. With a stable staff, the school has made good progress in addressing the key weaknesses that were outlined in the last report. The leadership and management are now very good and the teaching has improved markedly and is now often very good. The headteacher and teachers are now working to further improve the curriculum and planning programmes of learning to promote clear progression, challenge the pupils and ultimately raise the standards they attain. The school, therefore, no longer has serious weaknesses.

There is a clear plan to manage improvements over the next few years. Many areas still need to be addressed, but with its present strong leadership and good teaching the school is very well placed to continue to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	D	E
mathematics	C	B	D	E
science	C	C	D	E

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

The youngest children should reach the expected early learning goals and some should exceed them because they are achieving very well.

In 2001, the results at the end of Year 2 were higher than in the previous three years. During this period the results ranged from well above average in mathematics in 1999 to well below average in reading in 2000. However, in 2001 the results in reading were in the top five per cent nationally and were well above average in mathematics. In both cases, nearly half of the pupils attained the higher levels. In writing, standards were average but again this was an improvement on the previous year. When compared to similar schools, results in reading are well above average, above average in mathematics and below average in writing. The teachers are now giving particular attention to writing and there are clear signs that standards are continuing to improve. The pupils are now likely to reach levels that are above the national average by the end of Year 2.

In 2001, the results at the end of Year 6 fell to below average in English, mathematics and science from a fairly settled position of broadly average and above in previous years. The results were well below average when compared to similar schools. Over the last five years, the improvement in the school's results was below the national trend. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English and mathematics are currently broadly average in Year 6. The standards being attained by the older pupils are beginning to rise, but there is still considerable ground to make up.

Standards in science are average at the end of Key Stage 2, but should be higher. The pupils have not had a sufficiently broad range of teaching to increase their knowledge and develop their skills of scientific investigation. Standards in all other subjects are at least in line with expectations except in information and communication technology where they are not high enough.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The great majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. A few pupils, however, find it hard to reach the good standards of behaviour achieved by their peers.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' relationships with each other and with the adults in the school are good. In particular, the care shown by the older pupils for the younger ones is a positive feature in the life of the school.
Attendance	The attendance rate is broadly in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Good

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

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 the teaching is very good. The pupils are taught by a teacher and teaching assistant who manage the pupils very effectively. The planning is meticulous and takes full account of the early learning goals for the youngest children. The plans for the Year 1 and 2 pupils fully reflect the requirements for literacy and numeracy. For each lesson, the teacher sets out precisely what the pupils are to learn and the activities they are to complete. They are encouraged to ask and answer questions and to participate fully. They respond well to the teacher's high expectations.

In Years 3 and 4, the teaching is again very good; the lessons are very thoroughly planned and the teacher has high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and achievements. The headteacher teaches this class and sets a good example for the other teachers to follow. The lessons are well focussed with clear learning objectives and the activities move along at a good pace so that the pupils complete a good volume of work, particularly in English and mathematics. The high expectations are most evident in the pupils' presentation of work, which has improved dramatically and is now good. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils are currently taught by a temporary teacher. He had only been with the pupils for a very short time prior to the inspection and was still getting to know them. The lessons were extensively planned with interesting resources, but in some cases were not providing the right level of challenge for the different groups in the class. Nevertheless, the teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory and the teacher is building a positive relationship with the class. The teaching assistant is particularly effective in working with pupils and supporting those with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant and meets the requirements. A new long-term curriculum plan has been devised, drawing upon national guidance. There are also detailed, medium-term plans.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision to support the pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and ensures their inclusion in all activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school is very committed to fostering the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and makes good provision for this aspect of their education. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, but they have insufficient opportunities to find out about the way many cultures have contributed to the life of this country.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for the pupils well. Relationships are good and the teachers know the pupils well.

The recent history of the school, with frequent staff changes and new management, has left a significant minority of the parents uncertain about what is happening. Despite this, the great majority feels that their children like school and are expected to work hard and achieve their best. The efforts made to enhance the school environment and to create better systems for recording and improving the levels of the children's work are impressive. Some parents recognise this, but it has not yet been adequately communicated to the parent body as a whole.

The pupils are not yet receiving a sufficiently broad science curriculum and they have too few opportunities to use information and communication technology across the curriculum. There is now an appropriate system for recording the pupils' progress and tracking their attainment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is providing strong leadership. Together with the teachers and governors, she is making effective changes to the way the curriculum is planned and how the pupils are taught.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have undertaken training and now ensure that the school meets the requirements. They provide effective guidance and support for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and governors are monitoring the impact of school development activities. The headteacher is carefully tracking the pupils' progress so that the school's overall performance can be evaluated.
The strategic use of resources	The governors have received considerable guidance and support from the local education authority. They are now in a position to take total control of the finances. The settled staffing situation will allow the available funds to be targeted on the areas of greatest need identified in the school development plan.

Building improvements are currently taking place. The most pressing need is to complete the facilities for information and communication technology so that the pupils can make much better use of the resources right across the curriculum. At the present time, the school has inadequate resources in a number of areas such as science and geography. The staffing levels are good.

Arrangements for establishing the principles of best value have not yet been fully implemented, but the governors are aware of the need to compare the school's performance with that of other schools and they have consulted widely to aid in the planning of improvement activities.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school and are now making better progress. • The improvements in atmosphere and ethos. • The informal opportunities to talk to the teachers. • Support for the pupils. • Improvement in the homework arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour. • Information about how the children are getting on. • Relationships with the school. • The leadership and management. • Extra-curricular activities.

