

INSPECTION REPORT

SPELDHURST C of E (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tunbridge Wells

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118607

Headteacher: Mr David M Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs Kay Cornish
21080

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th October 2000

Inspection number: 224617

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Langton Road Speldhurst Tunbridge Wells Kent
Postcode:	TN3 0NP
Telephone number:	01892 863044
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A C Scott
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Kay Cornish [21080] Registered inspector	English, Art, History, Music, Religious education, Equal opportunities, English as an additional language, Special educational needs.	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Frances Hurd [9487] Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Philip Inness [21015] Team inspector	Mathematics, Science, Information and communication technology, Design and technology, Geography, Physical education, Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Speldhurst Church of England (VC) Primary is a rural village school on the outskirts of Tunbridge Wells, consisting of five classes for 129 pupils, which is smaller than average. The school, which was founded in 1859, is proud of its traditions and links with the church and local community. Pupils on entry come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and most have experience of playgroups or nurseries. Attainment on entry is above the expected level nationally. There have been significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection and Year 6 pupils are now taught as a separate year group. The school caters for just under one per cent of its pupils with English as an additional language, which is less than the average nationally. Sixteen per cent of pupils, including those with statements, are on the special educational needs register, which is below the national average. Just under one per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational need under the terms of the DfEE Code of Practice¹. This is below the average nationally. Pupils with free school meals, at 1.6 per cent, are below the average nationally. There has been one exclusion during the school year prior to the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Speldhurst C of E (VC) Primary School is an effective school that provides a good quality of education. It consistently helps pupils to attain standards that are mainly above national expectations, and in English, well above. Good teaching impacts substantially on pupils' good learning. A significant proportion of teaching is very good. The good leadership constantly strives to achieve higher standards in all aspects of the school's development. The significant strengths of the school outweigh those aspects in need of improvement. The school uses the principles of best value outstandingly and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The dedicated headteacher leads the school with clear educational direction.
- The highly committed governing body is very good at strategic planning.
- Teaching is a major strength of the school and has a significant impact on pupils' learning.
- Pupils' standards are higher than those expected nationally, particularly in English.
- The very good relationships, attitudes and behaviour are ensured by all the hard working and talented staff, working well as a team.
- There are very good links with parents and the community.
- Financial and daily administration are of a high standard and fundraising is exceptional for a small school.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards at Key Stage 2² in art.
- The poor accommodation, its refurbishment, storage and extra facilities for classrooms at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Health and safety issues discussed during the inspection.
- Information to parents about pupils' targets.

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

¹ The DfEE Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

² Key Stage 2 refers to pupils in Years 3 to 6 aged seven to eleven and Key Stage 1 to pupils in Years 1 and 2 aged five to seven.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching has much improved. Most of the staff are new within the last two to three years. The progress of pupils has improved and is consistently good in all years. Standards and progress have improved in information and communication technology (ICT), science and design and technology, and at the Foundation Stage³, and are at least satisfactory, if not better. Higher attainers are better challenged. Monitoring and evaluation of standards, progress and teaching is much improved, as is the use of assessment and record keeping. Class sizes and organisation have been reviewed and improved. Co-ordinator roles are clearly defined and allocated. The poor accommodation is still of serious concern overall and in need of improvement.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, English results were in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally and standards were very high. Almost 60 per cent of pupils reached Level 5 in English, the higher than average level for 11 year olds. Mathematics results were well above the national average. In science, all pupils' results were in line with the national average for pupils reaching Level 4. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was not as high as the national figure. During the current inspection, present Year 6 pupils attained high standards in English, well above national averages. Standards in mathematics and science of present Year 6 pupils are above national averages. Standards in science are rising and a new science co-ordinator has been appointed. Standards in geography, history, music and physical education are above expected national levels. Pupils' attainment in ICT and design and technology is in line with levels expected nationally. Art standards by the end of Key Stage 1 match the expected levels nationally, but at Key Stage 2 they are below expected levels. Overall, a good picture of standards emerges with exceptional standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Apart from art at Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in learning is good overall and consistent throughout year groups. This is despite the difficulties which the poor accommodation impinges upon the independence of pupils in their learning skills. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Higher attainers are well challenged generally.

³ From September 2000, the term Foundation Stage refers to children's education from the age of three until the end of the reception year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and purposeful. They are very happy to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Whenever possible, pupils make maximum use of opportunities to take responsibility, conduct independent research and use their initiative. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Good and pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. A significant amount of teaching is very good. Occasionally teaching is excellent. There was good teaching seen in all classes. This is a good picture of substantial improvement from the previous inspection report. The impact of good teaching has a significant effect on pupils' good and sometimes very good progress and learning. The teaching of literacy at both key stages is very good and occasionally excellent. The teaching of numeracy and science is good overall. The teaching of religious education is good. Planning is thorough and reflects the locally agreed syllabus fully. An area for development in teaching is in art. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make insufficient progress in art. Provision for special educational needs is very good and such pupils make very good progress. The good teaching of children in the Foundation Stage provides them with a good start to their education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Planning of the curriculum is good, broadly balanced and meets statutory requirements. The poor accommodation limits the range of learning opportunities, particularly for art and physical education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	All pupils with special educational needs are welcomed and provision for them is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good. The school is very successful in developing spiritual insight, values of fairness, honesty and respect for others. It encourages a well developed sense of mutual responsibility and is protective of people and the environment. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress. Adults work very hard to ensure pupils' welfare, but safety issues in the accommodation mean that, overall, this section is unsatisfactory.

