

INSPECTION REPORT

**St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided
First School**

Droitwich Spa

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number:116877

Headteacher: Mrs Jessica Robinson

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 6 - 9 November 2000

Inspection number: 224099

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Snook
Date of previous inspection:	20 - 23 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mrs C A Field 9479	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
Mr K Oliver 1329	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mr I Nelson 2220	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Equality of opportunity Special educational needs	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mrs J Cox 25074	Team inspector	Provision for children in the Foundation Stage English Art and design	
Mrs B Cloke 2799	Team inspector	Physical education	
Mr I Chearman 28170	Team Inspector	Mathematics Geography History	Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided First School is situated near to the centre of Droitwich Spa, and serves its local community. There are 417 pupils on roll: 213 boys and 204 girls aged between four and nine years. Pupils' attainment on entry into reception is above average. One per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is low compared to the national average. Three per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds but none are learning English as an additional language. Fifty-four pupils have special educational needs. Two of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs in place. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, is below the national average. The school's motto is "learning through confidence".

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Peter's has a warm and very caring ethos in which good team spirit underpins the school's many successes. There is good leadership, good quality teaching and in consequence pupils achieve good standards in nearly all subjects at seven and nine years. Pupils benefit from a rounded education and leave the school very well prepared for the next stage of education. Information and communication technology (ICT) has only recently been given the push it needs, and more remains to be done to lift standards. School managers have a good idea about what works best in school and why, but arrangements for monitoring and evaluation lack system. The school has prioritised both of these aspects for improvement in its current development plan. The school receives a lower level of funding than most schools, but manages its finances very efficiently and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Ensures pupils achieve very good standards in English at seven and nine years, and very good standards in music at the end of school.
- Through consistently good quality teaching and effective learning support, enables pupils to make good progress in all subjects except ICT.
- Expects and achieves high standards of behaviour from pupils who respond extremely positively, have lots of self-confidence but also show great respect for others.
- Makes good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Has a highly effective headteacher who ensures that there is very clear educational direction and that the school's aims and values are reflected in its work.
- Has very good links with parents and the community.

What could be improved

- The school's systems for finding out what is done well and what could be more effective so that all pupils achieve a fast rate of learning.
- Pupils have not been given enough opportunities to develop their ICT skills and as a result standards achieved are below the level expected at seven and nine years.

The strengths in school far outweigh the weaknesses, however areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since 1996 the school has made good progress in responding to the specific issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. The school development plan is now a useful tool for advancing major priorities. Subject policies have been updated and there is good quality guidance to aid teachers' planning across the curriculum. The school has implemented National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very successfully and as a result pupils develop their basic skills at a good rate. Teaching at all ages is now much more effective than it was, especially in the Foundation Stage. The provision made for the youngest pupils in school is no longer a weakness. The good attention given to these aspects has resulted in much improved standards from four to seven years and sustained high standards for pupils aged from seven to nine years in all subjects but ICT. The quality of education being provided is much better than it was in 1996, and the school is a happy place of learning.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	B	B	C
Writing	A	B	B	C
Mathematics	B	B	B	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Similar schools are those with up to 8% of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Standards attained by pupils in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics were above average. The school's improvement in results over four years has kept pace with the national trend. Since 1996 standards have been above the national average. Compared to similar schools standards are average. Inspection findings show standards by most seven-year-olds to be well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Standards are maintained at this high level in Year 4. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has been successful in enabling pupils to work with increasing speed and accuracy and standards are rising as a result. There is scope for further improvement. The school's strategy for literacy has had a very positive impact on raising standards in English. Pupils achieve well in all other subjects except ICT where standards are unsatisfactory because pupils have not yet been given sufficient opportunity to practise and refine their skills. A new ICT suite is in use, and the school has a clear plan of action aimed at raising standards quickly.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show real enthusiasm for learning and try hard to do their very best work for their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils get on extremely well together and are considerate of the feelings of others. Behaviour is nearly always self-disciplined whatever the situation. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school and is very successfully underpinning the good learning taking place. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to take a lead in organising appropriate aspects of lessons and school life, though there is potential for these to be widened so that pupils can use their own initiative more.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are happy to come to school and most are very punctual at the start of the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	The Foundation Stage (reception)	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection, especially in the Foundation Stage. This has resulted in good learning for most pupils during their time at school. Pupils are taught how to be effective learners and work purposefully and productively in most lessons. The weaknesses in teaching reported in 1996, have all been addressed. Children up to the age of five are receiving a good quality start to their education and building firm foundations for later learning. They have already settled into good work habits, getting on with tasks sensibly and without fuss. In the 88 lessons observed during this inspection, teaching was of satisfactory or better quality in 95 per cent. In 41 per cent of lessons teaching was of good quality and in 20 per cent of very good or excellent quality. Five per cent of lessons (four in total) were unsatisfactory. In some lessons the work set is not targeted precisely enough to ensure that all pupils make the maximum amount of progress over their time at school, especially the higher attainers. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and results in these pupils developing well against their individual targets. The best teaching observed during the inspection was in Year 4 and this leads to pupils making rapid progress in their last year at school. Skills of literacy are very well taught. The teaching of numeracy is good. This ensures that pupils develop secure knowledge and understanding in these areas and build up their basic skills confidently and systematically. Through the worthwhile experiences being provided by teachers across the curriculum pupils are benefiting from a well-rounded education. The very best teaching and learning in the school has yet to be sufficiently shared.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very relevant to the needs and interests of young children. The pupils benefit from interesting and exciting experiences. Senior managers recognise how vital it is that basic skills are at the heart of the curriculum in order to give their pupils a head start. The community makes a very good contribution to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There is a very good team effort to ensure that individual needs are well responded to and kept under constant review. Good progress is the result.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school nurtures pupils' spiritual growth well. Their social development is very well cultivated both in lessons and in the wider aspects of school life. Good attention is paid to pupils' moral and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. All pupils in school are known as individuals. The procedures in place for improving behaviour and attendance are very good. Insufficient use is made of the good procedures for assessing the progress made by pupils to guide curricular planning in mathematics, science and most foundation subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. Many parents give time generously and their contributions make a good impact on the life and work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives very clear direction to the work of the school and is ably supported by a united and determined management team. Some co-ordinators have yet to assume the full mantle of their management responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met and are very efficient in supporting the work of the school as critical friends.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Governors and senior managers are aware of achieving best value in their decision-making. They have useful insights into what is working best in school and how weaker areas can be improved, but the systems in place to assess, monitor and evaluate this lack rigour. Managers are well placed to make the school even better than it is in the future.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staffing, accommodation and resources are all supporting positively the good quality of education being provided. The school is upholding well the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school.• Behaviour is good and pupils are helped to become mature and responsible.• Teaching is good and there are high expectations.• Parents are comfortable to approach the school with problems or concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents would like to know more about how well their children are doing at school and would like to play a bigger role in supporting their academic progress.• Some parents would like more activities outside lessons to be provided for younger pupils.

Fifty-three per cent of parents responded to the questionnaire and twenty-four parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector. The inspection team agrees that more information about how well pupils are doing would be beneficial to parents, especially the sharing of individual targets. The inspection team disagrees that more opportunities outside lessons should be provided. The quality and range of the existing extra-curricular programme are very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 At the time of the previous inspection standards at the end of the infant stage were judged to be satisfactory overall in all subjects with some good achievements reported in speaking and listening and music. Standards were judged to be higher than expected at the end of Year 4 with good progress reported in all subjects with the exception of information technology, where it was satisfactory. Very good standards were reported in music. Since the time of the previous inspection, standards have improved in the infant stage, and have been sustained at their high level in Year 4. There is no significant variation between the achievement of boys and girls. Today pupils make good progress in all subjects except information and communication technology (ICT). The development of ICT has fallen behind that seen in many schools. Pupils have not been given sufficient opportunities to build up the skills they need. Standards today are below the level expected for seven and nine-year-olds. The need to raise standards in ICT is a key issue for the school to address.

2 Standards attained by pupils in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics were above average. The school's improvement in standards over four years has kept pace with the national trend. A year ago, in the 1999 National Curriculum tests writing levels at the higher level 3 were below average. The school has tackled this weakness well under the positive influence of the English co-ordinator, and the much higher standards this year are confirmation that its approach to making improvement is the right one. Compared to similar schools (those with up to eight per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals) standards are average. Although it is not a statutory responsibility, the school has agreed targets with the local education authority aimed at maintaining current levels of performance of seven-year-olds. Senior managers have not yet given attention to assessing the potential for making targets more challenging so that attainments in 2001 compare more favourably with those of similar schools.

3 Inspection findings show standards to be well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science in Year 2. Standards are maintained at this high level in Year 4. The standards pupils' achieve at nine years exceed the average attained in the county. A significant number of pupils are achieving very high standards at nine years, especially in English. Pupils make accelerated progress in their last year at school because of highly effective teaching.

4 The school's strategy for literacy has been very well implemented and has had a very positive impact on raising standards in English. Pupils develop skills of a high order in reading and the overall level of attainment in reading is well above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils are able to make out unfamiliar words by using clues from the context and they use phonic skills very confidently. Writing skills are very good and used widely in all subjects so that pupils get plenty of practice in writing for different purposes. Pupils can plan and structure their work accurately. They write creatively and for various audiences. Pupils have very good speaking and listening skills and are confident in discussion. The use of Standard English is good and pupils use a wide range of vocabulary when putting forward their ideas.

5 Teachers have introduced the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and this is enabling pupils to work with increasing speed and accuracy. A new scheme has been brought into use this term to support teaching and learning of the wider mathematics curriculum. There is an absence of recorded data to enable the school to evaluate how best standards in mathematics, especially for high attainers, can be raised to the same high level as English. Setting by ability from Year 2 onwards in mathematics is proving beneficial but in some sets the

level of work demanded of higher attaining pupils lacks challenge. Workshops held with other local schools for more able mathematicians are a positive feature but are too infrequent to have a significant impact on raising standards. The drive to raise standards in mathematics so far has not been forceful enough. The deputy headteacher has taken the lead role in monitoring classroom practice but the findings have not been used systematically to promote the best practice observed within numeracy hour lessons in an endeavour to lift standards.

