

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WALTER HALLS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Mapperley, Nottingham

LEA area: Nottingham

Unique reference number: 122456

Headteacher: Mr Frank Knowles

Reporting inspector: Mr Andy Bond  
17263

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 224108

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Querneby Road Mapperley Nottingham
Postcode:	NG3 5HS
Telephone number:	0115 953 7200 / 915 0045
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Simon Gilby
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Andy Bond 17263	Registered inspector	Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? Results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
David Ashby 09868	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How the school works in partnership with parents
Carolyn Powell 27369	Team inspector	Science The Foundation Stage	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Ted Cox 25623	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology English as an additional language	
Judy Boyd 01811	Team inspector	Music Religious education	Personal development (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)
Pauleen Shannon 19765	Team inspector	Geography History Art and design Special educational needs	
Peter Sandall 25771	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>30</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Walter Halls is a community primary school catering for pupils aged three to eleven years. The school is larger than other primary schools and has 327 pupils on roll (155 boys and 172 girls). In addition, there are 50 children in the nursery who attend part time. At present there are seven children in the reception class; other children are due to join the class later in the school year.

The school serves an area of council and private housing. The ethnic background of the majority of pupils is of white United Kingdom heritage, although a growing number of pupils are of Asian descent (12 per cent). There are a small number of pupils with African-Caribbean backgrounds (five per cent). Seventeen pupils have English as an additional language, but none of these pupils is at an early stage in learning the language. An above average percentage of pupils are identified as having special educational needs (24 per cent). Many of these pupils have speech and communication difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average (23 per cent). Children have a wide range of attainment when they start nursery school, but overall attainment levels are well below average.

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

This is a very effective school with a strong team spirit. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen rapidly by the end of Key Stage 2 and were high last year. Standards were not so high at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, but they are improving. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is generally good. The overall quality of teaching is good and very good in Key Stage 1 and the nursery. The leadership and management of the school is very good and the governors support the school very well. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well and generally make good progress throughout the school. This has resulted in rapidly improving standards in English, mathematics and science. These are now well above those of similar schools at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. It is very good in Key Stage 1 and in the nursery. The quality of nursery provision is also very good.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff is very good and the governors of the school fulfil their duties very effectively.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. There are positive relationships throughout the school and an excellent shared whole-school commitment to improvement.
- The school forms very good links with parents.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.

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

- Planning in some subjects could be more detailed and this would enable pupils to make even greater progress.

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

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

The previous school inspection was in November 1996. The key issues of the last report have all been addressed properly. The school has made good progress in the intervening period. Pupils' attainment in

the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved tremendously in English, mathematics and science. In information and communication technology standards have also risen, when taking into account present day expectations.

Other areas of improvement include assessment procedures, the quality of teaching, the provision for pupils with special educational needs, the provision for pupils' cultural development, levels of resourcing and general site and accommodation facilities. The school has maintained good standards in many other aspects of school life.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	D	C	A
Mathematics	E	C	A	A
Science	D	C	A	A

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The table for 2000 shows that attainment in English in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average and that mathematics and science are well above the national average. Compared to similar schools all three subjects are well above average. The judgements from the inspection indicate that present standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations. The school is aware that the present Year 6 pupils are not attaining such high standards as the previous year because there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. At the end of Key Stage 1 inspectors judge that standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national levels. There has been a rapid improvement in National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2 over the last three years which exceeds the national trend. The targets set by the school in English and mathematics, in conjunction with the local education authority, are far too conservative and were easily surpassed in the school year 1999-2000. Pupils achieve well in most subjects and are making at least satisfactory, and often good progress through the school. The best progress is being made in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are eager to come to school and enjoy lessons. Pupils have a great deal of interest and enthusiasm for school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils concentrate well on their work.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships with staff and with each other. They use their initiative but too few opportunities are provided to develop this further.

Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, teaching is satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons; very good or better in 30 per cent and unsatisfactory in three per cent of lessons. Teaching was judged to be very good in Key Stage 1 and in the nursery class. At the time of the previous inspection teaching was good and no unsatisfactory teaching was recorded. The quality of teaching has improved because expectations of teaching are much higher now than four years ago and the percentage of very good teaching has increased significantly. There is good teaching in English and mathematics and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well. This allows pupils to make good progress in their learning in these subjects. Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils can do and good class management skills. This ensures pupils are challenged, concentrate, listen carefully and apply themselves well to their work. Pupils have a good understanding of their own learning and what they need to do to improve. In the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory the pace of lessons was slow and pupils completed insufficient work in the time available. The school meets the needs of all pupils, including those who need specialist support. The good quality of teaching means that pupils achieve well and generally make good progress through the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good curriculum for pupils. It is broad and relevant to their backgrounds. In some subjects schemes of work are not detailed enough. Extra-curricular and outdoor activities are particular strengths of the school's provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs. They make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is no specialist support for pupils with English as an additional language but they make similar progress to their class mates.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The schools' provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils' cultural development is catered for very well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good levels of care. Staff are sensitive and support pupils well. Assessment of pupils' work in English is very good and in mathematics it is good. In many other subjects assessment is still being developed. The school has good strategies for improving behaviour and attendance.

The school maintains very good links with parents.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED?

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff give the school very good leadership. The staff work well together as a team. Subject managers fulfil their responsibilities well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their role very well. They monitor the school performance very closely and have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its own performance well. There are good analytical systems in place.
The strategic use of resources	Finance is used effectively to support school priorities. The accommodation and site facilities are used well. Comparative tendering systems are used and comparisons are made with schools of a similar kind to evaluate overall school performance.

The school is staffed adequately. There is a high proportion of classroom support staff who are very effectively deployed to support pupils' learning. Learning resources have improved and are now generally good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching is good</li> <li>The children like school</li> <li>The school expects children to do their best</li> <li>The school is well led and managed</li> <li>The school is helping children to become mature and responsible</li> <li>Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents do not feel well informed about how their child is getting on</li> </ul>

Parents are generally very supportive of the school and praise the school for the quality of its work. The inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents. Inspectors do not agree with the views of some parents about the information provided by the school on pupils' progress. The information supplied to parents, and in particular details of pupils' progress, is judged to be very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most children entering the nursery class are well below average in their attainment for their age. These standards are confirmed by the school's own baseline assessment. Children generally make good progress through the Foundation Stage but the majority do not reach average levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the start of Year 1. However, in personal, social and emotional development and in physical and creative development the expected levels are reached by the time children are ready to enter Key Stage 1. Progress in these three areas is very good.

2. The results from the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that pupils are attaining standards in line with the national average in English and well above the national average in mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher grade 5 level in all three subjects was particularly good and judged to be well above the national level for mathematics and science and above for English. Over the last three years the results from National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have shown a rapid improvement. The school trend of improvement exceeds the national picture. Compared with similar schools, the 2000 results show that pupils are attaining well above average levels in English, mathematics and science. Inspection judgements show that standards being attained by the present Year 6 pupils are in line with national expectations in all three subjects. The standards are not so high because this particular year group has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a significant number of lower attaining pupils. Girls achieve marginally higher standards than boys in English but boys outperform girls in mathematics and science. This is in line with the national trend.

3. The results from the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that pupils attained standards well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Only a small percentage of pupils reached the higher level 3 grade in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, teacher assessments showed that although the vast majority of pupils achieved the average level no pupil gained the above average level 3. Compared with similar schools pupils' performance in mathematics was below average and in reading and writing it was well below average. However, pupils in the present Year 2 classes are attaining higher levels than in previous years and inspection judgements show that at the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. There is a general trend of steady improvement, although attainment slipped back in the year 2000. With this exception, the school trend of improvement is generally matching the national picture. Girls are outperforming boys in reading, writing and mathematics. The difference is particularly marked in reading, but in writing and mathematics this is not so pronounced.

4. The school sets targets in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in line with the local education authority policy. Targets are very conservative and were easily surpassed in the year 2000 National Curriculum tests. The school tends to be cautious in its predictions, although they are based on good quality assessment information.

5. Standards of attainment are rising, especially in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. There are several factors that account for the improved performance of pupils. Teaching is good throughout the school and at times it is very good. This enables pupils to learn more effectively and make good progress in lessons,

gaining new skills, deepening their understanding and extending their knowledge. The introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have also had a positive impact on attainment levels. The setting in Key Stage 2 mathematics lessons favourably affects pupils' performance. Teachers are able to match work more closely to pupils' needs and use their teaching time effectively to improve standards. Lessons are well structured and focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills. The built-in progression of the schemes of work also enables a more systematic acquisition and consolidation of learning. This has resulted in good standards of literacy and numeracy being achieved by pupils. The school assessment procedures are very good in English and good in mathematics. Teachers are able to pinpoint individual pupils' levels of attainment and then to set suitable targets for improvement based on the information gained from the records compiled. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of what they need to do to make further improvement. The school analyses test results well and clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Action is then taken in lessons to remedy weaknesses. The booster club classes in Year 6 for English and mathematics, held after school, are also instrumental in raising standards. Lessons are taught enthusiastically by a committed school staff and pupils' attendance levels are high. In science the teachers allocate a greater percentage of curriculum time towards the end of the key stage and concentrate on consolidating earlier learning, prior to national tests. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved with the installation of a new computer suite and the increased level of training for teachers. Teachers are becoming more confident and better qualified to deliver more challenging lessons using more up-to-date equipment.

6. At the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils are fluent readers, taking notice of punctuation. Most pupils break down words into syllables when tackling unfamiliar words. Lower attainers lack some of these skills and rely on picture clues. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are avid and expressive readers. They enjoy the Harry Potter books and have good comprehension levels. Average attaining pupils show interest in reading and can describe the parts played by the main characters. Lower attainers tend to read with little expression but they readily talk about the stories they have read. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are independent writers using commas correctly. They know how to use apostrophes in abbreviated words. Many pupils are beginning to join their writing by the end of Year 2. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have developed a well formed, fluent handwriting style which is presented neatly. Higher and average attaining pupils use a good range of punctuation in their writing. They experiment with exciting vocabulary and form complex sentences. Generally pupils listen carefully and explain their thoughts clearly, but some lower attaining pupils reply to questions with simple expressions and two or three-word answers.

7. At the end of Key Stage 1 in mathematics pupils have good mental strategies when adding and subtracting. They recognise simple relationships and patterns in number. Pupils explain some of their findings when examining block graphs. At the end of Key Stage 2 there is a wide range of ability. Lower attaining pupils increase their level of understanding of fractions by completing practical activities. Average attainers in Year 6 construct and interpret line graphs successfully, whilst the higher attainers confidently use a formula to find the area of rectangles and right-angled triangles.

8. In science at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are encouraged to 'act like scientists' in their investigation of an electrical circuit. They know the main parts of a plant and the importance of seeds. They know that the properties of some materials change when bending and heating are applied. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils record their findings from investigations in tables, diagrams and graphs. They have a clear understanding of habitat in relation to mini-beasts. Pupils have an improving knowledge of environmental change through the effects of weather and temperature. Pupils at the end of both key stages have an appropriate understanding of fair testing.

9. Pupils' make good progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT. They generally make good progress in these subjects throughout the school. Progress is also good in music throughout the school and in physical education in Key Stage 1. This has a direct correlation with the good and very good teaching in these subjects. Only in design and technology in Key Stage 2 is pupils' progress slow and this is due to the limited opportunities that pupils have to develop their skills, build understanding and extend their knowledge. Standards are judged to be in line with nationally expected levels in all subjects at the end of both key stages except music, which is above average and design and technology at the end of Key Stage 2, which is below average.

10. In other subjects, standards have fallen in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 2 and in history, art and physical education when compared with the judgements of the previous report. The school has quite rightly followed national directives and successfully raised standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT and as a result other subjects have not received the same level of support and development as they did previously, prior to the 1996 inspection. Nevertheless, a broad and well-balanced curriculum still exists and plans for the implementation of new curriculum requirements are being developed.

11. Pupils with English as an additional language are learning at a similar rate to their class mates. These pupils receive help within the classroom in the normal course of lessons but no additional outside support is received to aid their progress.

12. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the effective support they are given and most make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and in many aspects of learning across the whole curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards that are below average levels with some pupils attaining standards well below average. They are well supported by the special needs co-ordinator, the class teachers and the learning support assistants who are well briefed and very efficient. Progress is good in nursery and across both key stages because of the good provision made within classes and through targeted additional support outside the classrooms. The setting arrangements in numeracy in the upper Key Stage 2 and grouping of pupils by attainment in English, mean that most pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and work that is closely matched to their particular needs.