Partnership with parents is good. Links with the community are excellent. The school is held in high regard and is an orderly community, offering a warm welcome.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The dedicated headteacher has a good grasp of the school's strengths and needs and has led the school with clear educational vision through the significant staff changes of the last four years since his appointment. New key staff are implementing change effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very good at strategic planning. Governors are articulate, informed and proactive.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is good at evaluating its own strengths and needs. All the key issues of the previous report have been remedied overall.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget prudently. Financial and daily administration are highly efficient. The limitations of the building create difficulties and cause problems in the use of the accommodation and resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards of pupils and good teaching. • The caring ethos. • Approachable and professional staff. • Pupils' behaviour and happiness in coming to school. • Provision for music and the school's concerts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fabric of the building and the use of its environment. • Lack of parents used as a resource. • Provision for art and craft. • Exit of pupils through to the main road after school. • Information about children's progress. • Information about the curriculum. • Provision for homework.

Inspectors agree with the positive aspects of parents' comments. Inspectors agree with parents that the fabric of the building and the limitations of the accommodation create significant problems. The headteacher and governors have plans to improve the use of the school's environment soon. Inspectors consider that the plans are worthwhile. Inspectors consider that the provision for art at Key Stage 2 is lacking but acceptable at Key Stage 1. Information given to parents about the curriculum is appropriate and sufficient, but information about pupils' progress lacks targets in written reports. Homework is satisfactory, but its collation could be improved upon by introducing homework books for all older pupils instead of the use of loose leaf papers. The exit of pupils during the inspection was observed to be safe and monitored well. There are plans to create a new drive, away from the pupils' exit. A significant number of parents were seen to be used as a good resource at school. Inspectors agree with the principle that all parents and adults working with children at school should accept the safety screening by police to ensure the health and well being of pupils. To reassure all parents, the school welcomes any voluntary assistance provided that helpers meet the school's criteria.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. During the previous inspection, pupils attained standards in line with nationally expected standards in most subjects. Pupils entered school with above the expected levels of attainment. Progress at Key Stage 1 was insufficient generally. Progress at Key Stage 2 improved from Key Stage 1, but was inconsistent between year groups. Key issues were to raise standards in ICT and design and technology, and to improve all pupils' progress.

2. During the current inspection, pupils' standards are broadly above the expected levels nationally. Standards in ICT and design and technology are now in line with expectations. Standards in art at Key Stage 2 are below the nationally expected level. Pupils' progress in learning is good overall, consistent, and improved upon.

3. In 1999 National Curriculum test results for Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was very high in reading. This included 16 per cent of pupils at the higher Level 3 and 11 per cent at Level 4, a very high standard. All pupils reached the required average Level 2 in writing at least. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in writing was three times greater than the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, English results were very high with almost 60 per cent reaching Level 5, the higher than average level for 11 year olds.

4. Mathematics results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for both key stages were well above national averages. Standards in science at Key Stage 1, according to teachers' assessments, were very high. At Key Stage 2, science results in 1999 were in line with national averages, but the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was below the national figure.

5. Taking into account broad trends over time from 1996 to 1998 inclusive, trends at Key Stage 1 are upward and match the national picture. Boys performed better than girls, against national trends. However, small numbers within year groups mean that there is considerable year-to-year variation. At Key Stage 2, the school's results are better than national trends in English and mathematics, but science results were lower in the 1998 to 1999 academic year compared with English and mathematics. There were little gender differences in English and mathematics, but in science, boys were more successful than girls.

6. The school has carefully analysed these trends. Science results are improving with a sharper focus on the subject and a new science co-ordinator now in post. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of teaching staff changes at both key stages and the new team has stabilised and influenced the improvement and consistency in pupils' progress.

7. From the current inspection, literacy standards at the end of both key stages are high and well above the national averages. Numeracy and science standards are above national averages. Standards in geography, history, music and physical education are above national expectations. Pupils' attainment in ICT and design and technology is in line with what is expected nationally. Art standards, by the end of Key Stage 1, match expectations, but at Key Stage 2 they are below. Standards in religious education are above expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. Overall, a good picture of standards emerges, with exceptional standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

8. Apart from art at Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in learning is good overall and consistent throughout year groups. This is despite the difficulties where the poor accommodation impinges upon the independence of pupils in their learning skills.