The comments made by parents at the pre-inspection meeting were generally positive and recognised the improvements that have been made in the school's provision. In contrast, the questionnaire responses indicate that about a third of parents have concerns in key areas. The inspectors agree with those parents who recognise that the school is improving, the atmosphere and ethos are positive and their children are well supported. They also agree that there is a need to provide parents with information about how the school is working and improving in important areas. Whilst the behaviour of a few pupils is not as good as it should be most pupils behave very well. However, the inspectors disagree with the negative view of the leadership and management and find that it is providing a clear direction for on-going improvement. They agree that the present extra-curricular provision is minimal, but note that the headteacher is seeking to extend the range of activities. For instance, this term many pupils are attending pottery club and next term tag rugby will be available. A French club is well attended and taken by a governor. However, with such a small staff there is obviously a limit to what can be provided and expected. Moreover, priorities have to be established and the teachers' efforts are currently

focused on improving the curriculum and raising standards. The inspectors agree that in the short-term this has to be the priority.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When the school was last inspected, there was considerable under-achievement, particularly amongst the pupils with the potential for higher attainment. Significant action to address this issue has only been possible since a stable staffing situation was established at the beginning of the current academic year. The headteacher and teachers have been successful in ensuring that pupils of all abilities are challenged and are making good progress in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. The pupils in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 are gaining sound basic skills. There is a clear commitment to build on these improvements and to achieve high standards across the curriculum. Furthermore, there is recognition that much still needs to be done in order to reach these aspirations.
2. The youngest children are making good progress and are well prepared to begin Year 1 because the adults encourage them to "have a go" and to persevere. Almost all should reach the expected early learning goals and some should exceed them because they are achieving very well. In their personal, social and emotional development the children make very good progress because the teacher and her assistant help them to become independent. The children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing very well. Early reading skills are very well promoted through interesting activities, and the children revel in their success. In their mathematical development, the children are extending their numeracy skills effectively because counting activities are included in many other aspects of their work.
3. Over the last few years, the school has been very unsettled by many staffing changes. In addition, the proportion of pupils on the special educational needs often varied from year to year and some of the cohorts were small. These factors have had an adverse impact on the results that have been attained in national tests in recent years.
4. In 2001, the results at the end of Year 2 were higher than in the previous three years. During this period the results ranged from well above average in mathematics in 1999 to well below average in reading in 2000. However, in 2001, the results in reading were in the top five per cent nationally and well above average in mathematics. In both cases, nearly half of the pupils attained the higher levels. In writing, standards were average, but this also was an improvement on the previous year. Detailed analysis of the data by gender shows that the boys consistently attained below the national average for boys over the last five years. The school has worked hard to reverse this and was successful in doing so in 2001. When compared to similar schools, the results are well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and below average in writing. The teachers are working to raise standards generally, but particularly in writing. As a result, there are clear signs of continuing improvement in the pupils' writing and it is likely to be at levels above the national average by the end of Year 2.
5. In 2001 at the end of Year 6, the results in English, mathematics and science fell to below average from a fairly settled position in previous years when they were broadly average and above. Moreover, the results were well below average when compared to similar schools. Over the last five years, the trend in the school's results was below the national rate of improvement. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English and mathematics are currently broadly average in Year 6. Whilst a few higher attaining pupils are responding well to the challenges they are set, there is a higher than usual proportion of the older pupils on the special educational needs register. The needs of all groups of pupils have been carefully analysed and consistent strategies for developing their language skills are now being implemented. From the evidence of recent work, the standards being attained by the older pupils are beginning to rise, but there is still considerable ground to make up. However, scrutiny of the pupils' work in Year 4 shows that the improvements in curriculum planning and the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills are having the desired effect. Standards are above average in both English and mathematics.
6. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in science are broadly average, but should be higher. The pupils have not had a sufficiently broad range of teaching to increase their knowledge and develop their skills of scientific investigation. This is currently a focus within the school development plan. The school should fully implement the proposed action in order to raise standards in science. **This is a key issue for action.**

- Standards in all other subjects are at least in line with expectations except for information and communication technology where they are not high enough. As with science, the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and apply their skills across the curriculum. Here again, the school has plans to improve the teaching and facilities and thereby raise standards. All these aspects of the school's information and communication technology provision should be improved as soon as possible. **This is a key issue for action.**

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- The great majority of pupils are well behaved and keen to come to school. Where they are benefiting from consistently good teaching, they respond with enthusiasm and are setting themselves high standards. For example, in an art lesson the pupils worked hard to achieve the highest possible standards and were prepared to evaluate their own work with a view to improving what they had done. Younger pupils seen in a mathematics lesson were similarly enthusiastic, willing to display their knowledge and eager to make progress. Most pupils generally have a good approach to learning and school life, but a few individuals need careful management to ensure that they are making the best possible progress.
- Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. The pupils are polite, respond promptly to instructions and are comfortable with the classroom routines. As a result, the lessons are conducted at a suitable pace with little time lost in dealing with any minor misbehaviour. A few pupils, however, still appear to be adversely affected by the recent, frequent staff changes and the differing styles of classroom management. These pupils find it hard to reach the good standards of behaviour and self-motivation currently achieved by their peers.
- The pupils' relationships one with another and with the adults in the school are good. The care shown by the older pupils for the younger ones is a particularly positive feature in the life of the school. On the playground, the pupils of all ages play football together in a friendly way. The school is encouraging a growing measure of independence as the children progress through the school and the older pupils are starting to assume responsibility for a range of routine tasks to assist in the smooth running of the day.
- The level of attendance is broadly in line with that found in primary schools nationally. There is no unauthorised absence. The levels of non-attendance relate generally to sickness and holidays taken in term time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- At the beginning of this academic year, a new teaching team was appointed to replace a number of temporary teachers who had worked in the school since the last inspection. In the last two years nine teachers have left the school. This has caused considerable disruption to the school and many parents feel it has adversely affected their children's education. However, the new team has quickly established a positive climate for learning and brought a greater level of stability, which was desperately needed.
- At the time of the last inspection, the teaching was unsatisfactory because the teachers' expectations were unclear and their approaches inconsistent, resulting in underachievement. This is no longer the case. All of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory; three out of ten were good and a further four out of ten were either very good or excellent. Consequently, the pupils are now making good progress in most lessons and achieving well.
- In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the teaching is very good. The pupils are taught by a teacher and teaching assistant who manage them very effectively in a classroom with a small annex. This allows the youngest children to be taught at times in a discrete group, but alongside the Year 1 and 2 pupils on other appropriate occasions. This arrangement works well and generates a good balance of provision and a range of activities that interest and motivate the pupils. The planning is meticulous, taking full account of the early learning goals for the youngest children and developing more advanced activities around common themes for the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The plan for the older pupils fully reflects the requirements for literacy and numeracy. In each lesson, the teacher sets out precisely what the pupils are to learn and the activities they are to complete. On each occasion, the teacher makes clear to the pupils

‘What I’m Looking For’ so that they know what they are expected to learn. She also questions the pupils well, for example, in a mathematics lesson when they were learning to sort and classify information and present it in a pictogram. The pupils are encouraged to ask and answer questions and participate fully. They respond well to the teacher’s high expectations and their progress is continuously assessed.