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

13. Since the last inspection pupils of all ages have maintained very good attitudes and have responded well to school rules. They are eager to come to school, participate with enthusiasm and enjoy their lessons. They respond well to adults and to each other and have positive attitudes to learning. When pupils are well motivated by teachers they work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Examples of this were seen in three excellent lessons. One was in English in Year 6 when pupils were listening to and creating poems, the second was in a Year 4/5 history lesson studying Viking origin place names and the other was a Year 3 mathematics lesson when lower attainers were learning about number bonds. Pupils are very good at collaborating with each other and this helps them make a very good contribution to the lessons. The majority of pupils have good or very good levels of concentration and can work well individually. Pupils listen well to each other, particularly when listening to each other answer questions. The class value the efforts of each other and encourage one another. In a good physical education lesson they clapped spontaneously when other pupils made a good contribution to the lesson. In a small minority of lessons some pupils found it hard to concentrate and to sit still, particularly towards the end of a lengthy session. In these situations the impact on learning was less positive.

14. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school continues to be good and this has a positive impact on their work and concentration. Pupils respond well to the expectations of teachers, support staff and adults about their behaviour. On the rare occasions when pupils are not effectively challenged some pupils behave less well, and this sometimes has a negative impact on learning. School rules and conventions are clearly understood by pupils and by parents. The result is a positive climate for learning with no evidence of aggressive or racist behaviour. Misbehaviour, when it occurs, is dealt with promptly and effectively. Exclusions rarely occur except at lunchtime when repeated misbehaviour does result in pupils having to go home for the lunchtime period.

15. From an early age pupils establish very good relationships with staff, with adults and with each other. Pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs are included as part of a well cared for community that copes confidently with daily work and play. Pupils have some opportunities for personal development through the jobs they do in class and around school. They engage in these with enthusiasm and confidence. Opportunities for personal development are sometimes missed in lessons. For example, pupils do not use the main library or computer facilities sufficiently to extend their individual study and research skills. There are good opportunities for sports activities, music and drama. Pupils also have opportunities to go on residential visits to outdoor activity centres, camping and places of interest. Pupils take part in these activities with enthusiasm and show a sense of pride in their achievements, which is seen in their comprehensive photographic records. The additional curriculum activities, trips and visits have a positive impact on pupils' personal development, by boosting confidence and self-esteem.

16. Most pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons although some have concentration and behaviour difficulties. The school has positive relationships with the children with special educational needs and the staff have worked hard to raise their self-confidence. This is particularly noticeable in the use of the accelerated learning programme at Key Stage 1 and when pupils are withdrawn at Key Stage 2. Older pupils with identified behavioural needs are given personal responsibility for setting a behaviour target each week which they review with the special needs co-ordinator. This has helped the pupils' personal and social skills and increased their self esteem and independence.

17. Attendance has remained broadly in line with national levels since the last inspection. Pupils clearly like coming to school regularly and this provides them with opportunities for achieving consistent progress in their learning. Most pupils arrive at school punctually, which allows sessions to start promptly. There is a low level of unauthorised absence because parents are responding well to the schools' initiatives to ensure they provide acceptable reasons for absence.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is judged to be good. Of the lessons observed during the inspection period, four per cent were excellent, 26 per cent were very good, 43 per cent good, 24 per cent were satisfactory. Unsatisfactory teaching represented three per cent of all lessons. The very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching was the result of slow lesson pace and insufficient learning took place in the allotted time. The tasks set for pupils were not well matched or sufficiently challenging.

19. In Key Stage 1 teaching was of a high quality with 93 per cent of lessons observed being good or better. In the Foundation Stage teaching was good, with particular strengths in the nursery, where consistently very good teaching was observed. In Key Stage 2, teaching was also good with three excellent lessons being observed by inspectors. The specialist teaching for pupils with special educational needs was also of a high standard. Teaching was judged to be good or better throughout the school in the subjects of mathematics, English, information and communication technology and music and in physical education and science in Key Stage 1.

20. At the time of the previous inspection teaching was judged to be good with all lessons being satisfactory or better and nine per cent very good or better. There were weaknesses in the setting of learning objectives in lessons and assessment was insufficiently developed. Although, there is now a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching, very good teaching has improved by 21 per cent and the criticisms of the previous report regarding the setting of objectives and assessment procedures have been eradicated. Overall, the school has improved the quality of teaching. This in turn has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and the improved levels of attainment, especially in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. A much higher percentage of pupils are achieving levels above the nationally expected levels in these subjects than at the time of the previous inspection.

21. Pupils with special educational needs have work that is well matched to their needs and careful planning helps them to achieve their targets. Pupils' needs are assessed regularly from nursery onwards and staff use the information to plan appropriate work, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good particularly when pupils have targeted withdrawal time. The special needs teacher has a very good understanding of the pupils' needs and provides an interesting and stimulating range of tasks, which helps accelerate their learning. The staff have worked hard to foster a calm, positive working atmosphere for pupils with special educational needs. The work set for them within classes is usually different, although some pupils with very low attainment would benefit from more limited written and recording work. These pupils are supported well by staff, both individually and in groups. The learning support assistants make an extremely valuable contribution.

22. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive no specialist support because no individual pupil is at an early stage in the acquisition of English. However, teachers and classroom support staff give these pupils good support by matching work appropriately to their needs. As a result they make similar progress in their learning as other members of their class.

23. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter they present to pupils. They deal with pupils' questions confidently. This enables pupils to make gains in their learning. This was demonstrated well in a Year 4 English lesson when the class and the teacher analysed a passage from a newspaper highlighting phrases which were either fact or opinion.

24. A very strong feature of teaching is the manner in which the basic skills in numeracy and literacy are taught. In a Year 3 lesson a lower attaining group of pupils were taught good mental strategies for calculating addition and subtraction using number cards and picking out patterns on a number square. The pupils responded well and soon grasped the concept, noting the change in value of the ten and unit digit when adding nine.

25. Teachers plan their lessons well. They set clear objectives and usually share these with pupils. They build on pupils' existing skills, knowledge and understanding and gradually increase the complexity of the tasks, ensuring that good progress in learning is made. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, the teacher taught the techniques of throwing and catching well, then made tasks more challenging by varying the speed and the height of the pass. Pupils were required to increase their physical effort and use their reasoning powers to streamline their skills.

26. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and the level of work that can be achieved is usually good. They encourage and inspire pupils by building up their confidence. The activities chosen provide pupils with sufficient challenge for good progress in learning to be made. Teachers often group pupils within the class according to their attainment levels and after the initial explanation provide tasks matched to those levels. In mathematics in Key Stage 2 the setting of pupils by ability across year groups usually proves effective in increasing rates of learning. In Key Stage 1 teachers are particularly skilful at involving pupils in their own learning. A good example was seen in a Year 1 mathematics lesson when the teacher asked individual children to come to the front of the class and use a pointer to count on a number square. The pupil began by saying "Are you ready everyone?", then the whole class joined in the counting exercise. Teachers have good questioning skills and check pupils' level of understanding by asking pertinent questions.

27. The manner in which teachers manage pupils is good in almost all lessons. It is very good in Key Stage 1, where relationships between pupils and teachers are particularly good. Teachers make learning fun and share jokes with the pupils without undermining their management of the class. In both key stages pupils concentrate well and listen carefully within the framework of good discipline systems. Pupils show interest and are keen to do their best.

28. There are occasions when pupils lose interest. In Key Stage 2 this often occurs in the session after lunch. Pupils and teachers have worked hard throughout the morning and are then faced with an overlong session of one and a half hours. Pupils' interest tends to wane towards the end of this period and the level of their productivity and concentration falls away. Some astute teachers vary activities during this long session. This was shown clearly in an excellent Year 5 history lesson on the Vikings when teacher questioning, video presentation, discussion and research were used to retain pupils' interest over a lengthy period of time.

29. The vast majority of lessons move along at a good pace and teachers give reminders about what should be achieved within the next ten minutes. When teachers' class management is not so strong lessons slow down because too many reminders are needed about the standards of behaviour expected. Resources and classroom support are used effectively, especially in Key Stage 1. A good example was observed in a Year 1 science lesson about light and dark. The teacher used a good range of equipment and adult support was well focussed to ensure pupils undertook purposeful scientific activity and made discoveries for themselves.

30. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' attainment levels both informally and in thorough record keeping. They circulate around the classroom and identify pupils' levels of

understanding, knowledge and skills. Skilful teachers often pick out weaknesses quickly and stop the lesson, re-focussing their teaching on a weakness in pupils' learning. The quality of marking is generally good, especially in English. Increasingly, teachers are becoming more analytical and using the information from assessed work and informal observation to set targets for improvement.

31. The school, as a whole, is using homework well to increase pupils' learning. It extends beyond the usual reading at home, learning spellings and multiplication tables. In a Year 6 lesson which took place at the end of the school day the teacher carefully explained what the pupils should look for at home when examining newspaper headlines. The examples collected by the pupils would form the basis of the next lesson. The pupils were thoroughly involved in their own learning and clearly saw the benefit and relevance of completing their homework. In Year 2 homework diaries are well targeted and make it clear to parents what their children need to do for the week. The booster classes held with Year 6 pupils after school in English and mathematics have been well attended. They have contributed significantly to the raising of attainment levels at the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers accurately target identified weaknesses in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and ensure that pupils are well prepared for National Curriculum tests.

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

32. The school has maintained a good, well balanced curriculum since the last inspection in 1996. Although there has been a higher level of concentration on the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT, it has retained good curriculum breadth by continuing to deliver to pupils stimulating experiences in all subjects.

33. The Foundation Stage curriculum for the nursery and reception children is in the process of being developed. There has been some re-organisation but this is in its early stages of development, in terms of leadership and organisation and the planning and assessing of children's work. When moving from the nursery to the reception class, children who have birthdays later in the year spend insufficient time in the reception class because of the termly arrangements for admission.

34. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and is committed to maintaining a broad curriculum relevant to the needs of its pupils. The exception is design and technology at Key Stage 2, where little has been produced over the last two years. The curriculum provided meets statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education. This conforms to the locally agreed syllabus. There is a well organised policy for the personal and social development of pupils, which includes provision for teaching drugs awareness. Sex education is also appropriately taught, partly through the science curriculum. There are policies for all subjects and these are supported by schemes of work. While long-term planning is sufficiently detailed to ensure coverage, in some subjects not enough attention is paid to planning for the medium-term. As a result, there is a lack of continuity in the teaching of knowledge, skills and understanding. This is the case throughout the school in religious education, physical education and music, and in design and technology in Key Stage 2.

35. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 has been re-structured to meet their needs and is well balanced, paying good attention to the requirements of Curriculum 2000. At the present time history, geography and science are taught in blocks for Key Stage 2 pupils. While there is sufficient coverage, the long gaps mean that some pupils have difficulty in building on the knowledge which they were taught previously, particularly in science. There is only one 'design and make' activity at Key Stage 2 design and technology in each year group.



This is insufficient to give pupils enough knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve nationally expected levels. Over the last two years too few opportunities have been given to pupils in this area. In Key Stage 2 there is an imbalance in the allocation of time in afternoon lessons. There is an overlong session after lunch followed by a brief half-hour teaching period which is too short to develop an in-depth lesson.

36. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is well established and numeracy is strengthened by the setting of pupils by ability in Key Stage 2. This helps teachers to match tasks more closely to the learning needs of their pupils. The planning of opportunities for the teaching and practice of literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects is in an early stage of development.

37. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported in classes and some pupils also have individual and small group support when withdrawn from classes. Pupils who are slightly underachieving are supported in booster groups and through a programme of accelerated learning. Classes for different ability groups in mathematics and grouping within classes for English contribute effectively to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils who have behavioural needs are identified and targets for behaviour are included in their individual education plans when appropriate, with advice given from the local education authority as necessary. Particularly effective is the range of strategies used by the special needs co-ordinator with older pupils at Key Stage 2 who give themselves a behaviour target each week which they review with the co-ordinator. Most children with special educational needs have homework, often based on games for the younger pupils and involving specifically designed activities for the older pupils. The school meets its statutory requirements regarding those pupils with a full statement of special educational needs, although the school is aware that the building is not fully accessible to wheelchair users.

38. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities and this is a strength of the school. There are many sporting and educational opportunities available to a large number of pupils, with teachers giving freely of their time and energy. A particular feature is the way in which all pupils from Year 2 onwards are given the chance of an annual residential experience. Good use is made of both visits outside and visitors to the school to support the curriculum in subjects such as religious education, science, history and geography. Booster clubs held for pupils in Year 6 after school, in literacy and numeracy, make a strong impact on learning.

39. The school's equal opportunities policy contains both suitable intentions and actions to support them. The value of individuals is emphasised in both policy and practice. Where pupils are withdrawn from classes, for instance for instrumental tuition or learning support, the school does its best to ensure that their wider education does not suffer as a result.

40. The school has good links with its community and partner schools, many of which contribute to pupils' learning. There is an after-school club whose facilities are available for school use. The play leader works closely with the school and is employed as a technical advisor. The development of the school grounds by the parents has made a considerable contribution to pupils' learning. The school choir sings at community events and in the local church and at carol services. There is a National Vocational Qualification training link with a local college, providing training for parents. Many of these parents now work in the school and give a good level of support. The Merrivale Beacon project has helped to develop the Foundation Stage and provides good links for teachers.

#### Pupils' personal development

41. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development continues to be good and provision for cultural development has improved since the last inspection. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and it is of a good quality. It takes place in a calm atmosphere. Assemblies at both key stages provide opportunities for reflection; sometimes to sing hymns such as *Jesus' world is very wonderful*; to participate in the recall of biblical stories and historical events; and to celebrate pupils' work. The school keeps a record of assembly themes.

42. The school successfully promotes the spiritual development of pupils through assemblies. This was shown very successfully by a Sikh pupil who wrote and led a prayer she had written. In lessons such as religious education, science and music, opportunities are provided for pupils to explore values and beliefs. In Key Stage 2 for instance this is demonstrated through the pure enjoyment shown by pupils in the choir and by the pupils' exploration of light and dark in Key Stage 1.

43. Pupils' moral development is good. Teachers promote a strong moral code and provide very good role models. Very clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour and caring attitudes emphasise the difference between right and wrong in all aspects of school life. The school's aims and ethos are promoted through the 'Golden Rules' in the corridors and classrooms and are a constant reminder to all. Teachers, in lessons, manage pupils through the use of non-verbal expression and gentle reminders about good behaviour, as in music where pupils are reminded of the 'rules for music'. Pupils are given clear moral direction and are aware of what constitutes consideration and respect for others.

44. The provision for social development is good. Opportunities to work together help to develop pupils' social skills. These are also developed through the 'Golden Rules' and the 'Golden Ticket' system, which celebrates the success of individuals. The staff are caring and thoughtful and provide opportunities in their teaching to discuss issues such as responsibility, taking turns and working together for the benefit of all. This is shown in choir practices, games lessons and in Key Stage 1, where there are good opportunities for pupils to work together. Teachers help pupils to develop their social awareness through opportunities to consider environmental issues and their support of the monitor system, which enables pupils to carry out responsibilities with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Assemblies make a good contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem. Pupils celebrate their work enthusiastically with the whole school. During break times and at school camps pupils are encouraged to build relationships with their peers and to develop their social skills.

45. Provision for cultural development was sound at the time of the last inspection. The school now provides very good opportunities for the pupils. Teachers make very good use of supportive families from different ethnic backgrounds. The parents come in to school to discuss their beliefs and values. These parents have recently worked with the school to develop the knowledge of belief and practices of the Sikh and Muslim faiths in Key Stage 2. Pupils have also visited local places of worship such as St Jude's Church.

46. The cultural diversity of the school is celebrated through the school ethos, ensuring that each pupil is valued and treated with respect. Pupils appreciate their own cultures through collective worship. For example, they consider, in Key Stage 2 the symbolism of the poppy through a well recounted story of the war and a discussion of why a poppy is worn at the time of Remembrance Day. Music of famous composers is used when pupils enter the hall for assembly. During the week of the inspection the focus was Beethoven. Pupils also perform their own musical compositions for others to appreciate. They perform music to capture the mood of the sea and the woods.

47. Other cultures are celebrated in assembly, for example the Australian Aboriginal culture, and the associated 'dreamtime' stories and music is mimed, performed and danced for the whole school. Other lessons in the subjects of religious education, science and geography make valuable contributions to the celebration of a wide range of cultures. There are good examples of the study of contemporary cultures in Tobago and Kenya to broaden the pupils' knowledge and compare other cultures with their own.

48. Photographs of residential camps at Hathersage, Overton and Scarborough reveal pupils' enjoyment of exploring the environment, enhancing their skills, knowledge and understanding of the wider world through visits to churches, Little John's grave, the local village and observing the local flora, fauna, rocks and fossils. The school has also captured the enthusiasm of pupils in the photographs of the Victorian Day which the pupils took part in. On that day 'history' came to life at Walter Halls School.

49. The music team provide many opportunities for the pupils to perform musical concerts and productions for a number of organisations in the community. They are currently preparing performances for a nearby hospice, Seely Hurst House, and groups attached to the local churches. Art makes a significant contribution to cultural development. There is an abundance of examples of artists' work displayed around the school which encourages the pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of art from a variety of artists, including their own work.

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

50. Since the previous inspection the school has consistently maintained good all-round care for its pupils. Staff and adults in the school are vigilant, sensitive and supportive of the pupils in their care. Monitoring, promotion and practice of support, safety and security arrangements are shared by the headteacher, staff and governing body. Assessment systems are well established for English, mathematics and science as well as for pupils' personal development, but are less well developed in other subject areas.

51. Child protection is an established practice in the school. Staff are aware of the need to keep the designated teacher informed of any concerns. Formal training for all staff has not been provided but the designated teacher ensures staff are well informed. Effective guidelines are in the staff handbook. Appropriate local agencies are effectively consulted when there are specific needs.

52. Staff are aware of good practice in health and safety, and clear guidelines and procedures have been established. Health and safety has been reviewed and checks are made to the buildings and grounds to ensure the learning environment is safe. Staff are aware of the need to inform the headteacher about issues. There are good regular arrangements for safety checking school, electrical, fire and physical education equipment. The standard of care for the premises and grounds is very good. A small team of cleaning staff work hard to maintain a clean and attractive environment in a large expansive building. This adds very positively to the atmosphere of the whole school.

53. Promotion and monitoring of behaviour have been consistent since the last inspection and the arrangements have become very well established. Staff, pupils and parents are very clear about the school's expectations. Appropriate rewards and sanctions in the classrooms, playground and around school generally are used as effective strategies for promoting good behaviour. This underpins the caring atmosphere the school community enjoys and ensures aggressive or racist outbursts are unlikely to occur. The school has very good strategies for dealing with any issues should they occur. Monitoring and promotion of good attendance is well established, with highly effective school systems and management. Pupils and parents

are equally clear about what the school expects for attendance, punctuality and authorisation of absence through promotion in school letters. Very effective monitoring arrangements ensure the school can react to any issue very quickly. There are very good links with the educational welfare officer, who attends when required or when there are any urgent issues. The school nurse provides good support to the school. Medical checks are undertaken periodically.

54. The school is proud of its provision for pupils with special educational needs and this positive atmosphere is reflected throughout the school. Assembly sessions are used to promote a positive attitude to disability and efforts are made to ensure that all pupils with special needs are included in all activities. The academic performance and personal development of pupils with special needs are assessed and identified from nursery onwards and are carefully monitored. Great care is taken in the nursery to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the daily life of the nursery. Class teachers and learning support assistants are given a copy of individual educational plans and have regular opportunities to contribute to these plans when they are updated. This close collaboration together with frequent discussions ensures that the learning programme is well matched to each child's individual needs.

55. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment. Information from tests is used effectively to monitor areas where the school is doing well and where the school could do better. There has been a significant focus on the three main core subjects which has been of fundamental importance as the school has successfully sought to raise standards over recent years.

56. Assessment data are used effectively to plan the day-to-day learning of pupils. Information for English and mathematics is very effectively recorded and clear targets are identified to ensure pupils make progress in these areas. In science and ICT, assessment records are established, but in other subjects there is no record of individual pupils' targets, achievements or weaknesses. The teachers are, however, good at recording what pupils know or cannot understand in lessons. During marking of work, teachers identify what pupils need to revise to ensure they make progress. Teachers have good informal systems, using information gleaned from pupils' work to feed back into their weekly team meetings and to inform their daily plans. The lack of structured individual assessment records and targets in all but the main three core subjects and ICT reduces the scope of teachers' information about individual pupils. The school recognises the need to implement systems as part of the next stage of school development. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Pupils' progress is monitored, regular reviews take place and information on assessments is used to inform future targets.

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

57. The school has consistently maintained very good links with parents. Very good quality information is communicated to them regularly. Parents have close links with staff and can approach them at any time. Parents who respond to the school's initiatives make a very good contribution to their children's learning and are very supportive of the school. These links have a positive impact on pupils' learning. There are very good levels of parent interest and parents and carers are generally satisfied with all aspects of their children's education.

58. Parents indicate that this is a very good school. There is a regular small core of parents who provide help in classrooms and they feel they are welcome to help at any time if they are available. Parents are very committed to the school and this is shown through the support they provide. They are very good at attending school activities such as special performances and open evenings with a specific focus on their children. For other

curriculum-based activities and meetings, attendance is also good. The school parent-teacher association activities make a significant contribution to the life of the school. They provide very good social and fundraising opportunities that enable staff and parents to meet and enjoy informal contact. The resulting fundraising adds significantly to the provision of important resources for the school such as the maintenance and provision of the school minibuses, the school hall curtains and the landscaped grounds. The after-school club has also been supported by the proceeds of these fundraising activities. This has a very positive influence on the work of the school.

59. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. Teachers work very hard to establish good communications with parents and provide opportunities for parents to know that the school is open and welcoming. Staff get to know and understand pupils and their families very well. The impact of parents' involvement in school is very good. Parents respond positively to agreed commitments to work with the school to maintain high standards of behaviour and in support of the home-school agreement. This clearly sets out the respective responsibilities of the school, the family and the pupils. They support consistently the use of pupils' reading record books. Parents are not so clear about the amount and frequency of homework given, for variations exist within year groups. Parents have a very good level of interest in the work of the school and know their children are happy there.

60. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be involved from an early stage and are kept well informed of their child's progress. Individual targets are shared with parents at regular reviews and parents appreciate the school's use of 'home school diaries' when necessary. The prospectus gives clear and useful information to parents concerning provision for pupils with special educational needs. A few parents feel it has been difficult to get the support they feel their children need; however the majority of parents are happy with the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and are positive about the school's attitude to supporting these pupils.

61. The quality of information provided by the school, on a weekly basis, is very good. Parents reflect that they are well informed in plenty of time about what activities the school is planning. The prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents is very informative. There is good quality and quantity of information that tells parents and pupils about all aspects of the school's work and the achievements of the pupils in the core subjects. Pupils' annual school reports are good and informative and tell parents about what their children have achieved. They are good indicators of what pupils can do and what pupils should do to improve. These reports are reviewed with parents.

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

62. The headteacher gives the school very good leadership. He has gained the respect and trust of staff, parents, governors and pupils during his period of headship and created a clear and united educational direction for the school. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff who are committed to raising standards in the school. The strength of the school lies in its team spirit and the development over the years of an excellent quality of shared commitment to improvement.

63. The school's results in National Curriculum tests over the last three years have risen rapidly at the end of Key Stage 2. The year 2000 results showed that pupils were reaching standards in line with the national average in English and well above in mathematics and science. Although standards have risen more slowly in Key Stage 1 the present Year 2 pupils are judged to be achieving standards in line with national levels and to be making good progress from a low base level of entry to the school. During this period of improving standards designed to meet national targets, the school has largely managed to retain a

balanced curriculum and to continue with a wide range of extra-curricular and residential experiences. It is through the very good management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher and the commitment of the staff that the school has been so successful in raising standards.

64. The key issues for improvement, resulting from the previous inspection report of 1996, which were few in number, have all been properly addressed through the school's action plan. Learning objectives in lessons have been clearly defined and teaching is now more sharply focussed on required outcomes in pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are now very good in English, good in mathematics and satisfactory in science and in information and communication technology as a result of the development of a whole-school assessment framework. New targets for learning evolve from the information derived. The analysis of national tests and the end-of-year assessments have been particularly successful in guiding the school towards high pupil achievement. Pupils are increasingly involved in their learning and are beginning to set their own targets for further improvement. There is evidence of pupils becoming more independent and using their own initiative but more opportunities could still be provided, especially in Key Stage 2.