9. Children enter school in the Foundation Stage with overall skills which are generally above expected levels. Pupils make satisfactory progress in most areas of development and very good progress in their personal and social development. By the time children commence their formal education at the end of the Foundation Stage, they have reached standards which are above the Early Learning Goals⁴ for most areas, and are in line with expected levels in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. There is a restricted outdoor curriculum for children which limits standards. However, the school has identified these issues and begun to seek improvements outdoors.

10. Higher attainers throughout both key stages are well challenged in the core subjects and National Curriculum test results reflect this. Higher attainers reach appropriately better standards in all other subjects, apart from art at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and make very good progress. At times, for example in literacy, these pupils reach the expected average level nationally.

11. Since the headteacher and new teachers were appointed, trends clearly show a rise in standards in all areas apart from the one in art, already highlighted. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has had a good influence on pupils' standards and progress. The overall picture of standards and progress in learning is one of consistent improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and there has only been one exclusion in the previous year. Play and chatter in the playground before school is friendly and relaxed. Most pupils display very good attitudes to lessons seen through their anxiety to get on with the day's work in which they are keen and enthusiastic, ready to participate and offer answers to teachers' questioning. Pupils respond well to the school's clear behavioural requirements.

13. Lessons start promptly and pupils need little reminder to pay attention at the beginning. Pupils display good work habits. During the considerable amount of poor weather during the inspection, pupils worked and played quietly and sensibly indoors even without the chance for outdoor play. The less positive picture painted at the time of the last inspection of some noisy lessons where pupils engaged in social talk, has been much improved. Learning is invariably good for all pupils because, on the whole, lessons are well prepared, organised and made interesting.

14. Behaviour in and around the school is of a high quality. In the main, pupils get on very well together both in games in the playground and in sharing resources and helping each other in lessons. Relationships across the school are a strength. This is notable between staff and pupils where relationships are very good. Inside, the school is tidy and orderly and pupils play a major part in keeping it this way. They readily accept responsibilities to carry out duties such as the difficult task of maintaining good order of coats on pegs placed in the classrooms without a cloakroom. Classroom conventions and teacher expectations are understood with pupils playing a full part in establishing their own rules. No bullying was seen and pupils say there is none. Even the youngest in reception find tidying away a pleasant chore to be carried out without fuss. Presentation of most work in the majority of pupils' notebooks is neat and careful.

15. A strength of the school is lessons and assemblies which provide good opportunities for personal development. Teachers arrange sufficient suitable occasions for discussions

⁴ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals', comprised of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the reception year. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literature; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; and physical development.

and pupils show they have a mature appreciation of the importance of respecting differences of opinions and viewpoints.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. During the week of the inspection, the quality of teaching was good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Of the lessons seen, teaching in almost a third was very good or excellent. Teaching in four lessons out of ten was good. All other lessons were satisfactory. This is a very good picture and a significant improvement from the previous report. The impact of teaching has been substantial in raising consistency and improving progress in pupils' learning. Examples of very good teaching were seen in all classes.

17. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is very good for personal and social development and occasionally excellent for the area of literacy. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and to develop independence. Taught activities are well balanced between practical, written and child chosen tasks and are relevant. However, due to the limitations of the accommodation, there are fewer activities available for children for the areas of physical development and of children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

18. The teaching of literacy at both key stages is very good. At times, it is excellent. The teaching of reading, and opportunities given for extended, personal writing, are particularly outstanding. Teachers have very good skills in helping pupils to analyse different types of texts in reading. Pupils are encouraged well in the use of dictionaries and skills for research. The teaching of handwriting, grammar, spelling, presentation, punctuation and paragraphing is very thorough, so that pupils' standards are high. The teaching of numeracy throughout is good and ensures that pupils gain a secure foundation of skills and understanding in order to apply their knowledge when solving problems. There is good teaching of written calculations and work is neat and presented logically. The quality of teaching ensures that pupils' progress for calculating mentally is good.

19. There is good teaching of science. Lessons are well planned with interesting investigations. Teachers ensure that pupils take care in the presentation of their scientific findings. Even very young pupils in Year 1 are encouraged to record their data in tabular form. The quality of teaching of ICT is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a mainly secure knowledge of the applications of computers.

20. The teaching of religious education is good. Planning is thorough and reflects the locally agreed syllabus fully. Teachers ensure that pupils explore questions of the meaning and purpose of life. They have good knowledge and expertise which impacts positively so that pupils have a secure knowledge of the Bible and of key features in selected studies on major religions.

21. Teachers make good links between subjects, such as English, mathematics, geography, history and science. Teachers promote good relationships in classes so that pupils are confident and the quality of discussions is high. Outstanding features of the best teaching include high expectations of behaviour, discussions and academic performance. Tasks are well planned so that work matches all pupils' needs. Teachers are very good at teaching the basic skills so that pupils' knowledge is secure and their presentation of work is neat and logical. The management of behaviour is very good and teachers use imaginative methods and tasks to interest pupils. There is very good expertise in music to ensure a rich, imaginative repertoire and good opportunities for higher attainers in the subject to develop individual talents.