15. Overall, the teaching in Key Stage 2 is good, but it ranges from very good in Years 3 and 4 to satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. This variation is understandable and is due to temporary arrangements in Years 5 and 6 where the teacher had only been with the pupils for a very short time prior to the inspection and was still getting to know them.
16. In Years 3 and 4 the lessons are very thoroughly planned and the teacher has high expectations of the pupils’ behaviour and achievements. The headteacher teaches this class and sets a good example for the other teachers to follow. The lessons are well prepared with clear learning objectives and move along at a good pace so that the pupils complete a good volume of work, particularly in English and mathematics lessons. The high expectations are most evident in the quality of the pupils’ presentation of work, which has improved dramatically. Similarly, in other lessons, such as art, the pupils are being encouraged to produce their best work and this valued by the teacher.
17. In Years 5 and 6, the lessons were well conceived, carefully planned with interesting resources but often were not providing the right level of challenge to the different groups in the class. Nevertheless, the teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory and the teacher is building a positive relationship with the class. This is important because the disruption of the last few years appears to have had greatest impact on these older pupils.
18. The well-briefed teaching assistant is particularly effective in working with pupils and supporting those with special educational needs. The teachers mark the pupils’ work thoroughly and often make comments to help them to improve. The pupils respond well to their teachers’ high expectations; they reply positively when questioned, enjoy the challenges they are set and show considerable pride in the presentation of their work, notably in Year 3 and 4. Throughout the school, relationships between the teachers and their pupils are positive and constructive. In most cases, the school’s behaviour policy is well implemented so that good behaviour is the norm.

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

19. The school offers a generally broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets all the statutory requirements. It covers all areas of the National Curriculum and fulfils the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The quality and range of the provision for the youngest children in the Foundation Stage is good. This is the result of thoughtful planning, particularly for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Consequently, the children are well prepared to begin the National Curriculum in Year 1. However, the opportunities for the pupils to acquire and develop skills in information and communication technology are inadequately planned and do not extend across the whole of the curriculum.
20. The teachers have recently reviewed the school’s long-term curriculum plan. As a result, many fresh elements are now included, drawing upon national guidance. There are also more detailed, medium-term plans for most subjects. In addition to information and communication technology, the school has also identified aspects of design and technology and geography that need further attention within its two-year rolling programme. A good start has been made in the comparatively short time the current staff team has been in place. Sound decisions about the content and order of the teaching programme have been based on initial assessments of the pupils’ knowledge and skills. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is now effective. It is underpinned by the teachers’ raised expectations of pupils and is ensuring more consistent approaches, for instance, in the teaching of reading and writing. The provision to support the pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and ensures their inclusion in all activities.
21. The school has a satisfactory level of awareness of how to develop the pupils’ personal and social skills and how to promote their general good health. In the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, for example, a

consistent effort is made to promote the children's independence and initiative. A comprehensive programme for their personal, health and social education is being assembled, but already the older pupils engage in discussions about issues that are either important to them or have a moral theme. The school is developing its links with members of the community, such as the local church, and with villagers who hear the pupils read. The school has good liaison with the on-site playgroup and the neighbouring high school. This ensures that there are well-established induction procedures when the pupils enter and leave the school. School visits and some extra curricular activities also enrich the curriculum, although these are relatively rare at the present time.

22. The school is very committed to fostering the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Assemblies provide good opportunities for reflection and all the pupils respond appropriately. There is a common approach towards raising the pupils' self-esteem. This is why most of the pupils enjoy school and are interested in the variety of opportunities they are offered. There are well thought out and agreed norms for promoting an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. This is reflected in the overall harmonious atmosphere, for example, in the dining hall and playground. The oldest pupils serve as table monitors at lunchtime, providing them with opportunities to socialise with younger pupils. They also set up equipment for assemblies, but further thought needs to be given to finding a still wider range of responsibilities for the older pupils to discharge. All the children have enjoyed collaborating during special events involving art and music. They have also been enabled to interact with local people at church services and with pupils at the high school when they have attended productions. An arts week is being planned for the summer term that has the potential for further enriching the pupils' broader experiences.
23. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. There are good elements in the work done on the local area, in history and through special events in art and music. Some multicultural topics are covered in religious education and in geography, and in art the pupils have worked in a "batik workshop". Overall, however, the pupils' understanding of the way many cultures have contributed to the life of this country is inadequate. There are some new books in the library to promote this aspect of learning, but displays of artefacts and photographs around the school are scarce at present. There is a need still for a wider range of cultures to be represented in art and music lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

24. The school cares for the pupils well. Relationships are good and the teachers know the pupils well. In physical education lessons, for example, they take steps, to ensure that equipment is used safely and that the pupils know the importance of warming up their muscles before rigorous exercise. The formal arrangements for child protection and health and safety are all in place. There are sufficient adults who are trained first-aiders, including members of the supervisory staff, who deal very competently with minor playground accidents.
25. The teachers have recently formulated a behaviour management policy. It is working very well with many of the younger pupils who respond readily to praise and encouragement, but it is not yet successful in helping some of the older boys to settle down quickly in lessons. It will need a longer period to encourage these pupils into the positive work habits that they should have acquired in earlier years. The school is working effectively with other agencies to monitor attendance, but most of the lengthy absences relate to family holidays taken during term time.
26. There is now an appropriate system for recording the pupils' progress and tracking their attainment. The teachers keep manageable records that cover each subject of the curriculum, and the headteacher tracks the attainment of each child as they move through the school. The previous records are incomplete, but the new systems will provide a comprehensive range of data by which it will be possible to monitor the progress and standards achieved by individual pupils. The available data is currently being used effectively in curriculum planning and to determine the next stage in each child's learning. The progress and development of the pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored.
27. Overall, the procedures for monitoring the pupils' educational and personal development are good. They are an improvement on those found at the time of the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