6 Standards in science are above the level expected at seven and nine years. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to choose their own resources, organise their work and to discuss what they observe. This gives pupils good opportunities to 'learn by doing'. The level of pupils' basic scientific general knowledge is above average and pupils have good command of scientific vocabulary in oral and written pieces. Report writing is of especially good quality. Progress is good overall; however opportunities for learning are not extended to meet the needs of the very highest attaining pupils. The school does not set targets for individual pupils' expected achievement in science in the way it does in English and mathematics.

7 Pupils achieve well in all other subjects except ICT, where standards are unsatisfactory because pupils have not yet been given sufficient opportunity to practise and refine their skills. In classrooms, computers are often switched on but not in use and there is little attention given in lesson planning to how ICT may support learning in other subjects. In the ICT lessons seen during the inspection, pupils used computers with confidence to process simple text, add and subtract in mathematics and to produce pictures in the style of Seurat in art work, for example. Older pupils were observed accessing the Internet to find out about local flooding problems in Worcester. There was very little evidence of previous work done on the computer to show levels of competence on aspects like word processing or control technology. From discussion with Year 4 pupils it was apparent that they had not had regular opportunities to build up their ICT skills when they were younger. Since the time of the previous inspection the school has added to its computer hardware stock, and opened a new ICT suite. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have benefited from the enthusiasm of the new co-ordinator who has introduced new software to support basic skills development, and to extend the use of ICT across the curriculum. The school has a sound platform on which to build future improvement at a good rate.

8 The school gives very good attention to basic skills but also ensures that pupils receive very worthwhile experiences across the curriculum, especially in art and music. Pupils make good progress in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical development. Pupils make very good progress in swimming. Singing in school is joyous and uplifting and the standards attained are high. As pupils get older they make very good progress in all aspects of music. The quality of pupils' performance in music is a strength of provision. Extra-curricular experiences provided in sport and music add considerably to the rapid progress some pupils make, especially those who have been assessed as having extra talents or gifts.

9 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning support staff, both in lessons and in small groups outside the classroom. As a result they make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, particularly in English and mathematics. In other subjects teachers support them by spending extra time with them or by giving them simple ways to record their work. This makes it easier to focus on the subject of the lesson rather than having to worry too much about their reading and spelling, so that they achieve well.

10 Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five with a range of social and early learning skills. In many cases, these skills are more advanced than usual for the age-group. As a result of the good provision, children make

good progress in all the areas of their work. Inspection findings suggest that by the end of the reception year the children's attainments are above average in all the areas defined by the Early Learning Goals¹. The reception classes provide calm and stimulating learning environments where the children feel happy, confident and secure. As a result they settle well and get off to a good start to their education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 St. Peter's school is a happy place and pupils have, with very few exceptions, a very positive attitude to their school. Parents are extremely pleased with the way the school promotes pupils' positive attitudes and values. Strengths reported about pupils' attitudes to work, and behaviour at the time of the previous inspection have all been maintained. Pupils are keen to learn. Occasionally, they become restless when the lesson is not engaging their attention. In some classes the level of noise rises to an unacceptable level when natural exuberance is not checked quickly enough. The great majority of pupils enjoy their school days and work hard. They are mostly attentive, follow instructions well and are capable of working either on their own or in pairs and groups. They make good use of the wide range of out-of-school activities such as the computer and gymnastics clubs and various music-making opportunities.

12 Pupils respect each other and the adults who work with them. They are invariably kind and considerate. During playtimes they look out for each other and in class they help each other in a variety of ways. In Year 1, for example, a pupil, without prompting, came to the aid of another who had difficulty tying up her shoelaces.

13 Behaviour in class, in the playground and around the premises is generally very good. Pupils are well aware of the school-wide code of conduct and in every classroom there are reminders, which they have helped develop, of what is expected of them. A well-understood system of rewards and sanctions is used to deal with any bad behaviour, which does occur. There have been no exclusions in the past twelve months.

14 Pupils are pleased with each other's success and generous with their praise and applause. Pupils in a Year 3 class, for example, spontaneously applauded a fellow pupil who produced a particularly successful and imaginative shape poem. The highlight of a junior assembly was the shared delight when some pupils were given certificates for achievements, which included not only high quality work but sensible and mature attitudes as well.

15 Pupils willingly accept the responsibilities, which are given to them during the course of their school day. Reception pupils conscientiously prepare for their next lessons and help their teachers clear up. Pupils in Year 4 calmly and maturely carry out their duties as messengers and register monitors. The school has identified as a priority the setting up of a pupil council which will enable those who are democratically elected by their class-mates to have a say in the running of the school.

16 Attendance, which is above the national average, is very good and there are very few problems with punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 Teaching is better than at the time of the previous inspection. This is largely because good attention has been paid by the headteacher and senior managers to monitoring practice and providing critical feedback on individual strengths and weaknesses.

¹ Early Learning Goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Additionally, guidance has been produced for most subjects to assist teachers' lesson planning. The successful implementation of national strategies in numeracy and literacy has given structure to lessons that in most cases helps the balance of lessons and the pace at which they are delivered. All teachers now set out the key learning objectives in most of the lessons they teach. Marking is of a particularly high standard, especially in English. Teachers are focussing on what pupils need to do next to improve their work. All of these initiatives are paying dividends as reflected in the improved standards achieved by pupils, significantly for those between four and seven years. Consistently good or better teaching leads to pupils making accelerated progress in Year 4, many of whom are achieving well above what is expected of them, particularly in English. Teachers in Year 4 classes target individuals very carefully so that the work set for them challenges them to do as well as they can. There is scope to develop the target setting the school has begun. There are still shortcomings in some aspects of teaching. For example, the use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is not used well enough. The teaching of ICT has yet to make sufficient impact on the standards pupils achieve. There is variable use of assessment to guide lesson planning and the best practice has not yet been shared. The school has excellence in aspects of teaching that management has not exploited to the full in influencing the work of the school. Parents hold very positive views about the good teaching at St Peter's First School.

18 In 95 per cent of the lessons observed during this inspection teaching was of satisfactory or better quality. The investment in staff development has been well made and this is reflected in the good levels of subject knowledge and confidence to teach the National Curriculum that teachers now have. In 41 per cent of lessons teaching was of good quality and in 20 per cent of very good or excellent quality. Five per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. Teaching is judged to be good overall but there is potential for it to be better focused on ensuring that all pupils make the maximum amount of progress over their time at school, especially higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science. Teaching of children in the Foundation Stage and of pupils with special educational needs is good. The best teaching observed during the inspection was in Year 2 and Year 4, and as result pupils make accelerated progress. This is because these teachers have high expectations of what the range of pupils are capable of achieving by the end of the lesson and so better rates of learning are achieved. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and is leading to pupils developing very secure basic skills.

19 The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Teaching is far more geared to enabling the children to learn successfully through structured play. The limited opportunities for children to 'learn by doing' was a weakness identified by the previous inspection that no longer exists. Teaching is confident and lessons are generally well structured to engage the children's interest, and make learning enjoyable. During this inspection two physical development lessons were observed where the teaching was unsatisfactory because too little attention had been given to planning exactly what gains the children were expected to make. The organisation of these lessons left a lot to be desired, and to some extent they became free-for-alls, though the children's safety was never compromised. Teamwork supports learning particularly well in the Foundation Stage; all staff pull together in the children's best interests and this has a good knock-on effect in terms of their personal and social development. Very good attention is paid to promoting the children's self-esteem and self-worth whilst they are effectively guided onto the next 'stepping stone'² towards the Early Learning Goals when ready.

20 Pupils with special educational needs are taught effectively. Teachers liaise well with learning support assistants to ensure that they are well informed and can help pupils with their tasks either in the classrooms or in groups withdrawn from lessons to work in the library

² 'Stepping stones' are the stages that pupils go through to meet the Early Learning Goals.

or on 'the green'; an area that forms part of the foyer. Teachers and support assistants are familiar with pupils' individual education plans and make sure the tasks are relevant to them so that they make good progress.

21 The five per cent of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in four lessons: one in English and one in mathematics in Year 3, and two physical development lessons in reception reported on above. The unsatisfactory lessons in Year 3 were largely due to ineffective behaviour management. Although the great majority of lessons observed were at least satisfactory, there are refinements in practice that would ensure that all pupils, especially high attainers are enabled to learn effectively. These are as follows:

- the quality of short-term planning throughout the school, although satisfactory overall, is variable. In the classes where teaching has shortcomings this weakness is exacerbated and results in unsatisfactory conditions for learning;
- assessment of learning outcomes is too informal and is not used sufficiently well to assist the planning of future lessons;
- individual targets set in English and mathematics are not used explicitly in lessons nor shared well enough with pupils and their parents so that they can play a fuller part in meeting them.

These aspects slow down rates of learning and are therefore prime areas for the school to address.

22 Positive features of teaching, demonstrated throughout the school by most teachers, include the successful teaching of basic skills, high expectations, good subject knowledge, a good range of methods and generally effective management of pupils. There is very efficient use of resources and effective setting of homework. These positive features lead to most pupils acquiring good knowledge, improving skills and confident understanding in all the subjects they study and good gains in their learning in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and work with good application and perseverance. They are very proud of their achievements and are well motivated by the positive reward systems operating in classes.

23 In the most successful lessons, typically in Year 2 and Year 4, pupils are given challenging work, encouraged to tackle some things for themselves and are clear about what they need to do next in order to improve. This was well demonstrated in a literacy hour in Year 2. The teacher had skilfully organised group-work so that all pupils were working at a cracking pace on tasks that had been set up to stretch them as well as being enjoyable. One group working with the teacher read *Little Mouse Bears* together and then answered questions based on the story line. The teachers drew out extended answers from pupils, asking for more detail and better use of vocabulary rather than accepting just the first response. In this way, pupils' thinking skills were developed. Another group worked independently adding 'ing' to words such as 'slope' and 'hop'. They quickly realised the convention for doubling up the last letter of some words but not others when adding 'ing'. They used the dictionary to check that spellings were accurate and the thesaurus to find alternative words that meant the same. They used their new learning to write clues about an animal without naming it so that others in the class had to use the clues to guess what was being described. In the plenary session everyone shared what they had done and some pupils were rewarded with 'well done' badges made by the student supporting the class. Throughout the lesson a very good pace was maintained with the teacher making regular checks to encourage and stimulate good progress for all pupils.

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

24 In 1996 when the school was inspected previously weak aspects of the curriculum were reported in mathematics, design and technology and ICT. There was no whole school system for assessment. These aspects have all been appropriately addressed with a good measure of success, though more remains to be done in the use of assessment to guide curricular planning. There is, however, a dearth of music, art and literature from a range of different cultures and countries and this was a criticism of the last inspection report. Overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.