22. Teachers keep very good detailed records on each pupil, including good use of standardised scores of previous test results, in order to inform future planning of lessons. Marking gives clear guidance for pupils to improve, finish or correct work. It is consistent throughout all classes. Generally, the management of homework is satisfactory. There has

been improvement recently in the amount of information given to parents about the curriculum to be taught for the term ahead.

23. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and teaching. The new co-ordinator involves teachers and learning support assistants closely in the planning and review of pupils' individual education plans. Teachers have copies of these plans and make good provision in planning their lessons. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and pupils' progress is carefully recorded. Learning support assistants are well trained, skilful and well deployed.

24. An area for development in teaching is that of art. Teaching at Key Stage 2 has not ensured satisfactory standards in shading of close observational drawing, progression of skills in portraiture and maturity in representing landscapes. Standards in large scale co-operative work and in three-dimensional art are unsatisfactory. Teachers have not ensured that pupils' knowledge of famous artists is secure, and evidence of pupils' work produced in the style of famous artists is very limited. Apart from Year 1, art displays are not interactive enough and lack imagination and stimulus. Facilities are lacking for good displays of pupils' work.

25. Teaching overall has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It is now a major strength of the school and is occasionally excellent.

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

26. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are mostly good. An appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. Plans and policies, or drafted ones, have been developed for all subjects, although some now need reviewing in the light of recent developments. A rolling programme has been developed for most subjects which gives the curriculum planning some structure. This caters for the range of attainment and capability in each year group, including mixed age classes. However, weaknesses in the curriculum for design and technology and art, identified in the previous inspection, are only just being addressed. In other respects, improvements in planning, in order for teachers to establish a good programme of lessons, have been made.

27. The foundation curriculum for early years children is mostly good. There are, however, insufficient regular planned outdoor activities and resources to enable children to develop their physical skills as well as they might.

28. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum across the school are good, and include all subjects of the National Curriculum and the agreed syllabus for religious education as well as introducing pupils to French. However, art and design and technology are underdeveloped, although the school has already identified these as weaknesses. The school has competently implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies which are having positive impacts on learning in mathematics and particularly so in English.

29. The curriculum is broadened by a good number of extracurricular activities, which are very well attended by both girls and boys. A number of visitors are welcomed to enhance provision, including an author and musicians; and educational and residential visits are made in the locality and further afield: for example to the Isle of Wight, York, and an outdoor pursuits Christian centre in North Wales.

30. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual targets are reviewed and updated allowing good progress according to the individual capabilities of each pupil.

31. Pupils' access to physical education is limited slightly by the restricted size of the school hall. However, good provision is made for the learning of swimming, resulting in high

achievement. Some learning in information and communication technology suffers through lack of opportunity to practise skills, although this is improving.

32. The school promotes personal, social and health education well. The programme includes drugs awareness and sex education, which has been sanctioned by the governors. Much of the work is covered in the science programme, and good use is made of the school nurse and doctor.

33. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. A number of visitors help to enrich the curriculum, and many visits are made by pupils to local places of interest, such as museums, farms, churches and a field studies centre. From time to time, parents or grandparents share their experiences with pupils on particular topics, such as their recollections of what happened in the village during the last war. Good use has been made of the local church.

34. Relationships with partner institutions are good. The local consortium of schools provides opportunities for teachers to meet together to share ideas, and sporting tournaments and friendly matches enable pupils to visit other schools and develop social, musical and sporting skills. The school feeds many secondary institutions, and it is difficult for liaison to take place. But where possible it is done effectively.

35. In the previous inspection the provision that the school made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils was described as satisfactory in spiritual and cultural and good in social and moral. This positive standard has been developed further, and is now very good with regard to moral and social development, good in spiritual and satisfactory in provision for cultural development.

36. In assemblies, pupils have ample opportunities to reflect on their lives and different situations they may find themselves in, and pupils have an effective participatory role, answering questions and offering opinions. There are some good examples of opportunities for spiritual development through the curriculum, but planning for art is less than successful from this point of view. In literature and history, pupils discuss their feelings on the merits of being a citizen of Sparta or Athens and are provoked into using thoughtful and reflective language. In religious education, pupils are given many opportunities for stillness to meditate and reflect on deeper issues, and to grow in personal insight.

37. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. In fact, it is so effective that pupils' behaviour is very good in and around the school, and any procedures for unacceptable behaviour are rarely necessary. Teachers show good control and management in class, and a mutual respect is built up which fosters good attitudes and behaviour.

38. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Nearly all lessons include an element where pupils need to work together and co-operate on tasks. This they do admirably, sometimes in ability groups, and sometimes in age groups. Pupils take turns in helping with classroom tasks, and older pupils find it natural to help younger ones in and around the school. A good example is in assembly where older pupils guide the youngest in singing by helping them to follow words of hymns. Due in part to some very restricted accommodation in some classrooms, the number of opportunities for pupils to show initiative, select their own resources and take responsibility for aspects of their own learning are too limited. The school's extracurricular activities, especially those in music and sport, provide good opportunities for pupils to meet together socially, sometimes with pupils from other schools, and appreciate the importance of teamwork.

39. Cultural development is promoted well, and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils gain an understanding of their own culture through literature, geography, history, religious education and science. Their studies take them around the locality to museums, churches and farms. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures. Much of this is linked in cross-

curricular themes. For example, when studying a topic on Egypt, there is work in geography, design and technology and religious education. Other non-Western experiences are gained through displays of ethnic clothing which provide interest and dimension to the reception children. There is less evidence whereby pupils develop a broad understanding of different cultures and beliefs within their own country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The previous inspection report listed a number of health and safety issues which needed to be addressed. These have now all been dealt with. Provision for health and safety is well organised and staff are well briefed on all procedures, including child protection. There are a number of policies on such topics as sun awareness and drugs, as well as the main health and safety policy. All are concise and give good, clear guidance. The site perimeter is securely fenced and, during the school day, access is only possible through the main entrance to the school office. All staff have completed a basic first aid course, and first aid kits are located in each classroom as well as in the school office and the hall. The school has established particularly good practice for visits off site. Staff have a useful checklist to help them prepare, which places a strong emphasis on safety. Children always travel in seat-belted transport. The system for risk assessment is well organised and regularly implemented. The headteacher ensures that all items needing attention are dealt with. The school's provision for monitoring attendance is good, and any unexplained absences are followed up on the day on which they occur. Staff administer consistent strategies for managing behaviour through a single system of rewards and sanctions, which is well understood by the children. Class teachers know their pupils well, and children feel able to approach them, or the headteacher if they prefer, should they need to talk over a personal problem. The school's strong Christian ethos underpins its caring approach to education, with impressive results.

41. Despite this good practice, however, the provision for pupils' welfare is unsatisfactory, for reasons largely outside the control of the school itself. Cramped classrooms inhibit the development of pupil independence and make it more difficult to move around safely. The building suffers from damp and the roof has developed leaks in some places. The mobile classrooms (temporary buildings, one 35 years old) periodically suffer partial subsidence because they are standing on insecure foundations, and their steps are rotting. Because these buildings are so frail, the school uses them to house the younger, lighter children; they, therefore, have to cross the playground to the toilets. In the main building, the junior toilets are shared by both sexes and divided only by a half-height partition. The wooden floor of the hall produces so many splinters that pupils have to wear plimsolls for dance and gym. The upstairs windows of the main building are tied shut by string because they won't shut properly by themselves. This could be dangerous in the event of a fire and means these rooms become very hot in summer.

42. Partly because of the limitations on space, the majority of the school's computers are housed on trolleys. Some trolleys were gifts to the school, but these are the wrong height for children to work at, at two computers. Pupils sit on stools without backs whilst using the computers, which means their backs are not properly supported. In some cases pupils need to twist sideways to look at the monitor.

43. The elderly gas supply system developed the latest in a series of leaks during the inspection. It exits from a hole in the road immediately in front of the school's main entrance.

44. The school is sited by a road which is heavily used by fast moving commuter traffic, particularly during the morning rush hour. The pavement is very narrow. The danger inherent in this situation is exacerbated by the fact that some cars delivering pupils park on the yellow road markings directly in front of the school. Access to the school for vehicles is directly into the playground. Although the gate across the driveway is locked during school hours, it is open at the start and end of the school day. Staff take every care to ensure that children are kept away from this entrance, but the possibility of an accident appears alarmingly high. The

driveway is almost invisible to oncoming drivers, and is hazardous for staff exiting from the school. The school applied for permission to create a lay-by in front of the school, to provide a partial solution to some of these difficulties, but permission was refused, on the grounds that the site lies within a conservation area.

45. A car struck the headteacher whilst he was standing in the school entrance. The reason was due to parents' cars parked on both sides of the school's driveway. Since the incident, parents have been asked not to park on the village side of the driveway. These health and safety issues require consideration as a matter of urgency by all parties concerned.

46. Since the previous inspection, the school has made considerable improvements in the use it makes of pupils' achievements in formal tests and assessments within the three major subjects of English, mathematics and science. Less progress has been made in recording and evaluating the extent of pupils' learning and their understanding in other subjects. Significant benefit is afforded to curriculum planning and its organisation through the analysis of the areas of knowledge that cause the most problems to pupils. Teachers then modify lessons to place more emphasis on solving main areas of weakness. A good example was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, which successfully emphasised aspects of probability and chance after evaluating pupils' earlier performance.