28. The recent history of the school, with frequent staff changes and a new management structure, has left a significant minority of the parents uncertain about what is happening. As a result, some who either returned the questionnaires or attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern about many areas of school life. They feel that the children's behaviour is poor, insufficient homework is being set, and there is a lack of information about their children's attainment and progress. Some have concerns about the leadership and management of the school. They also consider that the school fails to work closely with them and does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Despite this, the great majority feels that their children like school and are expected to work hard and achieve their best. These concerns are understandable given the school's recent circumstances, but there are already improvements in all the areas where the parents expressed concern. Many of the issues raised are already being addressed and the leadership and management of the school are now very good. Moreover, all members of the staff are working hard to establish a better understanding between the school and the parent body.
29. The level of information given to the parents is satisfactory, given that all members of the staff are new and are not yet able to present a long term picture of the progress that individual pupils are making from year to year. The efforts made to enhance the school environment and to create better systems for recording the levels of the children's work are impressive. This has not yet been adequately communicated to the parent body. More should now be done to celebrate what has already been achieved and to inform parents of the actions being taken to bring about further improvements. **This is a key issue for action.**
30. The school's use of homework is satisfactory and the parents offer appropriate support. The systems to advise parents of the work being set, such as homework diaries, are very new and have not yet been in place for long enough to establish a working dialogue between parents and the class teachers. Some parents come in to school regularly to listen to children reading and to assist with a range of practical tasks. There is an active "Friends Association" that raises valuable funds for the school and is currently involved in plans to remodel the playground area.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

31. The headteacher is providing strong leadership. She has generated a clear commitment to improvement within the teaching team and in a relatively short time embarked on an extensive programme of development that is establishing a secure basis for sustained long term improvement. Together with the teachers and governors, she is making effective changes to the way the curriculum is planned and the pupils are taught. Most importantly, there are now high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. In addition, improvements to the building and to the range of resources are underway. There is a momentum of change that is beginning to have an effect in many areas of the school's work. However, because of the significant weaknesses that existed and the difficult staffing situation that prevailed until the start of this academic year, it will be sometime before the considerable efforts of the teaching staff come to full fruition.
32. The school development plan sets out a structured and systematic approach to improving all aspects of the school's work over a five-year period. The areas of highest priority are already being addressed and a strong foundation is being established to allow the teachers to focus on raising standards. This is evident in the quality of the teaching and the achievements of the younger pupils. The strategy for improvement has been carefully considered and is being well managed.
33. Communication within the teaching staff is good. They are all fully involved in curriculum development and in establishing consistent approaches to teaching and learning. They are keeping a close eye on all developments, but rightly their efforts are focussed on improvement rather than monitoring and evaluation. These features are clearly built into the long-term plans and the headteacher is already monitoring the quality of the teaching. The governing body is kept well informed and is also playing an increased role in monitoring the school's work and the success of its development activities. The governors have undertaken training and are now able to provide both guidance and support and to ensure that the school meets the requirements.

34. After the last inspection, prolonged staff absences created significant financial difficulties. These were compounded by a period when the school was run by an acting headteacher and staffed by various temporary teachers, with only one permanently newly qualified teacher. The governors have received considerable guidance and support from the local education authority and are now in a position to take total control of the finances in a much more settled situation where the staffing levels are now good. Currently, the income per pupil is very high. The funds are needed to improve both the learning environment and the range of resources, but governors are aware that they will be reduced as the school recovers from this period of considerable difficulty. The arrangements for establishing the principles of best value have not yet been fully implemented. Nevertheless, the governing body is aware of the need to compare the school's performance with that of other schools and has consulted widely to aid the various improvement activities.
35. Building improvements are currently taking place and the headteacher has well developed plans to improve the school grounds. The headteacher and chair of governors, with the help of their families, redecorated the school hall during the Christmas holidays. This was a major undertaking that has created a bright and welcoming space for assemblies and physical education lessons. The most pressing need is to complete the facilities for information and communication technology so that the pupils can make much better use of the resources right across the curriculum. At the present time, the school has inadequate resources in a number of areas, such as science and geography, and should seek to make good these deficiencies at the earliest opportunity. **This is an additional area for action.**
36. The situation has improved greatly since the last inspection. The leadership and management are now much stronger. The headteacher is providing clear direction and the governors have a strategic overview and play a much more effective role.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

37. The governors, headteacher and teachers should continue to implement the comprehensive school development plans. They should place particular emphasis on:
- (1) improving the provision for the teaching of science and ICT in order to raise the pupils' attainment in these subjects; (Paragraphs 6, 7, 65, 76)
 - (2) keeping the parents more fully informed about the range and effect of the various improvement activities being undertaken. (Paragraph 29)

In addition they should take every opportunity to extend and enhance the range and quality of the teaching and learning resources. (Paragraph 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	6	7	0	0	0
Percentage	5	36	27	32	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	58
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001			

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (67)	100 (78)	100 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (78)	100 (89)	100 (78)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Figures not included as the cohort was below 10.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	8	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	7	5	6
	Total	12	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (71)	71 (79)	79 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils	School	n/a (71)	n/a (79)	n/a (79)

at NC level 4 or above	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)
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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	58
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.4
Average class size	19.6

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	44.25

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	243 132
Total expenditure	239 146
Expenditure per pupil	3 340
Balance brought forward from previous year	6 131
Balance carried forward to next year	10 117

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	58	6	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	45	12	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	45	24	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	45	18	6	6
The teaching is good.	18	67	12	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	52	21	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	33	42	18	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	48	6	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	24	30	30	15	0
The school is well led and managed.	30	36	12	12	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	21	64	9	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	27	39	15	3

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

38. On entry to the school, the children's attainment is generally above average. They make very good progress and are well prepared to begin the National Curriculum in Year 1. This represents further improvement on the good picture seen at the last inspection.
39. There are currently 8 children in the Foundation Stage. At times, they are taught in a separate group, but otherwise work alongside the Year 1 and 2 pupils. The planning of their activities is very meticulous and the provision for them is well balanced. It takes full account of the early learning goals set for the children by the time they complete their reception year. The children's progress is continuously assessed by the teacher and the teaching assistant.