25 The curriculum is carefully planned to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education. New schemes of work are being introduced through the school development plan to bring content into line with the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The Foundation Stage curriculum based on national learning goals has been implemented effectively. Provision in this area is now good and this is a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection. The recent installation of a new computer suite has raised the previously unsatisfactory level of provision for information and communication technology to a satisfactory level. However, this is a very recent change and more work needs to be done to ensure that teachers make better use of provision. The overall quality and range of pupils' learning opportunities are good for both boys and girls. Provision for personal and social education is good and many opportunities are sensitively structured into assemblies and integrated into teaching. Strategies for teaching sex education and drugs awareness are appropriate. Homework is satisfactory overall, though some teachers make better use of this than others. All pupils regularly take reading books home.

26 The headteacher and staff are strongly committed to raising standards. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adopted and well implemented and are contributing to the high standards achieved in English and above average in mathematics. Improvements include the increasing accuracy and speed of pupils' mental mathematics and the quality of their spelling and extended writing. The strategies are also providing a sharper focus for the planning of what pupils have to learn. Teachers take advantage of opportunities to reinforce skills and knowledge acquired in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum; for instance in manipulating numerical data in science and in extending creative writing in history and geography.

27 A range of other learning opportunities enhances the curriculum. The provision for science is extended by using a wild life area. Many well-structured visits support learning across a range of subjects. For example, the visits to Charlecote Manor and Chedworth Roman Villa and that proposed to Bath to support history are very worthwhile. In addition, the use of the locality for geography studies enriches the opportunities for pupils to develop their research and enquiry skills. Many visitors are invited to share their life experiences with pupils and this brings enrichment to the curriculum. For example, mothers bring their babies to classes in Key Stage 1 and this helps pupils with their study of chronology. Grandparents and friends talk about their experiences in the world wars to support history topic work. From fire safety to road safety, and from the rain forest workshop to the Greek theatre workshop, the list is impressive and long. The school has very good links to the local and wider community to support learning and uses them very well.

28 The school has good links with other educational institutions to promote learning through the 'pyramid' structure. Continuity for curriculum between phases has been agreed as the national schemes for history and geography have been introduced to the school. The mathematics workshops to promote problem-solving activities for very able mathematicians is a good idea and provides benefit for pupils. An arts activity week is planned for next term.

29 The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Year 4 pupils have a very rich environment with well organised clubs providing a very good range of good quality activities giving opportunities in the arts, intellectual and sporting interests. The choir meets regularly and Key Stage 2 pupils reach high standards in singing. There is equal opportunity for pupils attending these activities, for example, girls and boys were seen to play touch rugby together.

30 The good support provided for pupils with special educational needs, especially those with statements, ensures that they take as full a part as possible in all activities and that they are helped to meet the targets set in their individual education plans. The last inspection judged that the higher attaining pupils were not challenged enough to maximise their learning. Although there is improvement in some subjects such as English, the provision is still inconsistent, especially in science and mathematics. The school has a policy for the more able and gifted pupils but provision is not yet co-ordinated fully.

31 Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is soundly promoted through acts of collective worship when pupils are given time to reflect and invited to join in prayers. Worship is introduced with music to set an appropriate reflective tone and pupils respond well, entering and leaving quietly. A table with a cross and a candle provide a focal point. The candle is lit as the pupils are invited to close their eyes to pray. The quality of the singing in assemblies, in lessons and in after school choir practice is joyous, and uplifting and raises the spirit. Occasionally teachers miss opportunities for quiet reflection within lessons as for example when a class worked on computers to draw trees on a graphics program without ever looking out of the windows to admire or reflect on the beauty of the trees around the school grounds. In other lessons however such opportunities are included as when a Year 4 class spent time reflecting on the moods created by pictures and by music.

32 Provision for moral development is good. Pupils agree class rules and codes of conduct and these are displayed on the walls of their classrooms. Teachers regularly reinforce them and encourage good behaviour through effective use of praise for pupils behaving well. They also recognise good behaviour and achievements through assemblies and a simple awards system that the pupils like. Teachers are very good role models for their pupils, treating them with respect at all times although occasionally they are inconsistent in their use of sanctions so that some pupils are more severely dealt with for inappropriate behaviour than others. Teachers expect pupils to behave well in lessons and around the school and as a consequence they do.

33 Provision for social development is very good. Pupils are given good opportunities to work together in many subjects including ICT where they share computers and produce a picture or alter font sizes and types. In music they work together to produce simple accompaniments to poems. In physical education they play games together. They also collaborate well in science investigations and sustain their concentration well on independent tasks in literacy and numeracy lessons. The school arranges a wide range of visits which help to develop pupils' social skills and invites visitors into school to work with the pupils. Some classes display a list of the jobs each pupil is expected to take responsibility for and the school runs a project to collect Christmas gifts to send to Romania which pupils support well. Pupils have limited opportunities for social development through having tasks and responsibilities around the school.

34 Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils learn about their own town and heritage including the local churches. Through their religious education lessons they also learn about other religions and cultures at Key Stage 2. They take part in music festivals and arts weeks and enjoy listening to a range of music. They enjoy good quality literature, including poetry, in reading lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35 St Peter's takes good care of its pupils who are closely supervised throughout the school day. It pays great attention to the health, safety and security of all pupils and has dealt with hazards such as the uneven surface at the main entrance, which the last inspection highlighted. Many of the staff are trained first aiders and are well equipped to deal with playground cuts and grazes on the spot. Initiatives such as the recent 'safe school' campaign demonstrate that the school is vigilant and always looking for ways to improve the safety and security of the whole site. Satisfactory child protection procedures are in place.

36 The school has very good arrangements for ensuring regular attendance and attendance is consistently better than the national average. Registration and the computer-based attendance records are very good. Well-established informal and formal systems are used to deal with any problems, which do arise. Pupils' general standard of behaviour is very good because they know what is expected of them. The Good Behaviour Code is on posters throughout the school and every class has its own set of rules which pupils know and follow. When bad behaviour does occur, a system of rewards and sanctions is used to deal with it fairly and promptly. Bullying is not a major issue. Nevertheless, in case a problem does come up, the school has good procedures for tackling it.

37 Assessment procedures were highlighted for improvement in the previous report. Steady progress has been made in improving them. The school is now using the results of a wide range of assessments, including baseline (start of school) tests, SATs results, nationally recognised schemes and teachers' own assessments to collect information on how their pupils are performing, to spot trends and compare St Peter's achievements with other schools. The school has good systems for tracking the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The individual education plans are regularly reviewed and fresh targets set. Support staff regularly record the day-to-day progress that pupils with special educational needs are making, particularly in literacy lessons. A new policy has been written and the co-ordinator for assessment is ready for the challenge of leading cohesive implementation across the school, although her time is very pressured. Parents have identified that they would like to know more about how well their children are doing at school.

38 The actual quality and range of assessment does however vary between subjects and teachers. The school acknowledges that an absence of recorded data in the past has not helped develop practice and this is being given attention. English, particularly in Years 3 and 4, is the most sophisticated and successful, closely followed by mathematics and science. A comprehensive system has been devised for ICT but has yet to be implemented. Assessment of other subjects such as art, geography and physical education has yet to be developed.

39 A new assessment policy was introduced in September 2000 and the school is working on a system of target setting linked to pupils' individual records of achievement. However a crucial weakness of the current situation and systems is that the school is not, in the majority of subjects, using the information, which it gathers from all its assessments to make, monitor and revise plans for individual pupils' education and general development. There is too much dependence on individual class teacher's assessments and, apart from in English and some aspects of mathematics and science, there is no uniform approach to assessment. The use of assessment to guide pupils' progress is an aspect for improvement identified by this inspection.

40 Teachers know their pupils very well. They are aware of individual pupils' learning abilities and personal strengths and weaknesses. They provide positive support and encouragement. Praise in the classroom, stickers and a variety of merit awards are the norm. Assemblies are used to celebrate and reward effort and achievement. In a junior assembly for example, two pupils were given pens because their handwriting was now good enough to

warrant them. Another pupil, new to the school, was given a certificate for trying really hard and improving the standard of his work. Other pupils were visibly pleased by these successes and generously praised the award winners.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 Parents are happy to send their children to St Peter's. They are confident that the school is a welcoming and caring community, which is helping their children to learn, mature and make progress. They find the headteacher and the rest of the staff supportive and approachable. They value the way that the school is concerned, not only for their children's education, but also for their general well-being. The introduction of a home-school agreement has been a positive feature in supporting the good partnership with parents.

42 Standard documents such as St Peter's prospectus, *Learning Through Confidence* are comprehensive and well produced. Newsletters and notice boards usefully keep parents in touch with day-to-day issues, developments and dates.

43 Formal arrangements for keeping parents informed of their children's progress are good. At the beginning of the school year parents are sent information about the curriculum. Meetings in the autumn and spring terms provide parents with the opportunity for one-to-one discussions with teachers about plans, targets and progress. Near one hundred per cent attendance is the norm and the school is happy to meet, at a mutually convenient time, the small number of parents who are unable to attend. End of year reports are comprehensive, providing summaries of what pupils have been working on as well as the progress they have made, across the whole curriculum. However, the targets shared in discussion with parents are not a feature of written reports. Pupils in Year 4 contribute to their own reports. Parents generally are pleased with these arrangements but some feel that the autumn meeting is too early in the term. Also some parents feel that the amount of one to one time that they have with teachers is too short. The team agrees that this is one aspect the school could usefully look to refine.

44 The school has an open door policy, which means that parents can call in as and when the need arises to talk to the headteacher and staff about any aspect of their children's progress. Parents are committed to the St Peter's home school agreement, which has been in place for the last two years. A combined reading log and home-school diary helps parents support their children's reading and other homework and keep in touch with teachers. In spite of the above comprehensive arrangements a minority of parents feel the need for more information about their children's progress principally because they wish to contribute more to their children's education. The school is aware of this criticism and is seeking ways to improve communications further.

45 Some parents feel that there should be more out of out-of-school activities, particularly at Key Stage 1. However, the inspection team's findings are that the school already has a particularly wide range of out-of-school activities, which are matched well to pupils' interests and needs, and enhance their learning.