65. The school has very clear aims and values in its work and these underpin the whole school ethos. The school is a caring environment where pupils are expected to fulfil their potential. Links between home and school are very good. There is a broad and relevant curriculum. Each pupil is valued and equality of opportunity for all is an underlying principle of school life. Finally, standards have risen across many areas of the curriculum. Teaching and levels of care have also been improved.

66. The school has a good structure in place for the delegation of responsibilities for the management of the key stages and the newly introduced Foundation Stage (nursery and reception). Subject managers monitor, advise and develop their curriculum areas. Major decisions are made and based on a collaborative approach, ensuring that targets are supported by all staff. Most subjects have two managers and this proves effective in retaining continuity of development even when staff leave. The school has selected its priorities for development appropriately, in line with national initiatives, and supported them with finance, time and energy. In addition, its own accurate analysis of school needs has shown that issues related to improving teaching standards, developing special educational needs provision, under performance by low achievers and improvement of attendance and behaviour have required the appropriate amount of attention in the school management plan. Evidence from the inspection shows that the school has been successful in addressing these issues. Almost inevitably, with so many initiatives being undertaken by the school, some areas have only been maintained at a lower level. The curriculum has remained broad and relevant to pupils but some subject development has slowed whilst the focus has been elsewhere. The monitoring of teaching in English and mathematics has been good and has provided valuable information for improving the quality of teaching throughout the school. However, in other subjects, monitoring of teaching is limited and assessment of pupils' work in art and design, music, physical education, religious education, history, geography and design and technology is largely informal. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects but in some subjects, notably physical education, music, religious education throughout the school and in design and technology in Key Stage 2, they are insufficiently detailed to ensure that pupils' development of skills, knowledge and understanding is continuous. That pupils often make satisfactory or even good progress in these subjects is due to teachers' experience and the strong informal liaison between staff which prevails in the school. The school is aware of the situation and is directing its attention towards new requirements for the curriculum.

67. There is very good management and administration of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator is very experienced and understands the needs of the pupils very well. She is well supported by the teacher with responsibility for children in the Foundation Stage. This ensures that the special needs provision is well co-ordinated throughout the school from nursery onwards, with early interventions, and this has a very positive impact on the provision, learning and progress of these pupils. The special needs co-ordinator and learning support staff have a high level of expertise, and training is usually shared with the school staff. However, there are no formalised opportunities for the co-ordinator to meet with the learning support assistants on a regular basis. The school complies with its legal requirements and the governors are kept well informed through regular reports. The school has considerably improved its provision for pupils with special educational needs since the time of the last inspection and provided additional funding from the school's budget to support underachieving pupils. All this additional provision and the quality of delivery throughout the school is having a positive impact on the standards achieved.

68. The governors are an influential, supportive and articulate body. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and duties, by monitoring the school's performance, through a good committee structure and through regular visits to the school. They keep abreast of current educational development by attending courses and reviewing documents. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet all statutory requirements. The governors take their responsibilities seriously and make their views known when school policies are shaped. Although governors are loyal and supportive they are rigorous in their outlook. Their procedures are thorough and they are not afraid to ask pertinent questions of the school management. The review process is a natural feature of their meetings and they seek constantly to ensure that the school makes best use of its financial and human resources. Performance targets for the headteacher and deputy headteacher are set properly. The governors have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

69. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory. Although the national formal structures have gradually broken down, the school has successfully retained its own informal procedures for the evaluation of teachers' performance and review of career development.

70. The school makes effective use of new technologies. There is Internet provision and an internal telephone system which aids swift communication on this large site.

71. The school has very good systems for the induction of new teachers. They are well supported within the school network and liaise closely with colleagues in parallel classes. New teachers settle quickly in to school routines and soon feel valued members of the school team. The school is actively engaged in the training of teachers and classroom assistants through national and vocational training programmes. Many parents have become qualified through this system and now work in school.

72. The school makes good use of its funds to target priorities and financial planning is generally good. It also generates income from the use of its facilities by outside agencies and by acquiring grants for educational initiatives. Earmarked funding is set aside for the school improvement targets and this is reviewed regularly to check that appropriate progress is being made.

73. Specific grants are incorporated into the whole school plan and used for their designated purposes. The school prudently carries forward a reasonable sum of money into the next financial year as a contingency fund to deal with any unforeseen budgetary problems. The most recent school financial audit recommendations have been met and day-

to-day administration is efficient. Governors are provided with regular updated information on school expenditure. The school makes good use of its strategic resources. Comparative tendering systems are used and comparisons are made with schools of a similar kind to evaluate overall school performance.

74. The school generally uses its resources well to increase attainment and further pupils' progress. However, there are two minor weaknesses, one in the use of time and the other in deployment of staff. In Key Stage 2 the afternoon session is unequally divided into two periods. The first is overlong, so that pupils become restless and their learning levels fade towards the end of the session. The second part of the afternoon is too brief and gives teachers too little opportunity to develop an in-depth lesson. In the reception class there is a staggered intake of children throughout the school year, depending on the term of their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were only seven children in the class. Greater progress would be made by children before entering Key Stage 1 if the reception class provision was available to an increased number of children at an earlier stage in the school year.

75. The school has a good number of teachers who are well qualified to teach primary school pupils. While many of the teachers are experienced and have been at the school some years, all are positive and enthusiastic. Hours for support staff are very high, and these are used very well to help pupils with special educational needs. Both teachers and support staff work very hard. Relationships are open, supportive and professional, and all members of the school community feel their contribution is valued. This applies equally to non-teaching staff, such as the caretaker, whose attitude and expertise save the school a lot of money. Office staff are efficient and contribute to the smooth running of the school. Teachers new to the school are particularly appreciative of the support they receive.

76. The school has plenty of space, both inside and out, and makes imaginative use of its accommodation. The hall is a good size and can comfortably hold all the pupils at once. The school has improved its accommodation and on-site facilities. The main building has been adapted to include an after-school care club and a computer suite. There are plenty of outside play spaces, both grassed and hard surfaced, as well as a soft surfaced area with attractive tables and benches, although their physical separation makes playtime supervision more demanding. The secure play area for children under five is in the heart of the school and part of this also has a soft surface.

77. Resources for learning are good in most subjects, both in quantity and quality, and are always at least satisfactory. They have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. They are stored accessibly and are carefully organised into different subjects, making it easy for teachers to use them. The school has made a substantial investment in ICT resources, which is beginning to benefit pupils. The way in which resources are maintained and improved lacks structure, however, and insufficient attention is given to deciding priorities in areas not featured in school development planning. The library is small and contains a good stock of books. It is not well used as a learning resource for research and independent work. The school makes good use of its minibuses to support extra-curricular, outdoor activities and residential experiences.

78. Taking into account the good standards of work achieved by pupils, the good quality teaching, the overall effectiveness of the school and the amount of money that is spent on each pupil, the school is judged to give good value for money.

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



79. The school has responded well to national initiatives and raised pupils' standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. To improve standards further the headteacher, staff and governors should;

- (1) **Focus on developing more detailed curriculum plans in the subjects of religious education, physical education and music throughout the school and design and technology in Key Stage 2, to ensure pupils make more consistent gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding.**  
(paragraphs 34, 66, 142, 170, 171, 175, 181, 183)

In addition to the above issue, the following less important matter should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- (1) **Review the arrangements for admission to the reception class, in order to give children a better preparation for Key Stage 1.**  
(paragraphs 33, 74, 81, 88)
- (2) **Investigate the timing of playtime in Key Stage 2, within the context of the afternoon session, so that pupils receive a better balance of teaching and learning input.**  
(paragraphs 13, 28, 35, 74, 130)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	26	43	24	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	327
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	119

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	92

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	57
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	41

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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	28	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	23
	Girls	15	15	19
	Total	35	35	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (74)	70 (88)	84 (82)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	23	21
	Girls	14	19	17
	Total	35	42	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (76)	84 (82)	76 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	23	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	21
	Girls	17	17	20
	Total	34	34	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (61)	74 (67)	89 (74)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	20
	Girls	15	14	17
	Total	29	31	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (61)	67 (63)	80 (67)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	13
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	25
Indian	3
Pakistani	11
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	271
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	27.3

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	206.5

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	99-00
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	£
Total income	722,765
Total expenditure	736,565
Expenditure per pupil	1,996
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,120
Balance carried forward to next year	21,320

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	395
Number of questionnaires returned	156

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	30	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	44	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	40	5	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	38	12	1	6
The teaching is good.	63	32	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	38	14	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	25	3	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	23	3	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	44	8	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	68	25	2	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	36	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	35	13	0	10

## **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**

80. Many children enter the nursery class at a level that is well below average, although for a minority of children this is not the case. These standards are confirmed by the initial assessment of children's abilities on entry to the school. By the time children are ready to start in Year 1, although they make good progress, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, most children are still to reach the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's personal, social and emotional development and physical development are in line with the levels expected and creative development is above these levels. Progress in these areas is very good. This means that in relation to their standards on entry they make good progress overall in the Foundation Stage.

81. The areas of learning for children under five in the nursery were reported upon separately at the time of the previous inspection but there have been a number of changes in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since then. The new Foundation Stage curriculum for the nursery and reception children is satisfactory and is now being established. There has been some re-organisation in terms of the leadership, organisation and deployment of staff and the planning of children's work and this is still in its early stages. The good practice in the nursery is being used as a starting point for the development of the curriculum. Assessment of children's knowledge and understanding has been identified as a priority in the school's development planning. There is a termly intake of children into the reception class at the present time. The admission arrangements mean that some children spend insufficient time in the reception class in order to promote the learning necessary for all children at this stage.

82. Support staff in the Foundation Stage make a significant contribution to the children's learning. They are aware of children's needs and work as a well-integrated team.

83. The Foundation Stage makes good provision for children with special educational needs and good support is given by a caring staff who show a good level of expertise. Outside agencies are involved in the planning for each child's specific needs.

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

84. Most children enter the school with a range of skills in personal, social and emotional development which are well below those expected for their age. Very few children attend a pre-school setting prior to starting school. By the time they leave the reception class most children's standards are in line with the expected levels in this area of learning having made very good progress. Teachers encourage children to work and play together happily and are successful in providing the play situations which encourage them to be more independent and to think for themselves. Teaching overall is good in this area of learning.

85. In both the nursery and the reception class children work and play together in a calm environment. Children in the nursery work as part of a group, show consideration towards each other and learn to take turns, for example when waiting excitedly to sing their own songs in a class activity. All children behave very well. When older children lose interest it is because their work is not well matched to their level of development and the length of the lesson is too long. However, when the activity is appropriate to their level of ability, children concentrate and take part enthusiastically.

### *Communication, language and literacy*

86. All children in the nursery and reception classes enjoy listening to stories in groups. Planned opportunities for adults to be involved in children's activities, such as role play and sharing books, are plentiful due to the good number of adults supporting children's learning in the Foundation Stage.

87. For many children their speaking and listening skills are not well developed on entry to school and are below the expected levels when starting Year 1. For a minority of children they are above. They are learning to negotiate with each other, for example when sharing the cake decorating items in the cooking activity. They have a wide variety of opportunities to talk in imaginary situations and use talk to develop their thinking and explain situations such as why their ice balloon is melting. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good so that by the time children reach the end of the reception year, although some achieve beyond the expected national levels in communication, many are still below the expected level. Progress is good overall starting from a low base level.

88. Children's learning in writing and reading is good. Where teaching is very good children maintain a good level of interest and very good learning takes place. Nursery children have frequent opportunities to write in their daily activities, for example 'taking messages' during a 'telephone call'. Although the levels they achieve by the end of the reception year are below those which can be expected for their age, children make good progress. Elements of the literacy framework are used in the reception classes but on occasions these lessons are too long and involve too few children to promote their learning.

89. Children are learning the letters of the alphabet. They learn letter sounds in the nursery during snack time, with the introduction of a new letter and a 'snack' to match the appropriate letter of the alphabet. Older children name sounds in words but are less confident when using them in their writing during planned activities. Children are very interested in stories in both the nursery and reception class. They enjoy the story of *Elmer and the Gingerbread Boy*, making a good attempt at retelling the story to their friends.