47. Although some teachers' lesson plans contain detailed information of the broad objective for the lesson, often the small steps which pupils need to understand and consolidate are not stated and assessed sufficiently. Information of pupils' progress is retained elsewhere, such as in the marking of pupils' work, reading records and 'mark books', but written information about pupils' individual targets is inconsistent.

48. The school is making strong efforts to begin to track individual pupils' progress from the time they start school and at regular stages thereafter. Predictions and targets are being established in order to identify the need to modify curriculum provision or ascertain the degree of extra support that is needed for pupils. Written reports to parents about their children's progress are often too descriptive, without sufficient short term targets being stated and, more importantly, the means by which these targets could be achieved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents give very good support to the school in a variety of ways: for example in cookery and reading, and organising the school library. This level of support has been maintained since the previous inspection. Others have been able to give much appreciated help with maintenance work around the premises. A number of parents run a 'walking bus' from a neighbouring village which collects and returns children every day, whatever the weather. There is a very active parent-teacher association which organises social and fundraising events. Special mention must be made of the committee set up to raise funds for the school's building programme, which has raised £70,000 in three years. The governors and parents involved in this have worked extremely hard and created tremendous community support for their project. The scale of their enterprise is extraordinary for a small school. Fundraising events have ranged from corporate golf days and raffling a new car, to organ recitals and an 'Allo, Allo' pancake stall. It is notable that a number of past parents and pupils have chosen to become involved in fundraising for the school.

50. Parents are very supportive of the school and speak warmly of the impact its values and ethos have on their children's attitudes and behaviour. They give good support to their children's learning at home, and welcomed the introduction of homework diaries. Parents find the school friendly and approachable, and feel confident that problems will be competently handled.

51. The school produces half termly newsletters for parents, which provide them with plenty of information about past and forthcoming school events, and additional notes are sent

home between newsletters when necessary. Parents particularly appreciate being told in advance what curriculum topics their children will be studying. The annual reports are variable in quality. They give a good picture of children's progress in mathematics and English, but in too many instances reporting on other subjects is no more than a statement of the curriculum covered. Targets are set for children, following discussion with parents at consultation evenings, but there is no consistent monitoring to see if these have been achieved. It is worth noting that these comments are almost identical with ones made at the last inspection. However, at that time information for parents was unsatisfactory, and the prospectus and governors' reports did not fulfil statutory requirements. Overall the quality of information is now satisfactory because the previous issues have been rectified.

52. Responses to the parents' questionnaire and discussions with parents showed that some parents feel insufficiently informed about their children's progress, and the inspection team considers that this concern is justified. Some parents were concerned about homework. Discussions with parents during the parents' meeting and during the inspection, suggest that this is because parents would like more guidance from the school as to what they can do to help their children at home, particularly with literacy and numeracy. A proportion of parents felt that they were not always welcome in school, and some concern was expressed at the meeting that offers of help from parents were not always accepted. The inspection team found many examples of parents who do help in school, and of the school welcoming that help. It seems likely, therefore, that this concern relates to the school's insistence on all helpers having a police check and on parents not working in their own child's class. The inspection team found no evidence to suggest that parents are not welcome in school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The quality of leadership and management is good overall. The dedicated headteacher has a good grasp of the school's strengths and needs and has led the school with clear educational vision through the significant changes of the last four years since his appointment. He has set up effective monitoring and evaluation procedures ensuring that all the new staff co-operate as a team. All present staff work hard and are strongly committed to good relationships and equal opportunities for all the children in their care. There is a clear focus in the school's work on raising standards. This has supported significant improvements over the years since the previous report under the sensitive guidance of the new headteacher. The key issues from the previous inspection have been rectified successfully, apart from improving pupils' progress in art at Key Stage 2.

54. The governing body is very good at strategic planning, particularly for recognising the need to improve the accommodation and planning for a new hall and proposed classroom alterations and additions. It is fully involved in the life of the school, showing obvious commitment and very good support. There are many printed statements, co-operatively produced, which reflect a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. The recent Annual Report of Governors to Parents is of an exceptionally high quality. Governors are well informed through the school's development plan and headteacher's reports, and have a strong role in shaping the direction of the school. Governors are articulate, informed and proactive. The compilation of the governing body is appropriate.

55. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The new special educational needs co-ordinator, staff and governor with an interest in special needs, work efficiently together as a team to promote the interests of this group of pupils. There are close working relationships between the school and outside experts. The documentation relating to these pupils is carefully maintained and accessible to all staff. Support assistants are well trained, competent and supportive in their approach. There are good equal opportunities for all pupils, apart from those where poor accommodation issues impinge on their education.

56. The delegation and contribution of key staff with co-ordinators' responsibilities are developing well in the short time since staff have worked together. The significant changes in staffing have settled. The school development plan, the headteacher and governors, clearly monitor the staff's responsibilities. The monitoring of teaching and learning is proving successful and the school has already identified areas for development, such as enabling some improvements in the accommodation to improve pupils' opportunities and learning.