46 A small number of parents work in the school as support staff. They obviously enjoy their work and are committed to the life and work of the school. There are also many other parents and friends who voluntarily give their time and talents to the school. Their work enhances the quality of the pupils' education. They come in to school to listen to pupils read, and help on trips. They support art and craft activities, cookery and various clubs. Some specialise and work with a particular teacher or group of pupils. There is a very active and successful parents' association that organises social and fund-raising events throughout the school year. Parents always support these events and community occasions such as school concerts are invariably filled to capacity.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47 The strengths identified in leadership and management at the time of the previous inspection have all been sustained despite staff changes. Good improvements have been made to the issues identified for development at that time, for example the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The school is now better than it was and is continuing to become even more effective because of the good leadership and management.

48 The headteacher gives very clear direction to the work of the school. She has good leadership skills and is moving the school forward. She is ably supported by a united and determined management team who between them have good insights into the strengths and weaknesses in school. Posts of responsibility have been given to two key stage managers who work very effectively. They have good oversight of the issues facing their colleagues in the different departments and see that these are aired at senior management team (SMT) meetings. The role of deputy head is currently being revised to give more clarity to the governors' expectations of the number two post in the school. The four members of the SMT each take responsibility for a major aspect of the school's work; English, mathematics, science and assessment. This is a useful way of ensuring that they keep abreast of the key elements of the school's work. The down-side is that the four people involved are over-stretched and cannot always do as much as they would like to, especially since three of them are class-based and have very little release time to carry out specific management tasks such as monitoring. The consequence is that aspects of assessment, monitoring and evaluation are carried out, but little is recorded to aid school improvement. Because time is so pressured the SMT tends to be reactive to issues rather than pro-active and makes too little use of emerging assessment data to target identified priorities.

49 Staff morale is good and there is united determination to do things well. Some co-ordinators have yet to assume the full mantle of their management responsibilities for example in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in classes other than their own.

50 When staff work to improve the things they are responsible for, they are often successful. For example, the strong lead given by the co-ordinators for Key Stage 1 and reception, has resulted in very effective provision being made for children in the Foundation Stage. The co-ordinator for ICT has worked hard to establish the computer suite, develop the scheme of work and produce a comprehensive assessment system. All of these developments are very recent and the benefits have yet to be felt. However, given the good rate of progress made in developing ICT in such a short space of time, this suggests that improved standards in ICT will follow soon. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that the Code of Practice for special educational needs is meeting requirements. She keeps up-to-date with the administration well and pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly, but she has only partial knowledge of the quality of provision within classes. To date the co-ordinator has not had sufficient time to monitor how well pupils with special educational needs are being taught in all years. She liaises effectively with neighbouring schools to try to meet the needs of pupils identified as gifted or talented.

51 The governing body meets regularly and is at full strength. Minutes of meetings are thorough and show good awareness of the issues facing the school and educational initiatives that are current, for example performance management. Governors fulfil all statutory obligations effectively. Governors visit the school often and report their observations back to meetings via written reports that show good insights into the quality of teaching and learning. Co-ordinators attend governors' meetings to report on policy and practice. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met and are very efficient in supporting the work of the school as critical friends. Governors and managers are aware of seeking best value in their decision-making and have growing awareness about what is

working best in school and how weaker areas can be improved, though the procedures in place to support this work lack system and structure. Governors are applying the principles of best value with increasing confidence in the various aspects of their work.

52 Staffing levels are good and managers ensure that individual skills are used to best effect in providing a good quality of education. Resources are of good quality and add to the quality of both teaching and learning. The accommodation although architecturally pleasing, imposes limitations on some aspects of learning; for example the library is accessed by stairs and is confined to a small loft-type space, so it is difficult for younger pupils to use it on their own. The hall is cramped when pupils do dance or gym. The staff work around such problems and so pupils' education does not suffer. Governors are meticulous in their assessment of health and safety risks and are currently seeking ways of using space differently and extending the buildings if finances can be found.

53 Finance is budgeted very well and set against clearly demarcated priorities. Additional funding is targeted carefully on those for whom it is intended, for example pupils receiving additional support in literacy. Financial management and control are secure. The school has a below average amount to spend on each pupil and achieves good value for money in the good quality of education provided.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54 The school is more effective than it was at the time of the previous inspection four years ago. It is not complacent and has tried to keep moving forward to ensure that pupils get the best deal possible during their time there. Management, teaching, learning and standards in all but ICT are at least good. There is no doubt, either in school or in evidence from inspection, that things can be even better. Some of what the school does is very good indeed.

55 Given this, and to make an already good school even better, senior managers and governors should:

1. Raise standards in ICT by ensuring that:

- teachers in all years take full advantage of the new ICT facilities;
- pupils get more time to practise and refine their skills;
- ICT is explicitly planned for, and used, to support learning across the curriculum.

(Paragraphs: 1, 7, 17, 25, 50, 78, 86, 108, 114, 115)

2. Extend assessment, monitoring and evaluation practices in order to raise standards still further

- at the class teacher level by:

- ensuring that all lesson plans have clear and detailed objectives for the full range of pupils in the class and that these are actively pursued throughout the lesson;
- using assessment of prior learning to set challenging targets for pupils and clear outcomes for lessons;
- sharing individual targets with pupils and their parents so that they can play a fuller part in meeting them.

- at senior management level by:

- clarifying what roles and responsibilities the senior management team has individually and collectively in assessing, monitoring and evaluating the work of the school;
- reviewing the quality and impact of planning and assessment through regular and systematic monitoring and making sure outcomes are recorded;
- establishing a programme that identifies the best teaching and learning to be shared and exchanged;
- enabling co-ordinators to build the necessary skills, ensuring that they have time and opportunity to undertake classroom observations to check on quality and standards in the subjects they co-ordinate so that they can play a full part in school improvement planning and action;
- using data analysis to project pupils' likely attainments and targeting expected achievement in the light of the value the school expects to add year on year.

(Paragraphs: 5, 6, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 30, 37, 38, 39, 43, 48, 49, 78, 81, 82, 83, 88, 90, 92, 94, 95, 100, 105, 109, 113, 117, 126).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	19	41	34	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		417
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		54

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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	44	42	86

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	37	41
	Girls	39	40	40
	Total	74	77	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (85)	91 (91)	95 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	41	42
	Girls	39	41	40
	Total	77	81	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (89)	95 (92)	96 (99)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	328
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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	216

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	605709
Total expenditure	595694
Expenditure per pupil	1409
Balance brought forward from previous year	62392
Balance carried forward to next year	72407

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	417
Number of questionnaires returned	227

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	4	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	52	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	46	11	3	8
The teaching is good.	44	48	1	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	48	14	4	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	37	5	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	39	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	35	44	15	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	41	48	5	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	3	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	34	16	7	19

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

56 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and it has a significant effect on children's learning and progress. This is a considerable improvement on the provision that was observed at the time of the previous inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to address successfully all the issues identified for improvement. Children enter one of three reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five with a range of social and early learning skills. For most children their skills are better than those of children of a similar age. The majority of children already attain the third 'stepping stone' in terms of their personal, social and emotional development and this is confirmed by an initial assessment of children's achievement. The lowest area of skills, on entry, is the children's physical development.

57 As a result of the good provision, children make good progress overall in all the areas of their work. Inspection findings suggest that by the end of the reception year the children's attainment is above average in all the areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the early years with support well designed to meet identified needs. The reception classes provide calm and stimulating learning environments where the children feel happy, confident and secure. During the inspection, the eighty-eight children in the reception classes were working and playing very well together and had settled into class routines very well already.

58 The quality of teaching in the reception classes is good overall. It ranges from unsatisfactory to good. The teachers, nursery nurse and the learning support assistants show considerable expertise in the teaching methods they use and in the good learning opportunities that they provide across the range of children's work. Two unsatisfactory lessons were observed in physical development. These were because the teacher had not given sufficient attention to the structure of the lesson nor planned to ensure that children could sustain physical activity for sufficient time. The staff organise the groups of children well and, in the main, provide good quality, and appropriate resources. However, the role-play areas are very basic and unappealing. They are not conducive to purposeful play and in consequence do not promote the children's language skills as well as they might.

59 Children are extending the high levels of concentration, initiative and independence that they had on entry because of constant encouragement by the staff. The teachers have instigated appropriate assessment procedures for tracking children's progress and all staff make relevant entries in records kept on each child. Parents provide very useful information about children's achievements prior to entry and records of children who have attended pre-school provision are shared. All these records are used successfully to plan the next steps in learning. The nursery nurse has a significant input into planning and teaching and all staff work very successfully together as a team.

Personal, social and emotional development

60 By the time children leave the Foundation Stage their personal, social and emotional development is above the expectations set out in national Early Learning Goals for this age-group. This demonstrates good achievement and reflects skilful teaching, as children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. Children respond very positively to their experiences at school, forming amicable relationships with their peers and attending well to their teachers. Children are encouraged, at specified times, to choose activities for themselves and to take turns and to share toys and equipment. They co-operate

well in pairs and small groups. For instance, in outdoor play, they share large wheeled toys without fussing and they help each other to fasten aprons when painting. Adults are good role models, they listen with genuine interest to what children have to say and speak with courtesy and consideration. Children are encouraged to be polite in return, for instance, they usually say 'please' and 'thank-you' when they receive help. The staff also promote children's personal development very effectively, by ensuring that the equipment and resources that the children use are easily accessible to them and help them to become independent.

Communication, language and literacy

61 Attainment is above the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy for five-year-olds, with strengths in speaking and listening. The children's use of spoken English is very good and the majority of them speak in clear, well-formed sentences. The children listen to stories attentively and readily share books with each other and with adults. The staff use talk to very good effect in all the areas of learning and are good listeners. They show children that they value their efforts at communicating. Children handle books appropriately and with confidence. Many of the children are beginning to pick out separate words in the text and a higher attaining child reads with fluency and expression, achieving standards which are in line with the average Year 1 pupil. Children take books home to share with their parents and this involvement has a noticeable impact on attainment. Writing is incorporated into many activities, for example children write their names unaided on their firework paintings. Most write their names unaided and those who can't copy from their name card. Higher attaining children have a good understanding of initial letters and identify rhyming words.

62 Work sampling indicates that by the end of the reception year, higher attaining children write well-structured short sentences with an appropriate use of capital letters and full stops. Letter formation is good, with most letters correctly formed and fairly even. The teaching of communication, language and literacy has many strengths. Adults are very skilled at encouraging discussion in class and in group lessons. Elements of the literacy framework are used well by teachers and a good understanding of phonics is developed through competent use of a commercial scheme. As a result of this good teaching, children can identify many initial sounds. In one lesson, they enjoyed passing interesting objects to each other and could sort the objects into sets beginning with the same sound.