### *Mathematical development*

90. Although children make good progress in relation to their standards on entry to the school, many leave the reception class achieving below the expected levels of children by five. The majority of children begin the Foundation Stage with a very limited knowledge of number and reasoning, together with a low awareness of shape and space. The overall good quality of teaching builds well on what children already know, especially in the nursery. Where teaching is very good, there is an awareness of children's individual needs and work is well matched, resulting in very good learning.

91. Children know the days of the week and are developing a good understanding of positional and comparative language in mathematical terms, for example placing teddy 'in', 'under' and 'on' the box. Many younger children know their shapes and colours and use shapes to create sets, patterns and imaginative constructions. Children count to ten and beyond, recognise and use numbers and place them in the correct order. In the best lessons teachers make good use of everyday events, for example during registration, recording the numbers of children on a 'caterpillar' display.

92. Children use their computer skills to develop their mathematical understanding of patterns and sequences and sing songs in class groups.

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

93. Many children enter the nursery class with a limited range of general knowledge of the world around them. Although they build well on this through experiencing stimulating activities, by the time children leave the reception class they are still below the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Through good teaching they learn about colour and light, about where they live and their bodies and senses. Where teaching is very good children are stimulated to think for themselves and make suggestions about what might happen such as, when investigating coloured ice balloons in the water tray, encouraged by good questions from adults.

94. Children make good use of constructional equipment to produce imaginative models. The way in which resources, such as sellotape, are readily available encourage children to experiment in their joining of materials. They are developing good computer skills, using their 'mouse' control to create patterns and match shapes.

95. Children are learning about their own and others' customs and beliefs. They learn about Diwali, Christmas, Bonfire Night and through stories they understand that 'we are all different', using the story of 'Elmer' as a good example.

#### *Physical development*

96. Children make very good progress in this area of learning and standards are in line with those expected for children of this age. Good teaching provides for the development of the necessary physical skills in this area of learning. For example, children can run, roll, balance, hop and climb, all with increasing control, in the hall. Teachers make good use of language to encourage children in their physical responses, particularly in the outside area which is used imaginatively.

97. The outdoor area for children's physical development is safe and secure, consisting of both soft and tarmac surfaces, although somewhat waterlogged at the time of the inspection. Most children use a paintbrush and handle a pair of scissors safely and competently, showing very good control of these finer movements.

#### *Creative development*

98. Most children exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and standards are very good. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Starting from a low level when they enter school, children's progress overall is very good. Good emphasis is placed on the development of children's imagination and opportunities are sought by teachers, particularly in the nursery.

99. In music children clap to a set rhythm, maintaining a pattern. They sing songs from memory and move rhythmically with enthusiasm and enjoyment. A good example being the wonderful response of all children to *I am the Music Man*, and *Rosie and Jim Go Together*. Children use percussion instruments to accompany songs and poems they have created, for example firework sounds to accompany a poem about firework night, matching the words to musical accompaniment.

100. Self-portraits are painted using paint and collage. These form a link with the topic of 'myself' as children work creatively on both a small and large-scale in two and three dimensions. Children glue and stick coloured paper using mathematical shapes to make mobiles showing what they would like to be when they grow up. This provides good opportunities to use their imagination, which is further developed in role-play, when dressing up and in the sand tray finding 'treasure'. Younger children use resources well. They benefit



fully from these experiences in an individual way, for example when making their own hat following an organised activity related to the 'Gingerbread Boy' story.

## ENGLISH

101. Standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in the 2000 National Curriculum tests are in line with national levels and well above those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Recent trends show that standards improved rapidly from 1997 and at a much faster rate than the national trend. Inspection evidence shows that the current Year 6 pupils are in line to reach the national average by the end of the year. Girls outperform boys by the age of eleven, which is similar to the national picture.

102. Standards achieved in reading and writing by seven-year-olds in the 2000 National Curriculum tests are well below national levels and well below those of similar schools. Recent trends show that performance in both reading and writing has risen generally since 1997 but slipped back slightly in 2000. Inspection evidence shows that the present Year 2 pupils are in line with national levels in reading and writing. The school assessment clearly indicates that this group of pupils are attaining higher levels than the pupils from the previous Year 2 classes. There has been a rapid improvement in standards of writing by boys but, overall, girls outperform boys at the age of seven. Standards in literacy are generally average in both key stages and compare favourably with similar schools.

103. In 2000, teachers assessed pupils' speaking skills at the age of seven and judged them to be in line with the national average. These results are confirmed by inspection evidence. This represents good progress for pupils, as a significant number enter school with poor language skills. Teachers' emphasis on language and vocabulary has a positive effect on progress in Key Stage 1. Although a few pupils still have difficulty finding the correct words to explain themselves, by the age of seven most pupils express themselves clearly, listen to teachers carefully and carry out their instructions. Higher attaining older pupils are articulate and explain themselves very clearly. They join in discussions and some make valuable contributions to discussions. An example of this was seen in a lesson in which Year 6 pupils discussed *The Diary of Ann Frank* and gave clear explanations of their points of view. Pupils with English as an additional language join in discussions and make good progress in speaking English. At both key stages, opportunities for reading from shared texts are helping to improve expression, enabling pupils to read in a more meaningful way.

104. At the end of both key stages, standards in reading are in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 read accurately, take notice of punctuation and are fluent readers. Most pupils try to say unfamiliar words after splitting words into parts and sounding out the letters. Lower attaining pupils sometimes lack these skills, although they may know the letter sounds, but often they work out the meaning of words from clues in pictures. By the age of seven most pupils know the role of authors and illustrators and higher attaining pupils understand what contents and index pages are used for. However, average and lower attaining pupils find it difficult to search for information alphabetically. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 read fluently, with good expression. They understand when authors infer information instead of stating it and have well-developed comprehension skills. Pupils name several authors whose work they like and describe the plots of books. They search for information quickly and accurately in dictionaries. Average attaining pupils show good understanding of books but pay less attention to the way they read. They read too quickly, although most pay due attention to punctuation, or they read one or two words at a time and this makes their reading jerky. However, some show a lively interest in books and describe in detail the plot and many of the characters in the Harry Potter books. Lower attaining pupils read without expression. They build words using clues from pictures and letter sounds. These pupils talk about the stories

they have read, although they do not provide much detail. Most pupils at Key Stage 2 understand how the school library is colour coded to help with research, but do not know how to use the number system, with which all books are marked. This is because pupils are not given enough opportunities to use the library for independent research.

105. Standards in writing are in line with national averages at the end of both key stages, with an increasing number of pupils achieving higher levels. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive effect on raising standards at both key stages. Pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences and teachers present interesting tasks. At Key Stage 1, these include postcards, descriptions of holidays, stories and pupils' versions of the *Just-So Stories*. At Key Stage 2, pupils give the differing points of view of bullies and their victims, produce newspaper articles, poetry, play scripts and write in the style of well-known authors. Writing is generally used well in other subjects. However, in history, writing is mainly factual and opportunities are missed to develop other types of writing, such as empathetic writing, when describing the lives of people in Tudor times and the Second World War. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 lack the skills required to express opinions clearly and their choice of vocabulary is limited. For example, one pupil referred to a circle on a book cover as 'that thing' and another wrote 'It *heard* like a gun' instead of *sounded*. However, teachers encourage the use of correct language and vocabulary. They help pupils who have good ideas but poor writing skills by writing down sentences for the pupils. By the age of seven high attaining pupils write independently and organise their writing. They use capital letters and full stops correctly but inconsistently. Some pupils use abbreviations, such as 'Jack's' and 'I'll', and place the apostrophes correctly. Pupils learn to join letters at an early age and almost all write in a joined style by the end of the key stage. This early practice in joining letters helps pupils to make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 2, many have developed fluent and well-formed styles of handwriting. At Key Stage 2, they present their work neatly and take pride in their work. Higher and average attaining pupils show a good understanding of the different purposes of writing and organise their writing thoughtfully. Their use of a range of punctuation, including commas, speech marks and exclamation marks, is good and most separate their work into paragraphs. They increasingly seek to use interesting words for effect; for example 'Ben froze in disbelief'. Pupils develop mature and complex ways of composing sentences, such as 'Fearing for her brother and herself, she tried shouting for help'. Pupils respond very well to teachers in their writing. In an excellent lesson about personification in poetry, in which the teacher communicated her love of poetry to the whole class, all pupils understood the use of personification. They were able to develop atmosphere in their writing with sentences such as 'Fog pokes its cold fingers slyly through the key holes, blinding the eyes of the drivers'.

106. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers make good use of support staff and volunteers and their contribution benefits pupils greatly. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

107. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their lessons. They listen attentively in most cases, join in discussions and answer questions willingly. When teaching methods catch their imagination, they respond enthusiastically. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Most pupils concentrate well and are developing skills in working together in groups.

108. Teaching is good at both key stages, with a significant amount of very good teaching and some excellent teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching results in pupils making good progress and has led to the improvement in test results in recent years. The use of assessment by teachers is a strength of the subject. Teachers analyse test results to discover where pupils have weaknesses. The school has very good systems to assess pupils' performance in reading and writing and these have been used to identify

under-achieving pupils in each year group and set individual targets for pupils. It is the very good use that teachers make of assessments that is helping to raise standards in English. For example, Year 2 pupils who are not learning quickly enough are put on a Programme for Accelerated Learning. They are given intensive support for up to twenty weeks in reading and writing skills. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils whom staff think are borderline of achieving average levels are given booster classes to improve their English skills. In 2000, of the twenty-five pupils targeted for extra help, all reached the national average in SATs tests at the end of the year and 24 per cent achieved higher levels. Teachers make very good use of marking, the standard of which is consistently high in English across both key stages. It informs pupils as to how well they have done and how they can improve, and helps with setting new, short-term targets.

109. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. At Key Stage 1, they concentrate on teaching pupils to join letters when writing so that by the end of the key stage the majority of pupils' writing is legibly formed and joined. This has a direct impact on handwriting standards at Key Stage 2, where most pupils write in a clear and fluent style by the age of eleven. Teaching is good when teachers challenge pupils to think hard. In a very good lesson when pupils looked at the language used in newspaper headlines, pupils understood the use of short, eye-catching headlines in attracting the public's attention. Careful questioning by the teacher led pupils to connect 'It's Drench Warfare', a headline about recent flooding, with trench warfare and led one pupil to explain that this was an example of a pun. In this and many other lessons, pupils answered willingly and gave opinions because they felt confident so to do. In a Year 1 lesson on alliteration, pupils were encouraged to contribute to lists of words beginning with 'd' and 'f' when seated in circle and passing round their favourite 'Polly Parrot' toy. Teachers set clear learning objectives, which they share with pupils, and plan work that suits the needs of pupils of different abilities. They are good role models for pupils and use their voices well when reading stories and poems. Insufficient use is made of ICT in English lessons and teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to use the school library for research.

110. Both subject co-ordinators have a secure understanding of English and know what needs to be done to improve standards. They provide very good leadership in their subject. The good resources for the literacy hour contribute effectively to its success. The library is well stocked with books. However, it is cramped and is suitable only for small groups of pupils.

111. Since the previous inspection the school has made good progress in the development of English. Standards have risen at the end of Key Stage 2, the National Literacy Strategy and the monitoring of teaching has been successfully introduced and learning resources have improved.

## **MATHEMATICS**

112. The results of national tests in 2000 show standards in mathematics which are well below national averages at the end of Key Stage 1, but well above for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The number of pupils in Year 6 attaining the higher level 5 is also well above the national average. The picture over time is one of rapid improvement in Key Stage 2 and steady improvement in Key Stage 1.

113. The inspection judgement is that standards are broadly in line with national averages at the end of both key stages, and therefore above those achieved by similar schools. The difference between this judgement and the results of the most recent tests may be attributed to the overall abilities of the pupils involved, which differ from year to year. It is also evident that the quality of teaching of mathematics, which is good throughout the school but of a

particularly high standard in Key Stage 1, is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment at this stage.

114. The judgement of the previous inspection was that standards in mathematics were at least in line and sometimes above national expectations at the age of seven and eleven. This suggests that the school has made little, if any, improvement in the subject over the last four years. However, the results of national tests show that the present pupils are now much better at mathematics than pupils at the time of the last inspection.