Personal, social and emotional development

40. All the children have had pre-school experiences. They make very good progress in the reception group in response to the very clear expectations and routines that are set. Most can sit still and listen for appropriate periods of time. They are very enthusiastic about their work, but a few are occasionally very exuberant and call out of turn. The adults deliver firm reminders about agreed routines to ensure that the learning sessions are orderly and productive. The children understand the need to take turns and to be aware of the effect of their behaviour on others. For example, they are very considerate and quiet as they pass through the main classroom while the pupils in Years 1 and 2 are at work. The teacher and her assistant are rightly encouraging them to be more independent when they get out equipment and when they change for physical education. Many of the children concentrate well as they practise their writing skills and look at books. They are often quite helpful towards each other. For instance, some regularly offer a chair to a friend, give advice about how to develop a letter shape or hand glue sticks and pencils to each other. The children are well on course to achieve the early learning goals. Some are already showing well-developed social skills in response to the very encouraging atmosphere in the classroom.

Communication, language and literacy

41. The children make good progress in developing their speaking, reading and writing skills. Some will exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They listen well to instructions, for example, when planting up containers of herbs or practising their throwing and catching skills. Their language skills develop well because the planning takes very good account of the national guidance for this stage and the transition to the National Curriculum for Year 1. The early reading skills are being very well promoted because the activities are interesting and the children revel in their success. This was seen very clearly when the group shared in the reading of their Bear Alphabet book. Their recognition of the link between letter sounds and their names is above average and enables them to read a number of words with confidence. All write their own names and with a little help many can write simple captions for their drawings. They often comment on the letters in printed text that match those in their own names.
42. The teaching is very successful because the adults make very accurate assessments of the children's needs and know how to develop and extend their early knowledge and understanding.

Mathematical development

43. The children's numeracy skills are progressing well because counting activities are included in many other aspects of their work. For example, when the number eleven appeared in a text, the children were asked if they had enough fingers to count to eleven. A significant number responded that they needed one more. By the end of the reception year, some children can count in tens and most can say the numbers to twenty and recognise which digits appear in them. They have frequent opportunities for sorting and matching objects, such as beads, that have common attributes of shape and size. They can add and remove objects within sets and say if there are then more or less as a consequence. The role-play area, currently set up for shopping activities, provides useful opportunities for counting coins or the

number of items placed into a basket. The children are well on course to achieving the targets set for them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

44. The children are making good progress in developing cutting and sticking skills. The adults encourage them to “have a go” and to persevere even when their manipulative skills are not strong. Sand and water play and work with malleable materials enable the children to understand that materials vary in the way they feel and behave. They acquire a good understanding of the fact that there are different ways of joining items together, for example, by using multi-link and Lego blocks and by joining boxes and other materials to make models. They have also engaged in sequencing activities to develop an understanding of the passage of time. They have been able to observe some of the features of the area around their school.
45. The teaching is good, but the lack of space curtails the range of large construction activities, and the desirable free flow of work from the indoor classroom to a safe outdoor area is also limited by the nature of the building.

Physical development

46. As a result of very good teaching, all the children are likely to achieve the expected level of skills in controlling small equipment. Their pencil control is already very well established because they have received a high level of support, for example, to write letter shapes. During a games lesson with the pupils in Years 1 and 2, the youngest children were well able to participate safely in a game of bench ball. They could aim the ball and dodge well for their age. Their hand-eye co-ordination when rolling and bouncing a ball in pairs is satisfactory, but this is a skill that is difficult for them to achieve at a higher level. The children are very energetic and co-ordinate their movement well. The adults give them very good support to develop their confidence in a range of physical activities. There are plans to improve the outdoor facilities to provide the younger children with a more challenging and varied range of equipment for balancing and climbing. The children are well on course to achieving the early learning goals.

Creative development

47. The school has recognised the need to develop the role-play area to provide more stimulating opportunities for imaginative and creative play. During their reading activities, the children use their imagination well to interpret the text. For instance, they were heard to make quite imaginative comments about the various bears in the Alphabet Book. This was as a result of the teachers’ interesting questions. No activities in dance, music or imaginative play involving dressing up were seen during the inspection. However, the youngest children do benefit from working with artists and musicians when they visit the school. The children use language quite creatively, but the shortage of space limits the range of experiences necessary to ensure a high level of attainment by the time they are ready to join Year 1.

ENGLISH

48. Over the past few years, the test results of the Year 2 pupils have fluctuated. However, in 2001 there was a very marked improvement in the results in reading and a discernible improvement in standards of writing. The inspection evidence suggests that this trend is continuing. In fact, there are clear signs that standards in writing are continuing to improve to levels that are above the national average.
49. The Year 6 test results in 2001 dropped to well below average when compared with similar schools. However it is evident from the recent work of the present pupils in upper Key Stage 2 that standards are beginning to rise. However, the school faces a considerable challenge in its attempt to significantly improve standards amongst the current cohort of older pupils. The needs of this group have been carefully analysed and consistent strategies for developing their language skills are now being effectively implemented.
50. The school has rightly identified the need to raise standards in literacy. Clear targets are now identified to develop the pupils’ reading and writing skills. The staff team is planning the work very effectively so that

the pupils experience a good balance of speaking, listening, reading and writing activities. The resources for supporting literacy have also been reviewed and, although still somewhat inadequate in quantity, are now more interesting. For example, a considerable effort has been made to provide a range of books to ensure that boys develop an interest in reading.