Mathematical development

63 Towards the end of the reception year, the higher attaining children achieve levels in mathematics, which are above those of most five-year-olds. All the children achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area. Skills and understanding are developed well through sorting, counting and matching activities. For instance, children learn to add one more boat to a set of boats in the water tray. Some children find the task of adding one more object to a set quite challenging but persevere and achieve success. Higher attaining children are challenged to add two sets of frogs together and succeed in doing so because of the good teaching. Many children confidently identify two-dimensional shapes when making large and small rockets. All children make good progress in extending their understanding of numbers through daily use and practice. For instance, they sing or say number songs and rhymes such as *Five Green Speckled Frogs* and *Ten Green Bottles*. Children use mathematical language with confidence and this is reinforced well in other activities. For instance, children skilfully organise a picnic in the 'Wild Wood' with the correct number of place settings. The quality of teaching varies between the three classes. Where teaching is particularly effective it is because the teacher organises a range of practical activities which interests and excites the children so that they are keen to practise and extend their numeracy skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developing well and they attain levels that are above those of most children of their age. Opportunities are provided for children to develop technological skills through their use of construction toys during play activities with both large and small apparatus. The children use the computer with confidence and many children can already control the mouse and recognise many letters on the keyboard. They write their names and use an art program to produce colourful pictures of animals. Children explore their environment as part of their work on 'Colour' and 'Autumn'. They enjoy the sight and feel of autumn leaves and conkers and learn about seasonal changes in autumn and winter. Adults support children well in investigating their surroundings and encourage them to find things out for themselves. For instance, in one class, the children were excited when searching for 'animals' in trees and learnt to indicate the animals' locations on a simple map. All staff provide children with imaginative tasks and give them a wide range of learning experiences to develop their understanding of the world.

Physical development

65 The provision to promote children's physical development has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school has purchased bright, appealing outdoor equipment which children enjoy using every day. The children make good use of the secure outdoor play area to develop their gross motor skills and to use space safely. They show good control and co-ordination when propelling wheeled vehicles and they use good avoidance techniques as they travel around the playground. Skills are in line with what is expected at this stage of development. The teaching of indoor physical development is not so successful. Two unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. The teacher did not control the children sufficiently and they became over-excited. For example, when handling a large parachute, the children jumped up and down randomly, making a loud noise and not achieving much. Lesson objectives were not clear and merely listed activities. The organisation of the lesson did little to enable the children to learn successfully and at a reasonable pace. This lack of challenge is of concern given the low physical attainment indicated by the baseline assessment.

Creative development

66 Children attain above average levels in their creative work. Children's creative and artistic skills are evident in the bright displays of work in the reception classes. They engage in painting enthusiastically and enjoy creating colourful firework pictures using paint and sequins. Their free painting displays an abundance of brilliant colour and enjoyment. They sing together, recite rhymes and use appropriate actions to words and music with varying levels of confidence. Children draw accurately features such as trees on a map of the tarmac play area outside their classroom prepared by their teacher. They identify symbols such as a zebra crossing and locate plastic animals in trees. Many identify their own location on the map, and some can point out any feature. They talk about their maps enthusiastically and share their ideas. This good response and good level of learning derive from the teachers' carefully prepared planning. This is based on assessment of prior learning, good subject knowledge, and good lesson management. The children are particularly able in role-play. They use props and other resources with great imaginative skill when playing in the 'Wild Wood', although other home corners are not stimulating and do not encourage purposeful play.

ENGLISH

67 The results of the 2000 tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, indicate that standards in reading and writing are above the national average and in line with similar schools. Teacher assessments are in line with the national tests and they show that pupils also achieve well above average standards in speaking and listening. Over the last four years, attainment in reading and writing has been well above the national average overall for both boys and girls, so the picture that emerges is one of consistently good achievement. This represents an improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

68 Inspection evidence judges that pupils in the Year 2 classes attain standards which are well above those of pupils of a similar age. This is higher than the national tests showed last May. The current Year 2 has a larger proportion of pupils likely to attain at higher levels than last year. Analysis of test papers has enabled managers to target resources to making improvements, for example concentrating on spelling and writing skills, that will result in raised performance. The school has improved upon the 'satisfactory' standards indicated in the previous inspection. Year 4 pupils attain standards, which are well above those of other nine-year-olds. Pupils read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding. Higher attaining pupils display an impressive interest in words and their meanings. All pupils have very neat, legible handwriting. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and their attainment is in line with the national average in English.

69 The school has successfully implemented the literacy hour in all classes, which is based upon careful consideration of the pupils' needs. Weaknesses identified in writing have been given concerted attention over the last year and the results are good. For instance, the school felt that pupils' spelling attainment was suffering as a result of pupils being placed into sets for literacy. The co-ordinators took good stock of the situation before sensibly deciding to abandon setting arrangements in favour of keeping pupils in their own classes for literacy. This has resulted in improved standards in spelling. Within the literacy hour due attention is given to reading and writing and speaking and listening and pupils are taught spelling structures, specific grammar vocabulary and punctuation which accelerates their progress in reading and writing.

70 By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well above average and they make good progress. This is begun very effectively in the reception classes where children's opinions and ideas are listened to with sensitivity and interest by all staff and classmates during group discussions. In the Year 1 classes, pupils make very good progress in developing and extending their speaking and listening skills when discussing texts during the literacy hour. Pupils respond very well by listening carefully and asking relevant questions as to the precise meaning of specific words. For instance, when sharing the text *I Fell out of Bed*, pupils were very keen to suggest alternative words. Pupils' confidence in speaking in front of the whole class is consolidated and developed even further in the Year 2 classes when pupils have the opportunity to give oral explanations of their learning in many subjects. In all classes, pupils pay close attention to what the teacher is saying and reply to questions with thoughtful comment and detail. Pupils in a Year 2 class read their stories to fellow pupils confidently and coherently. Year 4 attain standards which are well above those normally seen. They are very confident, coherent and sensible when discussing aspects of their home and school life with an inspector.

71 Pupils' current attainment in reading is well above the national average for seven-year-olds and they make good progress. Reading is given a high priority and pupils in all classes demonstrate good attitudes towards books. Pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and know and use terms such as 'author', 'blurb', 'illustrator' and 'contents' correctly. The home/school partnership is a very successful feature of the reading programme. Parents receive very useful booklets clearly detailing the most

appropriate ways to help their child. A focus on the teaching of the letter sounds raises attainment and accelerates progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. By the time that they are seven, the higher attaining pupils read with accuracy and fluency, and can competently discuss the characters in a familiar story. Pupils develop a love of literature and pupils in the Year 2 classes discuss their favourite books and authors with obvious enjoyment. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of authors and stories. Consequently higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of a range of texts and can refer to passages in books to support ideas.

72 Year 3 and 4 pupils continue to enjoy books and attain well above average standards. They use the new library for research purposes and many pupils read for sheer pleasure and enjoyment. Time is set aside each day for pupils to read quietly and teachers regularly read to their classes from a good selection of fiction, poetry and information books, proving good role models with their own clear diction and love of literature. A particularly good example of pupils reading with clarity, expression and pace occurred in a Year 4 literacy lesson, when pupils read the play script *Homeless*.

73 Year 2 pupils' current attainment in writing is well above the national average and pupils make good progress. Year 3 and 4 pupils attain standards well above those normally seen. Pupils receive a good start to their writing in the reception classes, where they are encouraged to write independently and to use their knowledge of phonics in their writing. This good achievement is extended in Year 1, where the pupils write clear and logical sentences using capital letters and full stops. Pupils in Year 2 produce a good range of work, which includes fiction, poetry, information, instruction and review writing. Most of this work is of a good standard, and pupils take a real pride in presenting their work carefully. They respond well to the consistent challenge to 'have a go'. Work sampling indicates that the weekly 'diary' writing becomes tedious and repetitive for many pupils who are capable of writing in more interesting genres.

74 Year 2 pupils learn to write interesting stories with good understanding of how to structure their writing with a beginning, middle and an end. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 classes produce an impressive amount of work. The higher attaining pupils are already working at the level of an average eleven-year-old. Standards of spelling are good, especially for the higher attaining pupils, and pupils learn their weekly spellings conscientiously. Pupils are confident when using spellings in their writing and good progress is maintained through their ability to check spellings with the teachers and in dictionaries. Handwriting is taught in all classes, and pupils' writing is very neat and well formed. There is a consistent approach to this in all classes and teachers set a good example with their own neat, clear handwriting. There are some examples of pupils using information technology to skilfully word-process their writing.

75 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic and work hard during their English lessons and in the literacy hour. They concentrate well and are very keen to produce good work. They take a real pride in presenting their work neatly and carefully. In lessons they know what is expected of them and their behaviour is always good, which raises attainment and accelerates progress. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and are confident when contributing to class discussions. They are very good at listening to other pupils' ideas. They enjoy supporting and helping each other and enjoy celebrating each other's successes. Older pupils can empathise with characters in stories and can express mature emotions. They demonstrate a joy and love of literature.

76 The quality of teaching is good overall. It ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. The best teaching occurs in Years 2 and 4. Teachers show great confidence and good knowledge and understanding of English. They inspire the pupils with their interest and enthusiasm and provide excellent role models with their superb story reading skills. Lessons are planned very carefully to build on pupils' existing knowledge and experiences. Most

teachers make very good use of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. They have high expectations of what pupils can do and work is usually planned for different needs. Pupils of all ability levels are given challenging and interesting work, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when this was considered not to be the case. Teachers generally maintain a brisk lesson pace and keep pupils busy. This is particularly evident in the literacy hour lessons where pupils waste no time in settling to group activities after sharing a class discussion. Teachers intervene well to consolidate and advance literacy skills. A strong feature of teaching is the skilful use of praise and encouragement, which does a great deal to increase pupils' confidence in all aspects of English, particularly in writing. The teachers value all pupils' contributions and there is often sensitive questioning of the least able which includes them fully in discussions. The individual target setting in writing books has a significant impact on the pupils' progress in specific areas such as presentation and punctuation. Homework is used effectively to support what the pupils learn in literacy hours. In the lessons which are not so successful, it is because learning objectives are not clear, the pace of the lesson is too slow, and tasks do not match what pupils know, can do and understand. In the one unsatisfactory handwriting lesson, the teacher's inattention to promoting positive behaviour coupled with too little challenge expected for the more accomplished writers, resulted in a handful of pupils becoming fussy and unsettled and impeding the learning of others.