115. This improvement can be attributed to several factors. The most significant is the quality of teaching, which maintains a consistently high standard. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy, especially the emphasis on methods for quick mental calculations, is evident in the confidence shown by the pupils. Setting by ability for pupils in Key Stage 2 benefits all levels of attainment with work which, while sufficiently demanding, is well matched to pupils' present mathematical knowledge and understanding. Good use is also made of both on-going and formal assessment. As a consequence all pupils, including those of lower attainment or with special educational needs, have a positive approach to the subject, even to the extent of cheering a reminder that homework is being set the following day! Booster classes for many pupils in Year 6 give them the opportunity to look again at areas of mathematics that they may have found difficult to understand in the past. Overall, pupils' achievement levels are good, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. They make good progress throughout the school.

116. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 count forwards and backwards from 1 to 20. Higher attaining pupils can distinguish between tens and units in 'teen' numbers. Year 2 pupils show a good understanding of pattern and structure when making two and three-digit numbers from four given digits. They recognise simple relationships and patterns, and with encouragement are beginning to organise their work and discuss their thinking. They use good mental strategies to add and subtract, for example adding eleven to or from a larger number, dealing with either the tens or units first in their calculations.

117. In Key Stage 2 pupils show a wide range of ability, but all are effectively challenged by the tasks they are given and as a result make progress in every lesson seen. Younger pupils' competencies range from practising and consolidating number bonds to ten, to the realisation that multiplication facts can also be used to answer division calculations. Good attention to mathematical vocabulary is shown by the unprompted use of the phrase 'inverse operation' by a Year 3 pupil. Lower attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 increase their understanding of fractions through practical activities. Pupils of average ability show an understanding of bar charts and line graphs appropriate to their age, being able to both construct and interpret them. In the top set pupils confidently use a formula to find the area of both rectangles and right-angled triangles showing good levels of understanding.

118. Teaching is good overall, with no unsatisfactory lessons being observed. Over half the lessons were judged to be good, and almost half very good or excellent. This is a very positive picture and a credit to the teachers in the school. Lessons are well planned, and the emphasis placed on objectives is shared with the pupils, so they understand what they are trying to achieve. The correct mathematical vocabulary related to the area being studied is also displayed, and is often used by the pupils when answering questions. Teachers use a range of methods and strategies, the variety of which helps to keep pupils interested and focussed. The high quality of relationships between teachers and pupils and pupils themselves means that little time is wasted, with pupils listening carefully, responding to questions and working well with partners or in groups. The basic numeracy skills are taught

well. At times in Key Stage 2 teachers need to extend the more able pupils in their set by giving them more freedom to investigate for themselves.

119. The curriculum co-ordinators are both experienced and enthusiastic, and leadership is good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced thoroughly. Co-ordinators have a clear view of the subject and its development, and make good use of assessment to track progress, for example carefully analysing test results to define weaknesses and then putting programmes in place to rectify them. From assessments made at the end of each half term pupils are set targets for improvement, discussed with both pupils and their parents. Homework is regular and related to the week's learning objectives. Whilst there is evidence of mathematics being developed through other subjects, more careful planning would ensure that the maximum benefit is obtained, allowing pupils to practise their mathematical skills in 'real' situations in a structured way.

## **SCIENCE**

120. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in the year 2000 indicates that the percentage of pupils reaching national averages is well below the national picture. This is particularly true of the higher level grade 3, where no pupils were judged to have attained the higher standard. This shows a slight decline in standards from the previous year. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved well above the national average in the year 2000 both for level 4 and the higher level 5. The picture over time for Key Stage 2 is one of good levels of improvement.

121. Inspection evidence suggests that current standards are broadly in line with national levels at the end of both key stages. This means that the school is achieving better results than comparable schools. Improvement at Key Stage 1 is attributed to the increased confidence and good quality of teaching. This, together with the revised curriculum and good assessment procedures implemented for these pupils, is significantly raising standards. At Key Stage 2 the explanation for this judgement and the results of the most recent tests, is that year groups differ from year to year. Pupils have not yet reached the point in the year when focussed teaching and learning in science accelerates progress.

122. While these results are below the findings of the previous inspection when standards were found to be high at the end of both key stages, evidence from tests show an overall improvement in science. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in science. There has been an improvement since the previous inspection in the way pupils take responsibility for their own learning and work on their own initiative. The new scheme for science has focussed on the progression of skills in order to improve this aspect of pupils' development.

### Investigative science

123. By the end of Key Stage 1 the development of pupils' investigative and experimental knowledge is good. Pupils understand how to find things out and record their conclusions. They are encouraged to be 'scientists' in their lessons, for example in Year 2, when they plan an investigation to find out how to construct an electrical circuit. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 test the grip of a trainer when learning about force and record their findings in the form of a table they have designed and drawn themselves. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils collate information to classify minibeasts found on a minibeast 'safari'. Pupils record their results by drawing tables, diagrams, graphs and written observations. At the end of both key stages pupils give clear explanations of a fair test and understand that only one variable can be changed. Pupils are encouraged to make suggestions and all contributions are respected.

### Life processes and living things

124. Pupils in Key Stage 1 identify parts of a plant and understand the conditions plants require to grow. They know that it is seeds that are required to make more plants and the difference between living and non-living things. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils tentatively relate things that are common to all plants. They know the meaning of a habitat in relation to minibeasts and other living things and discuss the effects of any environmental changes such as weather and temperature. At this stage pupils do not have a clear understanding of micro-organisms.

### Materials and their properties

125. Younger pupils talk confidently about different materials and their properties and explain how they can be changed through heating and bending. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are less confident in their knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties.

### Physical processes

126. Year 2 pupils name sources of light and know what is needed to make a bulb light up. They know that friction causes objects to move or slow down. In Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 3 identify the shoe which has the 'best grip' and use a force meter to measure in Newtons. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 know that a source of power is required to make a bulb light up and that some materials make better electrical conductors than others. They have a limited knowledge and understanding of friction.

127. ICT is not yet integrated into the science curriculum. Numeracy links make a good contribution in Key Stage 1 through the use of Venn diagrams to sort electrical appliances, and in Key Stage 2 through reading a force meter and using tables to record results of investigation. Literacy links are made in Key Stage 1 in the good use of descriptive language when identifying objects as shiny or dull and in labelling electrical household objects.

128. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 make good progress and in Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory. However, through focussed teaching in science for older pupils in Key Stage 2, progress accelerates by the end of the key stage. The revised scheme of work and assessment of pupils' learning at Key Stage 1 and the close monitoring by the co-ordinator has improved progress in science for the younger pupils. In Key Stage 2 pupils build on previous knowledge inconsistently through 'blocks' of work in conjunction with history and geography. Through accelerated learning in Year 6 pupils reach high standards. All pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2.

129. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2, with some examples of good teaching. Where teaching is good, lessons are planned well with clear objectives to focus pupils' learning. In these lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievements and challenge the pupils to think and try things out for themselves. This promotes a good level of intellectual effort and pupils build on their basic skills. In lessons that are less successful teachers do not allow sufficient time for pupils to come together at the end of a lesson in order to consolidate what has been learnt. Since the implementation of the new scheme of work in Key Stage 1 there has been an improvement in teacher confidence and a rise in standards in science. Teachers use scientific vocabulary well throughout both key stages. In Key Stage 1 assessment has improved and teachers assess units of work together with an overview of each pupil's progress. In Key Stage 2, although annual assessments are sound they do not provide sufficient information of what

the pupils know, understand and can do in each aspect of science in order to plan for the future needs of pupils year on year.

130. Both co-ordinators provide a good level of support for science. They are enthusiastic and well informed and have a shared desire to move their subject forward. Since the previous inspection the co-ordinator in Key Stage 1 has introduced a scheme of work in line with national guidelines which has provided a sound structure to the overall curriculum. This scheme of work is closely monitored within each unit and strengths and weaknesses identified. In Key Stage 2 the shared timetable with history and geography makes progress inconsistent as pupils do not retain sufficient information between the 'blocks' of time for science. This necessitates highly focussed teaching at the end of the key stage in order to deliver the necessary amount of information for the end of year tests. The afternoon sessions for science are not sufficiently balanced, resulting in pupils' attention flagging towards the end of a long period. Resources are sufficient for the present planning arrangements for science and books are plentiful although many are worn.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

131. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make the same progress as the other pupils as they move through the school.

132. Due to the constraints of time and the timetable arrangements during the inspection week it was only possible to observe a small number of lessons. The judgements made are based on pupils' work over the last four terms, displays, discussions with pupils and lesson observations.

133. In Year 1 pupils make self-portraits using paints and pastels. The pastel work in the style of Gustav Klimt is carefully produced. Pupils make chalk rubbings, contribute to class collages and have mixed paints and experimented with different shades and patterns. The Year 1 pupils produce some particularly effective abstract designs based on patterns in nature from animal markings. This work is of a good standard and the stimulus photos and drawings are of good quality. In Year 2 pupils make observational drawings and paint historical figures during topic work. They sketch in pencil, print and experiment with colour and tone. The range and quality of work produced in Year 2 is variable and there are some examples of careful detailed work but in some instances less care is evident. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have experienced and used a variety of materials and draw from first hand observations. They have opportunities to mix paints, undertake simple collages and do print work. They use a range of tools and techniques.

134. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils talk about a range of different artists and discuss elements of technique used by different artists. Pupils talk about what they enjoy and have learnt about art. There are many opportunities to deliver art through the various subject areas. For example, in history pupils sketch historical figures such as the Tudors and design Egyptian masks. The geography topic on Kenya is used to provide pupils in Year 5 with a range of skills such as painting volcanoes, and drawing houses in pastels. In science the plants and fruits are used for observational drawings. Throughout Key Stage 2 observational drawings reveal increasing complexity and skill. Pupils also have opportunities to design environmental posters and use clay. Where work is of a particularly high standard there has been an emphasis on the skills and techniques, with opportunities to discuss and reflect on individual designs. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils explore the styles of a range of artists, for example Paul Klee's *Senecio* is used as a stimulus for the pupils' own creative art work. The work of Pablo Picasso from his Cubist period is used to stimulate pupils' paintings and

collages of intricate faces. After looking at pictures of mosaics, pupils produce detailed mosaics themselves. ICT has been used to explore shape, colour and pattern; for example, Year 3 pupils use the computer to design pictures in the style of Matisse's *The Snail*. Observational drawing skills are continually developed and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils show increasing awareness, accuracy and proportion. There is evidence that more gifted pupils are extended in their artwork, particularly in drawings. However, the pupils in Key Stage 2 do not have sketch books and there are limited opportunities for pupils to reflect on the standards they are achieving or to take pleasure seeing how their work has changed, developed or improved over time.

135. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, as very little direct teaching was observed. The lessons during the week of the inspection were detailed and show that teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and the tasks are appropriately matched to the ability of the pupils. The resources used are of a high quality. In Key Stage 1 some good teaching and learning is achieved when pupils use pastels and are encouraged to look carefully at fruit and vegetables using magnifying glasses. Work of a good standard is produced because pupils are encouraged to look, touch, feel and talk before sketching. In Key Stage 2 when pupils talk about colours and tone and make abstract designs to music there are elements of effective learning, although some pupils are distracted by the music stimulus. The teachers observed during the inspection week interacted well with different groups and gave supportive and helpful comments to the pupils aiding their progress in lessons. Throughout the school literacy skills are used effectively by teachers and learning support assistants in art and design sessions through focussed questioning, opportunities to listen, discuss and communicate feelings and ideas. Most pupils enjoy art and are developing a range of key skills such as drawing, printing, sketching and collage. All pupils have opportunities to work with clay and in the lessons observed most pupils used equipment safely and carefully.

136. The work around the school including the range and quality of the displays shows that pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum in art and design with some evidence of three-dimensional work. The art displays are varied and attractive throughout the school. They brighten up the corridors and classrooms and contribute to the positive atmosphere in the school.

137. The subject is well led by an effective co-ordinator who is enthusiastic about her subject. The curriculum policy has a useful 'curriculum map' outlining suggestions for each year band in colour, pattern, texture, which includes helpful guidance on portrait, abstract, still life, interior drawings, landscape and cross-curricular links. Throughout the school the displays and posters together with the range of artists studied in the planned curriculum contributes to the pupils' cultural development and appreciation of artists from different times and cultures. Resources are generally good. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. The issue of higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1, is beginning to be addressed through the introduction of the national scheme of work which is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of the work produced this year. In Key Stage 2 the co-ordinator is in the process of revising the curriculum in the light of the new national guidelines. The co-ordinator has limited opportunity to monitor the subject through reviewing pupils' work or observing teachers in classes. The absence of sketchbooks or systematically assessed work also limits the co-ordinator having a clear overview of the progress individual pupils achieve over a period of time. However, the school plans to address the issue of assessment and monitoring through its planned whole school target 'to begin monitoring in foundation subjects'.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**



138. Only two lessons of design and technology were observed during the course of the inspection, one in each key stage. Additional evidence is drawn from discussions with the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils. Teachers' planning was reviewed, as was work completed before the inspection, although most of this relates to pupils in Key Stage 1. As a result it is judged that the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 matches national expectations, but standards are below this level at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 there is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. There has been a fall in standards at Key Stage 2, where attainment previously was judged by inspectors in 1996 to exceed national expectations.

139. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 make a variety of animals with moving limbs, showing considerable originality in their approach. Considering their previous design activity helps their choice of materials. They draw plans which include how they intend to fasten the joints. The models are well made and pupils have produced a written evaluation. The same is true of model skateboards produced in Year 2, and pupils talk with some understanding about wheels and axles. Pupils make good progress in a lesson to design a roundabout powered by elastic, having investigated the mechanism in a previous lesson. In each case there are carefully planned links with other subjects in the topic, such as science and history, giving the activities greater meaning for the pupils. Overall progress in Key Stage 1 is good.

140. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have had little opportunity to make progress in the subject over the past two years. No designs or evaluations were seen, and in conversation pupils in Year 6 show little experience or understanding, apart from sessions at the local comprehensive school in 1998, although they do some cooking, as do pupils in Key Stage 1. A Year 6 class undertakes a focussed practical task in preparation for designing and making a motorised vehicle. While there is a good link with their science studies the level of understanding and experience is weak in both subjects, and the pupils are starting from a low knowledge base. Although they work hard and are given a good range of resources this restricts their progress.

141. Not enough lessons were seen to make a judgement on the quality of teaching overall, although those observed were satisfactory or better. While pupils behave well in both key stages, the better attitudes to the subject are at Key Stage 1, reflecting the pupils' greater experience and understanding.

142. An equal amount of time is allocated to the subject at both key stages, but at present much better use is made of the time in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have only one major project a year where an item is designed, produced and evaluated. Given the time available (about nine hours each term) greater coverage could be achieved. Activities should foster a progression in pupils' skills and build more clearly on the knowledge and understanding gained from previous experience.

143. The co-ordinator, who is both experienced and committed to the subject, is aware that the subject has been 'squeezed' over the past few years, particularly at Key Stage 2, by the increased focus on literacy and numeracy. Now that Curriculum 2000 has arrived, the school's stated commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum should ensure it regains its rightful place.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

144. The previous report stated that standards were satisfactory at the end of both key stages. These standards have been maintained. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve standards in line with national expectations. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an

additional language make the same progress as the other pupils as they move through the school.

145. Due to the constraints of time and the timetabling arrangements during the inspection week it was only possible to observe one lesson. Judgements have been based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, displays, discussions with pupils and one lesson observation.

146. In Year 1 pupils make maps of their classroom and plan a route following the paths around the school. In Year 2 a project on the seaside includes map work with comparisons between the land and the sea. A residential trip to Perlethorpe environmental centre during Year 2 includes map work and opportunities to discuss geographical features such as rivers and bridges. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have an understanding of simple plans and maps. Some pupils know that the United Kingdom and the rest of the world can be shown on globes and maps. Topics such as *Where in the World?*, *Jet Set Jim* and *The Travels of Barney Bear* are interesting and effective ways of promoting awareness of different countries. Postcards on display sent back from various holidays and family visits include Greece, France, South Africa, the Isle of Man, Devon, America and Thailand. Pupils talk about how they might travel and the weather in different countries. Most show an understanding of places beyond their own locality. This makes a significant contribution to the pupils' awareness and appreciation of different parts of the world.

147. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their geographical studies and enquiry skills learning about contrasting environments, studying settlements and finding out about an African country. These topics are covered through a rolling four-year programme. Pupils collect and record evidence and have opportunities to compare and contrast localities. In Year 3 pupils develop appropriate geographical skills finding directions with the use of a compass and then begin to use co-ordinates for route work around the school with increasing accuracy. They undertake specific map work of the United Kingdom identifying countries, mountains, rivers and seas and study world maps, learning about continents, the equator and oceans. The work this term by pupils in Years 4 and 5 on settlements is impressive in its depth and quality. Pupils list buildings in Aylesbury town centre and map farms, villages and towns and cities on maps of the United Kingdom. By the end of Key stage 2, through their focussed work on Kenya, Year 6 pupils discuss the different geographical and social implications of where people live in different parts of the world. They have attempted to plot the journey from Nottingham to Nairobi in Kenya. They draw maps and plans and use atlases and globes competently. The pupils' written work shows evidence that pupils can compare physical and human features in different localities. From discussion with pupils in Year 6 they are using geographical language with increasing confidence. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can discuss environmental issues such as the impact of people's actions regarding pollution, and make connections between the impact of geographical conditions such as drought and famine. They make suggestions as to how people's actions can improve or damage the local environment.

148. Throughout the school literacy skills support the geography curriculum. Care is taken with presentation and the majority of written work is neat. However, some pupils with less well developed reading and writing skills struggle with the level of text presented. Written work indicates that text books are used to gain information but the use of computer skills to work independently is limited. Pupils use numeracy skills appropriately to support graph work; for example when they compared Bombay and Mexico cities by population.

149. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching as only one lesson was observed.

150. The school has an impressive range of extra-curricular camps and trips which provide practical experience of contrasting localities. From Year 2 onwards every year band has a trip, visiting Brackenhurst, Lathkill Dale, Hathersage, Overton, Weymouth and Scarborough. Village studies at Overton, include studying geographical features of rivers, reservoirs, rivers and valleys. When asked, pupils say that they particularly enjoy these field trips. These trips, whilst developing the pupils' background knowledge, also contribute to the pupils' cultural development and appreciation of different places within the United Kingdom.

151. The subject is well led. The school has two experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinators. They have a clear sense of direction for the subject and resources for geography are good. The policy includes a 'curriculum map' with prompts given for geographical enquiry. The school adopted a national scheme of work in Key Stage 1 and are in the process of updating the scheme of work for Key Stage 2 to meet revised requirements. There have been some improvements since the previous inspection. The co-ordinators have begun to monitor the planning and review pupils' books to check appropriate geographical knowledge and skills. The co-ordinators have limited opportunities to work alongside or support teachers in classes, however the school plans to address the issue of assessment and monitoring through its whole school target 'to begin monitoring in foundation subjects'.

## **HISTORY**

152. The previous report stated that standards were satisfactory at the end of both key stages and these standards have been maintained. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve standards in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make similar progress to all other pupils, as they move through the school.

153. Due to the constraints of time and the timetabling arrangements during the inspection week it was only possible to observe a small number of lessons. Judgements made are based on pupils' work over the last four terms, displays, discussions with pupils and lesson observations.

154. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to develop a sense of time passing and use language 'now and then' appropriately. In work based on their visit to Brewhouse Yard, the museum of Nottingham life, pupils make comparisons between toys from the past and the present and classify everyday objects such as irons and kettles. They identify different forms of lighting used in the past and compare with the present. During an effective lesson pupils find light sources from pictures and draw their own lighting in a room in their house. More able pupils attempt a chronological 'light time-line'. Through their topics in Year 2 pupils learn about a number of male and female historical figures such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are developing a sense of time. They are aware that members of their families are from different generations and that some events happened a long time ago, beyond their own living memory.

155. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their knowledge, skills and historical concepts, developing a deeper understanding of life in the past. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils learn about different periods of time in greater depth. Through their work on invaders and settlers they gain an understanding of the impact on Britain of Romans and Vikings when they came to our islands. In one excellent lesson observed, pupils were very enthusiastic about their topic and were able to remember facts about Viking homes, food, travel, clothes and ships from previous lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have gained historical knowledge about invasions and settlements in Britain, studied the Tudor and Victorian periods in increasing depth and studied a European country and culture from the past such as ancient Greece. These themes have a mixture of historical knowledge with some

opportunities to think about the lives of real people and what living in the past was like, in terms of lifestyles, clothes, food, dress and religious beliefs. From discussion with pupils in Year 6, it is clear that pupils enjoy history, use appropriate historical terminology and make connections between the implications of living in one period or another. Pupils discuss concepts such as poverty at different times, oppression and the impact of technologies and inventions on peoples' lives in terms of jobs and pollution. They consider and compare the lives and opportunities of children in Victorian times to their own education and leisure pursuits.

156. Throughout the school literacy skills generally support the history curriculum. Care is taken with presentation and the majority of written work is neat. However, some pupils with less well developed writing skills struggle with the level of text presented and some pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 would benefit from more tasks being set at a more appropriate ability level. Pupils are developing appropriate study habits. Written work indicates that text books are used to gain information but the use of computer skills to work independently is underdeveloped. There are good cross-curricular links with other subjects, particularly art and geography.

157. It was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching as very little teaching was directly observed. However, both lessons observed were at least good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Elements of good teaching observed in these lessons were good lesson planning, high expectations of the pupils and the quality of teachers' questioning skills. Elements of excellent teaching occurred when the style of teaching meant that all pupils were totally absorbed in the topic. In both lessons the pupils were enthusiastic about the content of the lesson, worked hard at their learning and behaved well.

158. The subject is well led. The two experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinators have a clear sense of direction for the subject. Resources for history are good. The policy includes a curriculum map with prompts given for historical enquiry. The school adopted a national scheme of work in Key Stage 1 and is in the process of updating planning at Key Stage 2 to meet the revised requirements of curriculum 2000. The use of school trips such as visits to Wollaton Hall for a 'Tudor day' enhance the pupils' appreciation of history and contribute well to the pupils' cultural development and appreciation of people who live in different times and places. There have been some improvements since the time of the previous inspection. The co-ordinators have begun to monitor the planning and look at work books to check appropriate historical knowledge and skills. The previous standards have been maintained. The co-ordinators have limited opportunities to work alongside or support teachers in classes; however the school plans to address the issue of assessment and monitoring through its whole school target 'to begin monitoring in foundation subjects'.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

159. Since the previous inspection, the school has upgraded and modernised its resources. It has installed a computer suite, bought a large number of new computers and changed to using a more commonly used operating system. Not all resources are yet in place to teach the whole curriculum and not all staff have received training in using the new systems. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory at both key stages and are in line with national expectations. This is similar to the previous inspection at the end of Key Stage 1 but appears to show a decline in standards by the end of Key Stage 2. However, expectations in ICT are far higher now than in 1996 and the school has worked hard to raise standards of attainment.

160. By the age of seven, pupils start up computers in the computer suite, type in the class password and select the program they are to use. They type in text, edit and amend it to suit their purpose by changing the size, colour and style of font they want. Pupils highlight text to emphasise words by making them bold. Younger pupils use a drawing program to produce pictures relating to the school bonfire party. They confidently use the mouse to select and use tools from the program to draw colourful pictures representing the patterns and shapes made by fireworks in the night sky. Pupils make good progress in learning to control the mouse. Evidence from discussions with pupils shows that many have access to computers at home. These pupils practise skills learned in school and extend their knowledge by using e-mail to write to friends and relatives and the Internet to search for information. They have a good idea of how ICT is used in everyday life, for instance in shops and offices to keep records of transactions, and know that many appliances in the home, such as washing machines, rely on computer chips to operate.

161. By the age of eleven, pupils make good progress in using computer-based encyclopedias and the Internet to search for information. Teachers give clear explanations about how to gain access to web sites. Pupils type in the correct web address to select a search engine and research information connected to science work on electricity by looking up the life stories of scientists such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison. Well-led discussions and good use of questions allow teachers to discover pupils' knowledge of some of the pitfalls of using computers. Pupils know that information from America often has different spellings and that information from some web sites may be inaccurate and needs to be checked. They use computer-based encyclopedias to find further information about the mini-beasts they found in the school grounds. Pupils are familiar with the program, extend their enquiries by selecting words highlighted in the text, and use the sound button to listen to recordings. They are competent users of word-processing programs, which they use to copy up written work in English and pupils use a database to record details about themselves. They talk about the ways that ICT makes life easier and enables communications to be carried out more quickly. However, pupils understand the limitations of e-mail when samples or presents need to be sent by post. They use the Internet to help with their homework and find out about places they will visit on holiday. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to use control technology. No pupil used the school's programmable toy during the inspection. The control equipment the school has operates under the system in use prior to the introduction of the new computers and they are not in use now. However, scrutiny of work show that pupils in the early years of Key Stage 2 program the computer to move a pointer about the screen to draw rectangles and squares in a variety of sizes.