51. Many of the pupils are confident speakers because the teacher consistently engages their interest. In Year 2, for instance, the pupils were very forthcoming when recounting the books they had read and when discussed in pairs issues related to recycling. Their listening skills are also very well developed as the teacher expects them to listen carefully to her and to each other. These skills are also evident in the lower Key Stage 2 class. During an art lesson, the pupils made lively comments about the quality of their flower paintings, often employing technical terms to describe the form of their composition and the shades of paint they were attempting to mix. Some of the oldest pupils have very good ideas that they are able to articulate in a way that interests the listener. When they are absorbed in the topic they ask appropriate questions. However, a few lack the necessary self discipline to await their turn to speak and do not always listen courteously to what other pupils are saying.
52. Standards in reading are continuing to improve because discrete time is set aside for reading activities. Books, photocopied texts and facsimiles are now a regular feature of lessons such as history, geography and science. The reading material now available is inviting and includes both fiction and non-fiction. The younger pupils confidently use terms such as glossary, contents and index when using reference books linked to their work on plants. The teachers and teaching assistants play a very active part in helping the pupils to develop a range of methods for tackling quite difficult words. For example, one child in Year 2, when asked how he had read a complex word in a story said, "I look at it, and if I can't work it out, I go back to the beginning of the sentence. I then read on to the end to see if I can work out the meaning of it!" The younger pupils have very secure phonic skills and other decoding methods that enable them to become competent readers. Parents and members of the community who help with reading in school play a significant part in raising standards among the younger pupils. The reading habits of the oldest pupils are not as well established, as they ought to be. However, the school has recognised this and now provides regular, daily reading sessions, supplemented by opportunities for the pupils to read aloud in a group. The pupils' ability to read mechanically is average, but their fluency and expression have not been developed sufficiently over time. However, they are now beginning to enjoy the new books available and there is emerging evidence that what they read is having a positive effect on the quality of their writing.
53. The development of writing has been an important focus for improvement. This is why the standards are now beginning to rise and why, for example, appropriate encouragement is given to pupils who show evidence of above average writing ability. The teachers plan carefully to ensure that the pupils' skills develop systematically. For example, by the end of Year 2, the pupils are using more varied sentence structures, building on their experiences of writing simple, grammatical sentences in Year 1. A few of the more confident writers in Year 2 are clearly striving to use interesting words as they enliven their writing with phrases such as "A parrot with magical powers" and use less common words such as "continued" and "entered". The range of writing in Key Stage 1 matches very well the recommendations of the National Literacy Guidance. Standards of spelling are above average in Key Stage 1 because the key words are well taught and practised. The teachers are effectively using a published scheme to develop the pupils' spelling skills in conjunction with the teaching of joined handwriting. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is particularly strong.
54. The planning for writing effectively ensures that an appropriate range is covered in Key Stage 2. Writing skills are now being consistently used, for example, to record work in science, history and geography and recent work shows that they are developing an awareness of different types of writing. For example, they produced some good empathetic writing about the Victorians and some logically organised non-fiction accounts. Some pupils have an under-developed awareness of how to vary their sentence structures.
55. Standards are beginning to rise because of the good planning that is now consistent across the school. Further positive features are the use of day-to-day assessment information to modify the planning and the careful tracking of the individual progress of each pupil's progress. Nevertheless, there is scope for further consideration of the provision for some of the oldest pupils in order to ensure that the set tasks are better matched to their needs and abilities.

MATHEMATICS

56. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection and are now above average. However, at the end of Key Stage 2 standards have remained broadly average. Nonetheless, there are notable signs of improvement by the end of Year 4 where many of the efforts to raise standards are clearly having a beneficial effect.
57. The pupils in Year 2 are achieving well, particularly those with potential for higher attainment. They organise and present their work in a manner which allows them to solve simple word and money problems using structured approaches. They add numbers to 100 accurately, know that the multiplication process can be performed in any order, understand place value and can identify lines of symmetry in simple shapes. The average attaining pupils understand multiplication using repeated addition, recognise simple fractions and can identify right angles in shapes. Overall, the pupils are making good progress. The work of the lower attaining pupils is neither as well presented and nor as carefully organised, but they are making good progress in their learning.
58. In Year 4, the pupils' work is well presented and reflects the high expectations that have now been established. The focus for each lesson is identified so that the pupils know what they are learning. Their work is of good quality and shows that the improvements in Key Stage 1 are being built upon effectively in lower Key Stage 2.
59. Scrutiny of the pupils' work in Year 6 shows that they have made rapid progress since the beginning of this academic year. Their work is now clearly structured and carefully presented; that of the pupils with the potential for higher attainment contains clear indications that they are achieving higher levels of attainment in some elements of mathematics. For example, they work confidently with both fractions and decimals. They can also find the area and perimeter of regular shapes. The average attaining pupils, although not as secure in their knowledge and the application of their skills, are working well at the level expected for their age. The lower attaining pupils use multiplication facts reasonably well and can classify both two and three-dimensional shapes. Overall at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly average at present, but there are positive signs that they should rise in the future as improvements in planning, teaching and assessment come to fruition.
60. The teaching of mathematics is very good in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4, and satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. Throughout the school, the lessons are well planned and the set tasks are carefully matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. However, in Years 5 and 6, where the pupils were taught by a temporary teacher, the demand made upon the pupils was not as well targeted, largely because he had only been teaching the pupils for a short time before the inspection began. In Years 1 and 2, the lessons are very well organised and the pupils are very well taught. In one lesson, they were sorting, classifying and organising items to display in pictograms. Through good direct teaching and activities carefully modified for different groups of pupils, they made good progress and achieved well. Information technology was also used to provide a parallel activity for the pupils. In Years 3 and 4, rapid mental arithmetic is used as an effective start to lessons. The main objectives for the lesson are made clear to the pupils because the teacher tells them, 'What I'm Looking For' (WILF). At the end of the lesson, she involves the pupils in both asking and answering questions so that she can assess the extent of their learning.
61. The arrangements for assessing and recording the pupils' progress are now in place and working well. The improvement activities in numeracy are having a positive effect on the pupils' progress. The co-ordinator, aided by a governor, is monitoring developments closely to make sure that standards in mathematics continue to rise.