57. At the time of the previous inspection, the role of co-ordinators was insufficiently defined, and there were no job descriptions. The support and induction of new staff was informal and 'not clearly developed'. All these issues have been addressed, and the provision of staffing is now satisfactory. New staff are given good support and induction; their teaching is observed by their mentor and by the headteacher. There is a detailed staff handbook on all aspects of school life, which is regularly reviewed and updated. The headteacher has established a system of regular appraisal for all staff, although this is currently under review for teaching staff following the introduction of performance management. All non-teaching staff are well trained and provide invaluable support to the school. Parents share the headteacher's view that staff morale and teamwork are now much improved. As the majority of teaching staff are new to a co-ordinator's role, monitoring and assessment across subjects other than English, mathematics and science are at an early stage.

58. The storage of resources is a problem for the school, although good use is made of what space is available. All hazardous substances, such as cleaning fluids and chemicals, are kept locked away. There are no cupboards in the classrooms, which adds to the problems of the cramped working conditions. Provision for geography, design and technology and religious education is now satisfactory. It was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous report. Provision for history and music, previously unsatisfactory, is now good. Provision for ICT is now satisfactory, although several computers are housed on trolleys which are the wrong height for children to work at. The school's book provision has greatly improved since the previous inspection. The book stock, both in classrooms and in the library, is of good quality, in fiction and non fiction. Resources are good for the under fives, except for outdoor play provision, this was an issue for action in the last inspection and should now be addressed with urgency.

59. The accommodation was considered adequate at the time of the previous inspection. It is now considered poor. The school has a sufficient number of classrooms for the number of children on roll, as well as a staff room, school office, and headteacher's room. It has a good library, although as it is sited upstairs and away from teaching areas, pupils do not have ready access to it. The school has converted a former coal shed into a useful storage area. Externally, there is a good sized tarmac area and a large grassed playing field, as well as an environmental area with a pond, securely fenced off from the playing field. The site is secure and the grounds are well maintained, partly with the help of parents and governors.

60. The cramped and elderly accommodation makes it difficult, and in some cases impossible, for the school to deliver a full curriculum to its pupils. In particular, it is difficult to develop pupils' independent learning when it is physically impossible to allow them to move freely around their classroom. The fact that the main school building has been graded 'two star', and is sited in a conservation area, makes the cost of all repairs much more expensive than would otherwise be the case. Special materials must be used and work done to a standard which will satisfy heritage specialists. In practice, this means that some maintenance work simply cannot be done because the school cannot afford it. Internally, there are a number of unsatisfactory features in the main part of the school. The hall is too small for junior physical education, and its splintered, wooden floor means that children have to wear plimsolls. The junior toilets are shared by both sexes, divided only by a partial screen. The school has had problems with surface drainage in recent years. Storage is extremely limited, although the school makes every effort to keep everything tidy and well labelled. In particular, class teachers have very little storage space in their classrooms. One classroom is a corridor to the hall and to another classroom, causing continual minor disruption to lessons. The original metal window frames have become distorted over the years. For

conservation reasons they cannot be replaced. This means that many windows cannot be opened, or else can only be held shut with string. This poses a fire risk, and means that many rooms quickly become stuffy and hot, inhibiting learning. Facilities for display are extremely limited, although the school does make use of space where it can. The two mobile classrooms were installed as a temporary measure, one 35 years ago. They stand directly on the soil. After heavy rain the metal supports sometimes subside into the soft ground, which twists and distorts the frame of the building. The steps to both classrooms are rotting, as are the window frames. There are no toilets for these rooms. There are no cupboards in these classrooms. Both mobiles, and one in particular, provide cramped conditions and inhibit the proper delivery of the curriculum.

61. There are unsatisfactory features to the accommodation externally. The extremely large roof of the main building has produced a series of leaks in recent years from different points. The tiles, now mostly about 150 years old, are worn and thin, but the cost of replacing even part of the roof, let alone all of it, would be prohibitively expensive for the school. One chimney was re-pointed and repaired last winter, but at least two others need attention. The guttering needs repair and in some cases replacement. In some places it has discharged down the sandstone walls. Signs of damp (staining and moss) are visible in many cases on the external walls. Damage to the walls has been made worse by re-pointing done with an unsuitable mortar in recent decades, which is pushing the soft sandstone blocks of the wall further apart. There is still no secure outside play area for under fives, as at the time of the previous inspection. There is very little to occupy the children during playtime; the old, large play equipment has been partly dismantled because it was dangerous. The metal frame remaining stands on the edge of the tarmac and provides a further hazard when children evade supervision and try to swing on it. Apart from this, there are only some faded playground game markings for entertainment. The tarmac surface is cracked and uneven in places. **The inspection team considers the condition of the accommodation to be a key issue requiring urgent attention by all interested parties.**

62. The school's financial and daily administration are highly efficient. New information technology is linked to the local education authority's computerised system and used very efficiently. The school has a detailed policy for the use of ICT by pupils. There is a very good financial policy implemented showing clear financial delegation. The school development plan's educational priorities have financial implications. Governors are fully informed about budget monitoring by the headteacher and the local education authority. Specific grants are well used for designated purposes. The combined efforts of the staff, governors, parents and the local community in raising over £70,000 towards the cost of a new hall and badly needed classrooms, are exemplary. Much of the final success of this major challenge is still reliant on help from the local education authority.