77 The curriculum is very broad and well balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. Arrangements for monitoring progress in literacy are good. Assessment of reading, writing and spelling is thorough and regular; difficulties are identified at an early stage so that extra support can be given. There is good planning for the development of literacy skills closely linked to the National Literacy Strategy. The school is very aware of the importance of practising reading and writing in other subjects and very effectively links literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum. For instance, pupils have used their developing literacy skills to good effect to describe life in Chembakolli as part of their geography work.

78 There is good leadership and management of the subject. The two co-ordinators are enthusiastic, dedicated and committed to raising standards of attainment. They both make an invaluable personal contribution to the subject. They support colleagues very well and lead by example with their own very good teaching. However, there are no opportunities for them to look at standards of English in other classes or to demonstrate how to teach a really effective literacy hour. Support staff are generally actively involved in lessons and are well prepared, though in some classes they could usefully contribute more during the shared text work component. They make a very useful input to the assessment of pupils' progress by logging what is achieved by the pupils they support in the group activities. Resources are good. The use of ICT is still at an early stage in English, although pupils have some opportunities to word process their writing.

MATHEMATICS

79 Standards attained by pupils in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in mathematics were above average. For the last three years in Key Stage 1 standards have fluctuated. In 1997 there was a sharp rise because of higher ability in that particular year group of pupils, but overall, standards have improved steadily in line with national expectations. National tests show that pupils score lower in using and applying mathematics, than in number and algebra, shape, space and measures. This weakness was pointed out in the last inspection. There is still much room for improvement in providing opportunities for pupils to work on extended problems and investigations and to explore mathematics in the real world. Standards rose to the school's agreed target levels for 1999. The scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and observations in classrooms suggest that the good

standards of learning and teaching seen will encourage the upward trend to continue, given clear direction and leadership.

80 Evidence from this inspection shows that changes to planning, assessment procedures and curriculum practice are having a positive effect on the mathematics curriculum and levels of attainment. The school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and this provides a good structure for lessons and improves continuity and progression for pupils learning. Pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to develop mental arithmetic capability, and to improve their grasp of basic computational skills in the oral starter session. However, rapid recall of learned basic skills to promote mental acuity is not consistent in these sessions and many pupils are slow in their thinking. Some teachers encourage speed and accuracy but others waste this opportunity to accelerate learning. For instance in Year 1, pupils in one class enjoyed the challenge of a counting activity with an outcome target goal set against a time. They were given their own number in an ordinal sequence to deliver for the group, enjoying the team effort. In another lesson a similar activity was not used so well to challenge pupils in their speed and accuracy of thinking, the pace was slower and learning levels thus reduced. Clearly identified learning objectives are helping pupils to appreciate their achievements and this has much improved since the last inspection. These are often successfully highlighted in plenary sessions. The best teaching practice is in Year 4 where written learning targets are shared with pupils before the start of the lesson, and progress towards them reviewed at the end. Teachers work consistently together, to improve the pupils' mathematical vocabulary. In lessons they relate words to concepts very well and from this, pupils' technical vocabulary is seen to be good. This helps them to think clearly and share ideas in group learning. In Year 4 pupils create good poetry about mathematics using vocabulary such as 'partitioning', 'equilateral' or 'area' and this supports literacy.

81 Pupils are benefiting from the ability groupings in lessons and especially from the setting into study groups from Year 2 upwards. However, many teachers in both key stages are not yet setting sufficiently challenging tasks for the most able pupils. Too few examples of open-ended investigative problems are seen to be set to challenge pupils, especially the more able. Where the more able pupils are seen to share ideas and use their mathematical skills to solve problems set to challenge them, the learning levels are good.

82 Good practice in making provision for the higher attainers is inconsistent and this is a matter for subject leadership to address with vigour. In Key Stage 1 a good extension activity was seen where all pupils were set the task of tabulating data and constructing a bar chart. They had to count the different colours of Smarties on a tray and record to a graph, but higher attainers were set higher targets for learning in having to tabulate axes and spell the colour words needed. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons is usually very good and it is to the credit to pupils that not one Smartie went missing! Extended tasks of this nature were also observed in a Year 4 lesson on partitioning of numbers to facilitate division strategies. The teacher had very high expectations of these pupils and investigated with them the problem of remainders and the prediction of which numbers would have remainders. The teacher had a very clear idea of their needs from ongoing assessment.

83 Teachers follow the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy closely. This contributes to good levels of learning, good continuity, progression, and coverage of the programmes of study for most pupils. The opportunity for pupils to use and apply mathematics is less well developed. The school has recognised this and is now beginning to focus on this area. The use of assessment to measure mathematical performance is well developed to identify the school's progress towards its improvement targets. Assessment is not as consistently used to inform lesson planning and to pinpoint the need for intervention with individual pupils. It is not used sufficiently to match the content of the teaching programmes to pupils' abilities and to take into account their previous levels of learning. In

Year 4, however, recording of small steps in learning was seen to inform teaching that was fully effective.

84 Towards the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are gaining a secure knowledge and understanding of number. Most pupils can add and subtract to ten and count in twos, threes and tens, some to a hundred. They are able to appreciate a digit's place value. When they deduce missing numbers in an algorithm they demonstrate good progress in operating with numbers, gains in vocabulary and handling notation. The more able can see that addition is the inverse of subtraction and that repeated additions lead to multiplication. A Year 2 class partitioned two digit numbers, and was able to use the learning on pattern from Year 1 to work out the unit equivalents for any number of tens under the same partition. Scrutiny of work shows that pupils' progress at a good level in tabulating data and constructing bar charts to illustrate and interpret data, from early pictorial representations in the reception year.

85 Year 4 pupils are continuing to make good progress in developing their mental calculation skills. Scrutiny of work shows that they have a good understanding of the rules of number, and of the multiplication tables appropriate to their ages. They use a range of mental and written methods to solve problems accurately, building on previous knowledge when they use inverses to check results. A good standard of work was seen in their competent classification of triangles, and mathematical solids such as prisms by mathematical property. Pupils' good levels of attainment in fractions, the use of decimal notation for metric measurement and money, and the encouragement of individual strategies in calculations indicate that the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy, is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' learning.

86 The mathematics curriculum is generally broad and balanced but the higher attaining pupils are often insufficiently challenged. Opportunities to widen and extend learning by using mathematical skills in other subjects are given, for instance, by using graphs and tables in science to display results. The use of computers to support learning in mathematics is unsatisfactory. No use of data-handling and graphical representation was seen.

87 Pupils in both key stages have very good attitudes to learning in mathematics. They settle quickly to learning at the beginning of lessons and their response is usually good or very good and never less than satisfactory. Pupils listen very carefully to teachers and the good response of the pupils stems from the standard of teaching. Teaching is good or very good in seven out of the ten lessons seen and is good overall. In only one lesson was teaching unsatisfactory and this was to do with weaknesses in behaviour management that impeded pupils learning as well as they could. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and most use suitable mathematical vocabulary.

88 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 three out of nine lessons were good. In Key Stage 2 six out of ten lessons were at least good and of these half were very good. One lesson observed was unsatisfactory largely because of problems concerning the management of behaviour that delayed others learning. The quality of mathematics teaching overall has improved since the last inspection. The most successful lessons end with a well-planned plenary session to assess and consolidate learning. In less good lessons the slow pace restricts time for this activity. The best lessons are characterised by detailed planning based on assessment and a brisk pace. Teachers organise teaching support well and this promotes learning, but it is rare to see support staff monitoring pupils learning in support of short-term assessment when, for instance, they are not needed because the teacher is doing oral work with the whole class. The use of homework is satisfactory in supporting pupils' learning of basic skills. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Most marking did not direct pupils to the next step in learning with an evaluative comment; however, a minority of teachers did this well, especially in Year 4.

89 The curriculum for mathematics meets national requirements but there was very little work on time and analogue and digital equivalence found in books. Pupils have equal access to learning and teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are working on areas within the programmes of study that are appropriate to their needs. Achievement for these pupils is good and teaching assistants are well organised by teachers to promote learning.

90 The mathematics co-ordinator, together with key stage co-ordinators, have been effective in establishing the National Numeracy Strategy in the school. However, in other respects leadership is unsatisfactory. Although non-contact time is allowed for the monitoring of teaching and learning across the school, no clear targets have been derived to identify areas of improvement to raise standards, especially for ongoing teacher assessment of pupils' learning. There is no clear structure shared with teachers to meet the targets in the school development plan. An abundance of data about the school's performance in mathematics is being overlooked when it could aid improvement. The process of monitoring work in mathematics is undefined and undirected and will require attention if standards are to rise to the same level as in English.

SCIENCE

91 Teacher assessments indicated that attainment in science by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 was above the national average and is in line with standards of schools with similar pupils. There is no significant difference between the standards attained by boys and girls. Inspection findings confirm these results. By the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment is above the standards expected of pupils of this age. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is higher than reported at the time of the previous inspection and is maintained in Key Stage 2.

92 Pupils make good progress in all areas of science in the National Curriculum, mainly due to good teaching, the commitment of the school to raising standards and the very positive attitudes that pupils have to science. In Year 1, pupils can identify and compare different sources of light, for example candles, lanterns, torches, electric lamps. They know that light dissipates darkness and that sources of light vary in intensity. By Year 2, they understand how a torch works by disassembling it and putting it back together. Pupils know that a battery provides electricity and will work only if the right connections are made. They can investigate and test cars on various surfaces. They recognise the need for a fair test. In Year 3, pupils investigate how attraction and repulsion between magnets work and go on to test which materials attract or repel a magnet. They reach simple conclusions, for example that aluminium does not attract a magnet but steel does, or that magnets can still attract each other through plastic material. By Year 4, pupils can set up a fair test, isolating all but one variable to test the effectiveness of different materials as thermal insulators. They investigate the properties of solids and liquids, for example the maintenance of shape or ease of flow. Pupils learn well how to make comparisons and evaluate evidence. They know a good range of scientific terminology, such as 'insulators', 'resistors', 'magnetic attraction' and 'viscosity'. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills extensively in science. Their report writing is systematic, well organised and presented. They use block graphs, tables and Venn diagrams effectively. In some lessons, the work is set at different levels so that all pupils achieve the best they can, including those with special educational needs. Sometimes, however, opportunities for learning are not extended to meet the needs of the very highest attaining pupils.