SCIENCE

62. There have been some improvements since the last inspection. In the lessons seen during the latest inspection, good teaching ensured that the pupils made good progress in their learning. Scrutiny of their previous work also shows they have made good gains in their learning in the topics and themes they have covered, but there remain many aspects of the programme of study that are not yet being systematically taught. These gaps are most evident in Key Stage 2 where pupils are not conducting enough scientific

enquiry and investigation. The teachers have only very recently established an outline plan to include all elements of the science curriculum following the national guidance. This is the first step in a priority action plan to improve standards in science.

63. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are average. Most of the pupils are working at the expected level, but some are exceeding it. In one lesson observed, the pupils developed a secure understanding of the conditions in which plants grow. Their completed work shows the more able pupils can record their findings in words and simple diagrams, and in some cases draw clear conclusions from their investigation. For example, from an investigation into magnetism, one pupil clearly identified that 'not all types of metal are attracted to a magnet'. Whilst many pupils are not yet drawing this sort of conclusion, they can identify the properties of materials such as wood and metal.
64. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 are interested and well motivated. In one lesson, they improved their knowledge of insects and their habitats through careful observation. The teacher had planned and prepared the activities thoroughly, so that the pupils could make detailed observations through magnifying glasses. The information they gained in this lesson built successfully on fieldwork they had carried out previously. The teacher skilfully drew the lesson together at the end by playing a game of 'Insect Estate Agent' in which the pupils had to name the insect whose habitat was being described. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pupils made good gains in their learning through a series of teacher-led activities to prove that air is all around us. One pupil, who until recently had been on the special educational needs register, consistently provided a knowledgeable input to the lesson. The teaching assistant supported pupils on the special educational needs register effectively, thereby ensuring they were able to play a full part in the lesson. However, when the pupils were required to devise their own test to prove that air is all around, most of them were only able to replicate the teacher's earlier suggestions. This supports the view gained from scrutiny of their work that they have not had sufficient opportunity to develop their skills of scientific investigations.
65. The school is poorly resourced for teaching science, and the teachers have to borrow equipment for some lessons. This was the case, for instance, when magnifying glasses were needed to observe insects. The school must fully implement the action plan to improve provision and raise standards in science. **This is a key issue for action.**

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

66. These two areas of the curriculum are taught in blocks of lessons within a two-year rolling programme. During the inspection, a lesson in design and technology was seen in Key Stage 1 and an art lesson in Key Stage 2. A small amount of past work was made available for scrutiny, together with some work currently on display. The school has undertaken a thorough re-organisation of all its equipment and materials, but currently the resources for teaching these subjects are barely adequate.
67. The planning of what is to be taught in these two subjects has undergone a thorough review. The revised plans have recently been put in place, but are too new to ensure that skills learned early in the school will have been both well established and built upon in the older year groups. The new planning is designed to ensure that this will happen in future.
68. The standards of work are as expected for each stage and the underachievement identified in the last report is no longer evident. Some good work was seen in art in which the oldest pupils had used William Morris designs as a stimulus to paint stylised panels based on his wallpaper designs. Other pupils had worked with professional artists to produce good batik panels and prints using paint and various pattern-making materials. At times, the work in art is linked to history. This was the case when pupils observed and recreated Celtic designs as part of a topic on Boudicca and the early invaders. Good teaching in years 3 and 4 enabled the pupils to develop their observational skills as they drew and painted flowers, inspired by designs on a variety of wrapping paper. The pupils are developing an effective vocabulary for evaluating their own and others' work as they discussed the form of their chosen flower and made decisions about paint tones. The use of sketchbooks is at an early stage and is an aspect of the learning experience that the teachers know they need to develop. The younger children make pictures using paint, pastels, chalks and wax crayons satisfactorily, but no large, imaginative collage work was seen.

69. The recently produced planning procedures for design and technology make appropriate use of national guidance. There is a good match between the intended units of work and activities in other subjects such as history. For example, the pupils in Key Stage 1 made good progress as they constructed homes from found materials having previously looked at local houses. They planned their work beforehand by listing the materials they needed, and most were sufficiently dexterous to join paper and card to form a variety of shapes. They demonstrated well their ability to make appropriate decisions about the materials they needed for joining. The pupils achieved well in this lesson because the objectives for the activity were set out very clearly and they received very good support. The older pupils have engaged in appropriate activities designed to develop their ideas about structures and to help them appreciate factors such as appearance, appropriateness of materials and the use of various methods of construction. None of this work was available, but discussion with the pupils showed that they had responded positively to the activity and acquired a sense of design and fitness for purpose.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

70. Standards in geography and history are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. The position is similar to that recorded at the last inspection. At times, standards in some elements of both subjects are above average. This was evident in the recorded account of life in Victorian Britain and in work on the local area. The quality of teaching is good overall. The introductions to the lessons, the setting of clear objectives and the quality of questioning are very good overall. The recorded work of the past two terms indicates improving standards of work, but the school needs to improve the way the work is collated and presented. The present method of collecting together disparate loose sheets into paper folders, and others into books does not allow the teachers easily to review the work over time in order to track progress.
71. In geography and history, the pupils have used their research skills effectively. In geography, the pupils in Key Stage 2 have made detailed observations of the local environment, and studied photographs and maps of their area in order to raise questions and make judgements. However, they had few opportunities to use computer programs to record information using databases or simple pie charts. The oldest pupils are acquiring an appropriate geographical vocabulary. Some of the higher attainers referred to “human” and “physical” geography during initial discussion about a seaside location. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to compare and contrast their own village with a nearby town. They have used their observation skills to record some of the visual features of their village. It is obvious that the teachers have used good questioning techniques to prompt the pupils’ scrutiny of local buildings and enable them to reach conclusions about the kinds of jobs available in the area.
72. The same questioning techniques are used to stimulate the pupils’ thinking in their history lessons. The availability of food during a period of rationing in World War II was graphically illustrated because the teacher had brought in a sample of what each adult was allowed. This prompted the pupils to ask very relevant questions that led them to understand that access to shopping facilities then was very different from the availability of supermarkets today. Some good empathetic writing about the plight of children and general working conditions in Victorian Britain reflected an appropriate level of interest in the way life has changed since the mid 1800s. The emphasis on the teaching of basic historical skills in Key Stage 1 is appropriate. The pupils have considered items such as toys and homes in the past and compared them with their counterparts in the present day. This has enabled them to understand that the past can be represented by pictures and illustrations, by buildings and by artefacts.
73. The pupils show a good level of interest in learning about geography and history. Their questioning skills are developing well, but at times some of the oldest pupils do not listen well and are not as productive as they ought to be.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

74. Work to improve standards and provision in information and communication technology has only recently got underway. The teachers are undertaking a national training programme to increase their own knowledge and skills. A governor attended the initial three-hour session. Building work to create space for a small suite of computers has begun, and the teachers are currently developing a curriculum plan that will enable the pupils to use information technology across the curriculum.