162. In the small number of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain tasks clearly to pupils. They use the new computer suite each week and plan a suitable amount of work for the time allocated. Not all teachers have yet worked out how best to manage pupils in the computer suite, which is long and narrow and pupils sitting in the corners can easily be overlooked. However, most teachers manage pupils well and provide challenging tasks. This means that pupils are interested in what they do and excited by what they find out. This was particularly noticeable in the lesson when pupils discovered how to listen to recordings of information when using the Encarta Encyclopedia. Teachers use questions and discussions well to involve pupils and this means that most pupils make a positive contribution to lessons. Teachers make good use of adult support to ensure that pupils concentrate on their tasks and to answer pupils' questions as they occur. As a result of this, pupils in Key Stage 1 made good progress in using the shift key to select functions to enable them to type out words resembling sounds connected to Bonfire Night, such as BANG!!!!, WHOOOSH\*\*\*\*\* and POP^^^.. Teachers take care to use the correct vocabulary and to teach techniques that will enable pupils to use ICT confidently themselves. An example of this was seen when higher attaining Year 2 pupils typed in instructions so that the computer would use a different printer

to print out their work containing coloured text. Teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' skills because they do not plan the use of ICT often enough in other subjects.

163. The management and leadership of the subject is very good. It is driven by committed and knowledgeable co-ordinators. The school has rightly taken the decision to concentrate on making sure that staff and children quickly become confident users of the new systems. Consequently, ICT in the school has progressed at a good rate since the last inspection, with the establishment of the computer room at the start of this school year. Some areas still need developing. The policy of allocating each class time in the computer room ensures that pupils learn ICT skills but too little use is made of computers in classrooms to develop those skills. Older machines are no longer used to teach control techniques and to measure temperature and sound, although this equipment has not yet been bought for the new system. The school assessment arrangements are based on the previous system. Nevertheless, teachers use the assessment ideas contained in the nationally recognised guidelines adopted by the school and the co-ordinators have a model for assessment that they will shortly try out. The school finds itself in an interesting and exciting position with the provision of the new, good quality resources. These, combined with the very good leadership provided by the co-ordinators and the positive approach of staff, mean that the school is well placed to improve attainment in ICT.

## MUSIC

164. Standards of attainment are above expectations in both key stages. Since the previous inspection attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved and at Key Stage 2 good standards have been maintained. Pupils achieve good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special education needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress.

165. At the beginning of Key Stage 1 pupils are introduced to sound and how sound is made by the exploration of a range of instruments they have chosen themselves. These they can name and handle confidently and with care. Most pupils create loud, fast, quiet and soft music. They sing simple songs, chant tunefully and sing with a guitar accompaniment. In Year 2 they repeat short patterns and explore ways in which sound can be made and altered.

166. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are able to sing in tune, with clear diction and expression. Pupils perform well in their lessons; dancing and singing to the *Locomotion*. Pupils learn new songs and can interpret pitch and tempo, they also consider the background and history of songs such as the *Streets of London* and compare this with their own knowledge of the *Streets of Nottingham*. They sing well, staying in tune even when participating in a challenging, unaccompanied four part round. Pupils in Year 6 select instruments, name and handle them with care. They compose, perform and explore sound through the creation of a beat by clapping and developing this into rhythms and pulses. They use musical symbols and demonstrate the effect on the timing in their compositions. The choir is made up of pupils from Years 4 to 6 learn new songs, rehearse and perform well from memory.

167. From lesson observations and discussions with pupils, the overall teaching is judged to be good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. The pupils benefit from the use of specialist teachers in this subject. The teachers' strong expertise and subject knowledge enables pupils to compose rhythms with increasing complexity. Lessons are planned with care identifying learning objectives clearly. The pupils are challenged and motivated by the commitment of the teachers to develop skills and experience in music. In Key Stage 2 the vibrant delivery of lessons motivates even those pupils who are less enthusiastic. The teachers make music fun and enjoyable for the pupils. They use games, such as 'hot potato' and encourage pupils to be involved with their own learning. The pace of lessons and style of delivery means that the pupils have to physically and mentally participate in their own creativity. Teachers assess and appraise the learning of pupils informally through their methods of teaching. Learning is good in both key stages because of the quality of teaching. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils give them the confidence to take part and to gain the maximum benefit from activities. Most pupils enjoy music and respond with enthusiasm. Occasionally pupils lack motivation because their behaviour is restless and this slows down learning.

168. Support staff are used effectively, particularly the pianist. However, in Key Stage 1 little contribution is made by classroom assistants. Too little time is given to the plenary session in some Key Stage 1 lessons and this fails to reinforce learning sufficiently. Some accommodation is not conducive to good quality music because it lacks sufficient light and air.

169. Visiting teachers make a valuable contribution to the subject by teaching the recorder and violin.

170. The co-ordination of music is a great strength. The resources and their storage are good. The leadership team already recognise the need to review and update the scheme of

work so that it matches more closely the recently introduced Curriculum 2000. They have plans to develop the scheme so that medium-term planning and learning objectives match these requirements. They would then be able to link more formalised assessment to these criteria.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

171. Pupils attain standards in line with nationally expected standards at the end of both key stages. In swimming, the levels achieved by pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 are generally above the national targets. In Key Stage 2 all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make sound progress, whereas in Key Stage 1 pupils' achievement levels are generally good. However, there are variations in rates of pupils' progress, which may be attributed to a lack of a detailed scheme of work.

172. At the end of Key Stage 1, Year 2 pupils understand the need to warm up their muscles before undertaking energetic exercise. They know that the rate of heartbeat increases and falls depending on the extent of exercise. They are acutely aware of the need to use space sensibly when running around the hall. Pupils improve and refine their skills when throwing and catching a small ball over a distance of three metres. They apply their skills well in games situations and tackle tasks of increasing difficulty well. Teachers lead discussions with pupils on how improvements can be made in performance but there is too little paired and group appraisal with pupils offering suggestions themselves. In swimming lessons the most able pupils swim competently across the pool using the front crawl action. Pupils of average ability jump confidently into the water and practise their leg kick using a float to support the upper body. Lower attaining pupils rely more heavily on swimming aids. However, they walk with growing confidence into the pool and bounce up and down in the water.

173. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils perform safely, ensuring that landings are completed flexibly and carefully, avoiding damage to ankle and knee joints. In general, pupils have a good sense of balance and control their movements well in gymnastic sequencing activities. Some high attaining pupils show great confidence and dexterity when linking cartwheels and forward rolls. Pupils are beginning to evaluate the performance of others and make constructive criticisms. Pupils' levels of knowledge about the effects of exercise on the body and of the need to build stamina are secure but this area has not been advanced significantly when compared with Year 2 pupils. Although it was not possible to observe swimming lessons in Year 6, evidence provided by the school shows that high standards are reached by the end of the key stage. Almost all pupils are proficient swimmers, swimming distances beyond 50 metres and gaining in competence in water skills. Evidence from the observation of a Year 3 lesson supports this school-derived evidence. Higher attaining pupils in this age group are using the back stroke technique to propel themselves through the water, sustaining the activity for distances of approximately 25 metres. Average and lower attaining pupils refine their arm and leg actions to improve their swimming strokes.

174. The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and generally satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The management of pupils is a real strength of teaching, especially in Key Stage 1. Teachers ensure that pupils concentrate and remain on task during the activity sessions. They also monitor pupils' work well, moving around the teaching area, offering advice and making informal assessments. Teachers encourage and inspire pupils to higher levels of performance. In one very good Year 2 games lesson the teacher taught pupils the best techniques to improve their catching and throwing styles. These were then applied to the activities, that gradually became more difficult, so improving pupils' skills. Resources are used effectively. This was demonstrated in a Year 1 lesson when music was used at the beginning and the end of the lesson to firstly stimulate pupils in the warm up and then finally



to calm them down at the close of the session. Although the pace of lessons is generally good, when lessons are less successful it usually revolves around a slow pace and difficulties arising from restlessness amongst pupils. However, pupils' attitudes are usually good. They follow teachers' instructions and enjoy the challenge and variety of physical activities in lessons. There are some good examples of collaborative work in Years 2 and 6 in games and gymnastics. Relationships and behaviour are usually good. Pupils are properly dressed for physical education and teachers set a good example by wearing track suits and trainers.

175. The curriculum is broad and covers all the areas specified in the National Curriculum. Guidelines exist for teachers to follow in their planning but they are not detailed and do not identify the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils need to acquire in order to make consistent progress through the school. Teachers work well together in the school and the rapport they have built up over the years often overcomes shortcomings in detailed planning. The provision of extra-curricular activities in school is particularly good. This enables talented pupils to reach their full potential in physical education. The school competes in local sports competitions and has an enviable reputation locally for the quality of its swimming. The school is also heavily committed to outdoor education and gives pupils rich experiences from Year 2 onwards. Residential trips are made for camping, orienteering and walking in locations such as Derbyshire, Scarborough and Perlethorpe. This builds pupils' self-esteem and confidence and gives them a wider perspective of leisure and sporting activities on which to build in later life. It also contributes successfully to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

176. The two newly appointed co-ordinators have had insufficient time to develop the subject. The only form of monitoring of teaching is informal and assessment procedures are not established yet. However, the school is aware of the need to develop these areas in the future so that a clear picture of standards in the subject can be obtained by the co-ordinators.

177. The previous inspection judged that standards at the end of the key stages were above national levels. This would indicate a decline in pupils' performance with the exception of standards in swimming. The school priorities for raising standards in English, mathematics and science has understandably meant that less emphasis has been placed on this subject. However, resources and on-site facilities have improved and the school has maintained its high standard of provision in extra-curricular and residential enrichment activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

178. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were also in line at the end of both key stages. Pupils achieve sound progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, also make satisfactory progress. The school has maintained its provision since the last inspection but few advances have been made in the subject.

179. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils learn about celebrations in two world religions. They examine the significance of the Christmas story to Christians and learn the importance of Ramadan for Muslims. They also explore the importance of building and maintaining friendships through the use of secular and religious stories and also consider the care of the environment through the use of creation stories. Much of this work is completed orally. Pupils understand that they are unique individuals who are special to others.

180. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a broad understanding of the main festivals and traditions of Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 visit a local Christian church and explore the symbolism and features of some aspects of the church and consider the importance they have, for example, the font, for that community. Year 4 pupils have opportunities to explore the symbolism of Buddhism and to consider meditation. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study Sikhism and Islam and have the opportunity to discuss the importance of faith with members of the Sikh and Muslim communities.

181. From lesson observations during the inspection, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils, the overall standard of teaching is judged to be sound at both key stages. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the faiths they are teaching and plan their lessons well, even though the guidance provided in the scheme of work is very limited. They skilfully question pupils to draw out understanding, challenge ideas and provide some opportunities for reflection, and tasks are set to ensure all pupils make progress. Assessment is of an informal nature through the teachers' knowledge of the pupils. Good relationships underpin such teaching and the impact, here, is to promote thinking and understanding of relevant issues. The pace in lessons is good ensuring that a great majority of the pupils make progress. Most pupils behave well in lessons and listen carefully to their teacher. They show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others, and empathize with the feelings and emotions of the pupils of a variety of faiths and also characters in the stories they study. Most pupils concentrate well when working on their own and are keen to answer questions and join in class discussions.

182. All pupils make steady progress in their understanding of spiritual and moral issues, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. They develop an awareness of their own feelings, and an understanding of the ways in which families from different traditions celebrate their main festivals. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of the main similarities and differences between the major world religions, and learn to respect the beliefs and customs of others.

183. The subject benefits from good co-ordination. Resources are sound, although an increased use of religious artefacts would support learning better. The scheme of work does not provide detailed information for teachers in relation to matching planning against the criteria of the Agreed Syllabus, and whilst the knowledge and sound guidance of the co-ordinators is very supportive of teachers this area needs to be developed. There is little monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching and learning to inform planning. However, development of the scheme of work, providing specific criteria matched to the end of key stage descriptions, would provide the basis of a monitoring strategy. There are sound links with the faith communities through the parents of pupils in the school, but more visitors or visits to different places of worship would expand pupils' understanding in religious education.