93 The quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and is very good in Years 2 and 4. Lessons are planned well, with the best lessons having objectives clearly set before pupils. Emphasis is given in all classrooms to developing knowledge and understanding through scientific enquiry. The use of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's new scheme and very good guidance from the co-ordinator ensures that all

teachers have confidence and secure knowledge in teaching science. Lessons are well organised, no time is wasted and pupils are usually well managed. Occasionally, a few younger pupils are inattentive but the teachers use effective strategies to improve their concentration. Often simple assessments are planned to check the outcome of the lesson but there is little evidence of this information being used systematically to improve attainment. Marking of pupils' work, however, is very effective in promoting good progress. Expectations are realistic and in the best lessons challenging. As a result of good teaching, pupils learn and achieve well. They have an enthusiastic attitude to science and demonstrate keen interest. Pupils behave very well in lessons and take great pride in their work, which is well presented.

94 The policy and scheme of work ensure good coverage of the curriculum and a good balance between each area. Knowledge and understanding of life processes, materials and physical processes are taught mainly through scientific enquiry. Procedures for assessment are thorough but not yet used systematically across the school to inform future planning. Further development of a portfolio of pupils' assessed work, as well as the recent addition of individual profile sheets and a record of achievement will help to ensure an integrated assessment programme that will strengthen the standards and progress being achieved by pupils. The science curriculum is well resourced and enhanced by visits to places of scientific interest, use of the local environment and presentations from a science theatre group.

95 The subject is capably led by the co-ordinator, who has clear priorities for action that are included in the school development plan. She has monitored a science lesson twice this year but the evaluation of the impact of teaching, planning and assessment on attainment and progress is not yet well established.

ART AND DESIGN

96 Standards in art and design at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4 are above those expected for pupils of similar ages. The provision for art has been improved since the time of the previous inspection and standards are better at seven years as a result. Some excellent teaching in art was observed during this inspection which both inspired and challenged pupils in Year 4 to create their own sketches. These showed good technique, originality and flair.

97 Pupils are introduced to a good range of media, including clay, pencils, textiles, paints and pastels. There is a systematic progression of drawing skills throughout the school, as pupils become increasingly adept at observing closely and translating observations into representational forms. When teaching is particularly strong, pupils reach high standards to produce imaginative and creative work. All pupils have their own sketch book and this is a positive feature in aiding the development of skills including pencil control and use in drawing.

98 Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing an awareness of colour and tone in their drawings and paintings. They enjoy experimenting with different techniques. For example, Year 1 pupils have created vibrant bonfire night pictures. They used fluorescent paint to produce more realistic effects. Year 2 pupils are gaining experience in using a wide range of media, and in expanding their knowledge of famous artists. During the inspection, they painted colourful tigers in the style of Henri Rousseau. They displayed good observational skill in noticing the detail in Rousseau's work and incorporated this into their own designs. Year 3 pupils demonstrate skill and precision when designing and cutting shapes to make repeating patterns. They are developing an idea of which colours are most effective together. Work sampling indicates that pupils in Year 4 have studied a good range of artists, such as Seurat, Van Gogh and Monet. Older pupils also benefit from an after-school art and design club. The art and craft club won a banner competition run by Worcester Rugby Club and enjoyed a day out watching a match, as well as the prize T-shirts.

99 In the lessons seen, it was apparent that pupils enjoy art and are developing good work habits in the care and shared use of materials. Lessons have a busy, focussed atmosphere and pupils take pride in what they produce. Teaching is good in the majority of lessons. Pupils' work is carefully observed and individuals receive frequent feedback from teachers so pupils do not work too long without help. In the best lessons, pupils are well motivated because teachers give thorough explanations, demonstrate skills well and use resources effectively.

100 The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has only been in post for two terms, but is keen and enthusiastic and has good plans to develop art and design. A useful portfolio of work has been started and the level of resourcing is good. There are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to look at teaching and learning in other classes to help her gain insights into standards across the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101 Two lessons in Year 1 were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based also on a wide sample of work, a portfolio, talking to pupils and discussion with the co-ordinator.

102 Attainment in design and technology has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 and this high standard is maintained in Years 3 and 4. The good quality of teaching, the very good management of the subject by the co-ordinator and the eagerness of the pupils to learn have been effective in raising standards since the previous inspection. The levels of attainment seen during the inspection and in pupils' previous work this year indicate that pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs.

103 As they progress through the school, pupils have opportunities to develop their skills using a wide range of materials, such as textiles, wood, plastic and paper, and construction processes such as stitching. In Year 1, most pupils have an understanding of the properties of fruit, such as taste, texture, appearance and smell. By Year 2, the majority of pupils can use a simple design sheet and make products, such as a winding mechanism and a puppet made of cloth and card, using skills of cutting or joining appropriately. A few lower attaining pupils have less co-ordination and find it difficult to work from a design. By the beginning of Year 4, pupils generate their own ideas and test their effectiveness. They design carefully, using sketches, labels and prototypes. They make products well, using suitable tools, materials and techniques accurately. For example, pupils were challenged to make pencil cases. They used a design sheet effectively and then tested materials for suitability. They also tested the best way to join material, using, for example, staples, glue, pins, stitching and made informed final choices. They then made a prototype from their chosen design to ensure it was effective. They made attractive pencil cases that many Year 4 pupils are proudly using. They also identified how they could improve a future product. A high proportion of pupils were successful in this project and demonstrate good progress that indicates that many pupils will reach high levels of attainment by the time they leave the school.

104 No overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching but on the evidence of the two lessons, the planning, the sample of work and portfolio, teaching has many strong features. The use of a good scheme of work and the very good expertise of the co-ordinator help to make the teaching confident and based on good understanding of the curriculum. A good range of opportunities is planned and a wide range of resources is used effectively. Activities motivate the pupils to learn about designing and making. Vocabulary and specific skills are developed systematically. There is little evidence of the use of ICT but pupils' work included the use of good measuring skills. The standards of higher attaining pupils are

enhanced by joining a project within their pyramid of schools to design, make and sell a product.

105 The subject is effectively managed by the co-ordinator who is well qualified and helps teachers with planning and demonstrations. She has clear priorities for the direction of the subject. There is as yet no systematic assessment across the school. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for a manageable assessment of skills to inform future planning. The school's portfolio of work is valuable and well annotated but the levels of attainment are not included. Ongoing assessment in lesson plans is satisfactory and marking is good, but the information is not always used effectively to improve progress.

GEOGRAPHY

106 At the last inspection standards of attainment in Key Stage 1 were found to be in line with national averages, and were above average by the age of nine. It was only possible to observe two lessons in Key Stage 1 and none were seen in Key Stage 2. On the basis of evidence from these limited observations, scrutiny of pupils' work for this term, and examination of moderated pupils' work from last year, standards are judged to be good in Key Stage 1. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In Key Stage 2 the good standards seen previously have been maintained. The improvement is seen to result from improved teaching that caters for all abilities in some classes, and a more carefully planned curriculum to balance the teaching of skills and knowledge.

107 In Year 1 pupils draw a map of their route to school and are able to talk about the features they include. In Year 2 they examine contrasting environments such as the seaside, mountains and jungle. They identify similarities and differences and express views on features of buildings and environmental links such as transport, in their own locality. This sequence and others observed show good planning for continuity and progression of learning by teachers. In Year 3 pupils show a good understanding of the regions of the United Kingdom using the large-scale map painted on the playground. Scrutiny of work shows that most Year 4 pupils can interpret a map of the world and identify continents using a colour key. They are able to locate Delhi and the village of Chembakolli on a map of India. Most draw features on a map of the village indicating how people live their lives. These skills are the result of good quality teaching and planning. Good quality extended writing demonstrates their good knowledge of environments beyond their own locality, similarities and differences, and from their own observations and how these affect people's lives.

108 Teaching is judged to be good overall. In the lessons observed, one was good and one satisfactory. In the good lesson pupils of all abilities were challenged. In the other lesson the pace was a little slow and the plenary session to review learning was a little short. Consequently, the higher attaining pupils were not challenged in discussion by extending their ideas and testing their geographical vocabulary. There is limited use of assessment to guide lesson planning. It is evident from the scrutiny of work that high expectation of pupils is not always consistent for all abilities. In Year 4 very good marking that is evaluative and leads pupils to the next steps in learning is common. This indicates very good teaching and consolidates pupils' learning. This quality of marking is not seen frequently except for one class in Year 2. Information and communication technology is not used effectively. Only one teacher was seen to use it to extend opportunities for pupils to learn. However the pupils' enthusiasm, willingness to work hard, and good attitudes to learning are testament to the overall good quality of teaching in the subject.

109 The subject co-ordinators' leadership is good but lack of opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms inhibits subject development and just as importantly, the co-ordinators' own professional development. A new national scheme of work has been successfully introduced and this provides a good structure to ensure continuity and

progression in pupils' learning. The curriculum fulfils all the national requirements. The next step for development is to improve the use of computers to enhance learning, taking advantage of the new resources available to the school. Visits are used well to support learning. Assessment of pupils' performance is satisfactory, but its use to match work to pupils' needs based on previous levels of learning is inconsistent. The subject makes a good contribution to learning in support of literacy and numeracy.

HISTORY

110 At the time of the last inspection most pupils' attainments and learning in history were satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. At this inspection only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 and only two in Key Stage 2, but other evidence arising from the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that standards are now good in Key Stage 1 and that standards have been maintained for pupils in Key Stage 2. The adoption of a new national scheme is promoting the development of skills essential to historical enquiry and helping teachers to provide continuity and progression in the learning they plan.

111 In Key Stage 1, pupils are developing an understanding of the differences between then and now. Year 1 pupils use simple time-lines to understand chronology in their own lives. Good display in one class using pupils' own work and photographic evidence demonstrates their knowledge of the passage of time, change, and important events in their lives. This is extended in their study of toys past and present. Year 2 pupils are currently finding out about remembrance and the First World War, and have visited the local war memorial. Pupils were observed to use historical sources and evidence in the community well, to conduct historical enquiry, and extend their understanding of chronology. In discussions with pupils, one was quite sure that he wasn't born then and neither was his Dad. Good learning levels result from teachers' good knowledge and understanding and from tasks that are matched to individual pupils' abilities. Year 3 pupils empathise with child evacuees in the Second World War and are able to use their senses in role-play to respond to an audio-tape of an air raid, for example. Pupils showed good use of historical evidence to make conclusions about events. They produce vocabulary lists for supporting extended writing, showing good learning. Year 4 pupils' entries on time-lines that cover five thousand years show good awareness of chronology and secure knowledge about ordered events. Their work about a recent visit to Charlecote Manor and its Elizabethan connections shows good knowledge and understanding about the Tudors, and an appreciation of peoples' lives at that time.