75. During the course of the inspection there were very few opportunities for pupils to use computers. In Key Stage 1, the pupils were entering information about themselves during a mathematics lesson on data handling. They were confident and displayed a good range of skills that indicate that they are working at a level appropriate for their age. In Key Stage 2, information and communication technology is clearly not yet an integral part of the pupils' learning and consequently standards are not as high as they should be. Although there are examples of word-processed writing in English and bar graphs to display findings in science, the pupils' skills and knowledge are not being developed systematically as they move through the school. Moreover, information and communication technology is not being used to extend and enhance their learning across the curriculum.
76. The school is part of a cluster of schools that employs a technician. This provides the school with valuable support beyond the solving of technical problems and often enhances the teaching and learning. However, at the present time, the range of opportunities that the pupils have to develop their knowledge and skills within a carefully planned curriculum has not improved since the last inspection and therefore standards remain lower than they should be. There is an urgent need to enhance the provision for information and communication technology and raise the standards the pupils attain. **This is a key issue for action.**

MUSIC

77. The only first hand evidence of music available during the inspection was the good singing heard during school worship. The pupils sang well in tune and with marked enthusiasm. They paid good attention to their phrasing and clearly knew considerable portions of the hymns by heart. The repertoire is well chosen and good leadership is given through the high expectations the headteacher and other leaders of worship communicate to the pupils. A good feature was the total involvement of boys and girls across the age range.
78. The planning for music has been reviewed and has benefited from the contribution of a teacher who has specialist knowledge, but who is currently on leave. It indicates that the activities proposed include a good balance across all the elements outlined in the National Curriculum. There is evidence that when the revised curriculum is fully in place, the pupils will experience music from various countries and from different periods, often linked to their work in history.
79. The resources for music are being audited to ensure that they are of an appropriate range and quality so that the broader curriculum may be enriched through improved provision for this subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

80. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are achieving well and making good progress in ball skills because they are being very well taught. In one lesson, the pupils practised their throwing and catching skills in a good range of activities that included a game of bench ball. This provided both rigorous exercise and opportunities to improve their skills. The teacher used demonstrations very well to help the pupils to improve their dribbling skills and also emphasised the importance of safety and fair play. The pupils responded very well, worked enthusiastically and improved their skills as a result.
81. In Key Stage 2, the oldest pupils were observed in a gymnastics lesson. The standard and quality of their work is broadly average, but some pupils do not display the finesse and accuracy of movement that is expected of pupils of this age. Very few pupils know how to finish a sequence of movements with style. However, the pupils showed a good understanding of the importance of warming up. The teacher made appropriate use of demonstration and through a well-structured series of activities helped the pupils, often with numerous reminders, to improve their performance. Most pupils put a good deal of effort into their sequences of movement, but some lack the expected level of concentration and commitment to a high standard of physical performance.
82. The school has recently implemented a long-term curriculum plan that should ensure that the pupils' skills are developed systematically as they move through the school. It will provide the structure that is needed to build on the good work evident in Key Stage 1 and raise standards at the end of Key Stage 2 beyond

the present average level. Nevertheless, taken overall the situation is much better than when the school was last inspected because the teaching is stronger.

83. Although the school hall is small it is sufficient for the small classes that are currently in Key Stage 2. The hard play surface and field are also adequate for the number of pupils. The provision of extra-curricular sporting activities is less than is normally found. However, the headteacher used the school's good relations with the local college of higher education to provide additional specialist gymnastics and games lessons and both extra-curricular football tag rugby clubs last term. The school is trying hard to establish other links of this kind to provide the pupils with a range of interesting sporting opportunities. A tag rugby club will be run by the temporary teacher next term.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

84. The school follows the local syllabus for religious education. The teacher's planning has recently incorporated elements from the national guidance for this subject. Most pupils achieve well and attain standards that are generally in line with those outlined in the agreed syllabus and occasionally are a little higher. This was evident in a lesson where some of the oldest pupils showed a good recall of the key events leading up to Easter. This was because they were effectively prompted to recall earlier learning and then provided with a reinforcement activity that they recorded. It helped them to consolidate their understanding and increased their knowledge. The good overall standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.
85. The pupils in Key Stage 2 know that the Bible has two major parts and understand that the gospels describe events in the life and the ministry of Jesus. They are aware of the fact that other major religions, such as Islam, have their own specially revered books. They also understand that prayer is an important feature in the lives of people who express religious faith. Some of the recorded work on prayer positions in different faiths and prayers written by the pupils reflect sensitivity in the teaching of this aspect of religion. Learning about the life of Mother Teresa and her work with the poor in India has provided a stimulus for the pupils' own involvement in good causes, such as Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood and the Stroke Association.
86. The younger pupils have held discussions about how it feels to belong to a family, a club, their school and a church. The topic has made a very valuable contribution to their personal development and sense of identity. Their understanding of other faiths has been enhanced through a topic on Judaism where the provision of artefacts has aroused their curiosity and prompted them to ask questions. The younger pupils too have become aware of global good causes through being taught about Vision Aid in Africa.
87. The teaching is based on very sound planning. The teachers have a growing understanding of ways to provide a range of interesting activities to promote learning. Assessment is not yet well established, but the school is aware of the need for an appropriate way of assessing the work more formally as the recent planning becomes more established. The school also needs to consider how to increase the use of the range of attractive books now available for religious education. The pupils' contribution to discussion is often very interesting and worth recording in the form of whole class books.