112 Pupils in lessons use reference materials well and are enthusiastic about their work. They help each other and discuss ideas and evidence, listening with interest to others' contributions. This results from teachers planning lessons well and having high expectations of pupils in their work. It is a strength that teachers have high expectations of pupils' use of literacy skills in their work. In Year 3 a pupil identified alliteration for the class as a method of dramatising his descriptive phrase describing the impact of an air raid on people's lives.

113 The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject given that non-contact time is not available to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms. She has had two hours to update the moderation portfolio of pupils' work. Pupils' work and teachers' planning is regularly monitored. The co-ordinator has good understanding of the developments and resources that are needed to improve the subject further. Good management within the strategic objectives set within the school development plan has seen the successful introduction of a national scheme of work that will provide opportunities to increase cross-curricular links. Visits are used well to support learning. Further work needs to be done to improve ongoing assessment so that planning relates more closely to pupils' previous learning, and to identify areas for subject and teaching improvement. The subject has good

links with geography and supports numeracy and literacy well, but information and communications technology is not used effectively for learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114 At the time of the last inspection standards in information technology were reported as being satisfactory, with computers supporting the work in many other subjects. The school has not sustained those standards since then, and on the evidence seen during the inspection standards are below what they should be at both key stages. Skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are not used effectively in other subjects. However the school has only just opened a brand new computer suite which each class now uses on a regular basis. On the evidence of the lessons seen pupils at both key stages are now making good progress in acquiring computer skills and the standards they are likely to achieve in the near future should rise.

115 Pupils are learning to log on and off, to access the program they want, to save and retrieve their work, and to print out a hard copy of what they have produced. They create pictures for example at both key stages learning to use the tool bars, to manipulate the various tools through the mouse and to change colours, styles and tints. They learn to alter the font size and type. Older pupils are being introduced to the Internet and are learning about search engines and web sites as sources of information. There was very little evidence of previous work done on the computer to show levels of competence on aspects like word processing or control technology. However the new scheme of work is planned to include all that is required by the National Curriculum and an after-school computer club gives older pupils an opportunity to develop further the skills learned in lessons. Although all classes are time-tabled to use the computer suite regularly, less use was seen of the computers being used to support lessons in pupils' own classrooms. The school has yet to give sufficient focus on the use of ICT becoming an integral element of learning in most subjects. In discussions with pupils during lessons it was clear that prior to the opening of the suite they had not made effective use of computers in school.

116 Teaching in the lessons seen was good overall and pupils made good progress in those lessons. Teachers confidently explain what to do and deploy support staff well to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, meet with success. They introduce correct terminology such as 'logging on', and give pupils time to explore the particular aspect they are working on. They use software that holds the attention of the pupils, and maintain a good pace in lessons. As a consequence pupils are excited and enthusiastic about using the new computers. They work well in pairs taking turns and discussing their work as it progresses. They concentrate well on what they are doing and try hard. For example, in creating tree pictures in the style of Seurat each pair of Year 4 pupils concentrated well on using the various tools and techniques. Year 3 pupils learned how to choose font sizes and types and to change them on screen, having great fun creating 'calligraphics' (letter pictures) as a link with their earlier literacy work. Older classes began to use the Internet to find and print out information about the recent floods and about famous artists.

117 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has worked very hard to establish the computer suite, develop the scheme of work and produce a comprehensive assessment system including a useful portfolio of examples of work at particular National Curriculum levels. All these developments are very recent and the benefits have yet to be felt. However given the amount of progress made in a fairly short space of time recently there is every indication that standards will rise quickly as both staff and pupils gain confidence with the new equipment and work their way through the planned scheme. The co-ordinator does not have a strong role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and this will be crucial to driving developments in ICT and to raising standards.

MUSIC

118 The previous report considered standards in music to be above national expectations at Key Stage 1 and well above expectations at Key Stage 2. These standards have been maintained since then. At both key stages pupils sing very well. They know a good range of songs and hymns which they perform with great enjoyment. They keep time and sing in tune, holding their parts well in two-part rounds. They pay attention to tempo and to dynamics and articulate the words clearly at all times. They sing expressively in lessons and in assemblies. Around three dozen pupils sing in the school choir which rehearses after school and performs at a very high standard. Several pupils also play recorders and have lessons at lunchtimes, learning to play simple tunes with confidence. By the time they leave the school the standard of singing and playing is excellent. At Key Stage 2 pupils listen and reflect upon pieces of music and discuss the moods different pieces create and how they do so. These lessons give them excellent opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills as they explain their ideas, listening to what others say and building upon their comments. These lessons also play a good role in the social development of pupils as they share ideas and consider the views of others.

119 Pupils make good progress in music. From their early days in school they are introduced to simple action songs which they enjoy and accompany with percussion instruments. Teachers have high expectations of even the youngest pupils. For example children in reception classes are expected to choose an appropriate instrument to accompany a song and to play it appropriately. This means playing shakers softly and at the right time during the song, which they do with teacher support. In Year 1 they learn to identify long and short sounds and to watch the teacher's hands as she brings in their sound, and stop when she signals them to. By Year 2 pupils are learning musical terminology like 'phrase' and 'tempo' and understand what these terms mean. Year 3 pupils make music to accompany a poem with percussion and a keyboard, creating mood music to match the words.

120 Teachers are confident with music and enjoy teaching it. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and her enthusiasm is infectious ensuring that all staff and pupils share it. Consequently music is very important to the life of the school and teaching is good overall. Teachers are knowledgeable about music and confidently pass this knowledge on to the pupils. They expect them to perform well and pupils respond well to those expectations performing with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. Teaching makes effective use of the good resources available including a wide range of instruments and recorded music although there is little music from other cultures in school. Teachers effectively teach basic skills to pupils so that they use instruments sensibly and in a controlled manner. The very good relationships that teachers have developed with their pupils ensure that classes are well controlled and that pupils learn to make music together, taking turns and accepting that they may not get a turn with instruments until a following lesson. They work well together at times when a whole year group sing together although for parts of some of these lessons some staff are not fully involved. Pupils behave well in lessons although some younger ones sometimes let their enthusiasm get the better of them and call out rather than raising their hand and taking turns to speak.

121 The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils in music covering the National Curriculum requirements. There is a particularly impressive range of extra-curricular activities and pupils have the opportunity to perform beyond the school. There are some talented musicians who are enabled to develop their gifts with the support of the school. Although there is little formal assessment and recording of pupils' progress in music, teachers know their pupils well enough to be able to support those who need it, including

those with special educational needs, and to extend those who show a particular musical talent. A strength of the school is the way all pupils perform to a consistently high standard.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122 Standards of physical education are good throughout the school, an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards at Key Stage 1 were satisfactory. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic and achieve similar standards. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in dance and gymnastics and very good progress in swimming. Significant contributing factors are an extensive programme for physical education, the expertise of the co-ordinator, consistently good teaching and the positive attitudes of pupils. The school's baseline assessment shows that children start school with below average skills in their physical development; the good standards achieved as pupils get older are testament to the good quality provision.

123 In Year 1, with the help of the teacher, the class can link actions into a sequence of movements to represent a fireworks display. Some pupils produce an imaginative dance sequence. The majority can explore movements and by watching others, can improve their performance. In Year 2, pupils work independently to link movements to form an 'Olympic dance', with throwers, runners, swimmers and rowers. They are learning to stretch, twist and travel lightly at varying speed and levels. In a Year 3 gymnastics lesson, pupils move with sound control over their bodies. They link movements and stop quickly at the sound of a tambourine. They use space sensibly and know the key vocabulary for their movements, such as 'balance' and 'sequence'. By Year 4, they can work with a partner to form a dance motif based on a comic character. They can evaluate their own work and that of others as well as demonstrating good quality movements. Pupils understand good language, such as 'motif', 'structure', and 'eye focus'. The majority of pupils choose and use ideas and actions well and show good co-ordination and control. About half the class can link their movements to perform a simple, fluent dance sequence. In all years, pupils are aware of the need to warm up their bodies before physical exercise. In Year 4, all pupils are confident in the water and can swim across the pool. By the end of Year 4, a very high proportion of pupils are likely to be able to swim twenty-five metres. They are learning good stroke techniques; in the lesson the above average swimmers are beginning to perform a smooth continuous backstroke. Higher attaining swimmers are having lessons on water safety and survival.

124 The quality of teaching is good. Strong features are detailed planning, stimulating activities, and good demonstration. Teachers are dressed appropriately in all lessons. Teachers emphasise the need to warm up in every lesson, although occasionally the balance of time between the warm up and the main activity is lost. Teachers are aware of the limited space in the hall, especially for larger classes and older pupils. They have to limit activities to ensure that pupils are safe, especially in gymnastics. This occasionally impedes progress in a lesson. Teachers encourage pupils to work hard and to evaluate their work and that of others. Pupils achieve the highest standards of which they are capable as a result of good teaching and a wide range of opportunities to improve. Assessment is planned for in lessons but there is no record of progression across the school to inform planning.

125 The range of extra-curricular activities for physical education in Years 3 and 4, sometimes for Year 2 as well, is impressive. Excellent use is made of local experts in a range of sports, for example cricket, football, tennis, rugby, netball and basketball. The majority of pupils are involved in some of these activities, enhancing attainment and extending the skills of the higher attaining pupils. The sports teams have been successful in tournaments. They also have a lot of fun and raise money for charity, such as in an aerobics and gymnastics event with an Olympic gymnast that raised £300 for Kosovo and a skipping day for the British Heart Foundation.

126 Management by the co-ordinator is very effective. The curriculum is carefully planned and good quality resources are provided. There is an appropriate new policy and clear priorities for the subject in the school development plan. The co-ordinator has had some opportunity to teach other classes and is just starting a long course for subject leaders in physical education. There is no opportunity at present to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. The accommodation is just adequate. The hall is a little small for classes of older pupils and the field is on a slope. There are, however, two reasonably sized playgrounds and extensive use is made of other local venues.