63. The school uses the principles of 'best value' very effectively. Any shortcomings in the school have been identified already by the headteacher and governors and steps taken to remedy them. The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Standards are mainly above national averages or expected levels. Pupils show good achievement and their attitudes and behaviour are very good. The quality of teaching is mainly good with a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching. Costs of running the school are appropriate for its size. Overall, the significant changes of the last four years have settled and there is every indication that the school is moving forward successfully.

64. The school gives good value for money, an improvement from the previous report's findings.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to further improve the school: headteacher, governors and staff should:-

- **Continue**, with the help of the local education authority and the Diocesan Board, to improve the poor accommodation, its refurbishment, and storage for resources, so that provision for all pupils (particularly for Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage) supports all pupils' learning needs completely.

Paragraphs: 8, 9, 17, 27, 31, 38, 41, 54, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 66, 71, 78, 95, 122, 133.

- Address and remedy the health and safety issues discussed during the inspection.

Paragraphs: 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 58, 60, 61.

Although no subject is unsatisfactory overall in the school there is a need to:-

- **Raise** pupils' standards in art at Key Stage 2 by:

- Improving pupils' skills in close observational drawing, in portraiture and in representing landscapes;
- Increasing pupils' collaborative art work on a large scale;
- Improving standards of pupils' work in three dimensions, particularly in ceramics;
- Improving pupils' knowledge of the work of famous artists;
- Increasing the work pupils produce in the style of other artists;
- Improving facilities for good, interactive displays.

Paragraphs: 7, 8, 11, 24, 28, 36, 53, 98, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105.

In addition to the above key issues, the following minor issue needs to be addressed:-

- Improve still further the management of already available data concerning pupils' progress to set targets and better inform parents.

Paragraphs: 47, 48, 51, 93.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

37

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	19	43	27	0	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

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

129

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

2

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

21

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

11

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

4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	10 (11)	10 (8)	20 (19)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8 (11)	9 (11)	9 (11)
	Girls	9 (8)	10 (8)	10 (7)
	Total	17 (19)	19 (19)	19 (18)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (100)	95 (100)	95 (95)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9 (11)	9 (11)	10 (11)
	Girls	10 (8)	10 (7)	10 (8)
	Total	19 (19)	19 (18)	20 (19)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (100)	95 (95)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	82 (86)	88 (87)

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	7 (9)	10 (8)	17 (17)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6 (9)	6 (9)	7 (9)
	Girls	8 (8)	6 (7)	7 (6)
	Total	14 (17)	12 (16)	14 (15)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (100)	71 (94)	82 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6 (9)	7 (9)	6 (9)
	Girls	7 (7)	8 (8)	7 (8)
	Total	13 (16)	15 (17)	13 (17)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (94)	89 (100)	77 (100)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	127
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	25.8

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	46

Number of pupils per FTE adult	14
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	229688
Total expenditure	216889
Expenditure per pupil	1607
Balance brought forward from previous year	15132
Balance carried forward to next year	27931

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

170

Number of questionnaires returned

62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	42	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	45	3	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	44	3	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	58	22	2	0
The teaching is good.	44	52	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	48	21	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	42	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	37	11	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	43	20	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	34	52	10	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	52	2	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	56	10	3	2

Due to rounding percentages may not equal 100.

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

66. Children under five are taught alongside five and six year old pupils in Year 1. Due to inspired teaching, children's learning is often very good. From entry to the school, children's achievements in literacy and numeracy, as well as most of the Early Learning Goals, are above expectations. However, even though improvements are being made or planned, there are drawbacks to the position of the indoor accommodation and the main school, and restrictions in the outdoor curriculum and resources. These reduce the opportunity for children to increase even further their physical and personal development with the provision of regular activities and resources which are specific to this youngest age group.

67. From entry to school the progress made in most of the children's personal and social development is good. Planning shows that under fives and pupils in Year 1 frequently work closely together, enjoying the work. Those in the foundation group concentrate for longer than expected for children of this age. They respond very well to instructions, are very keen to help, are developing a good awareness of knowing right from wrong, and how to help each other. Children get themselves ready for physical education, playtimes and home times sensibly.

68. Skills of talking and listening are progressing very well. Children talk with confidence about what they know, and how they can tackle problems, such as writing their names using a computer before printing them out unaided. They are provided with a good range of reading experiences, often sharing literacy with older pupils. Instruction is excellent when the teacher dresses up in a mask and costume to enact 'The Little Red Hen'. Children's attention is immediately captured and increased when they, too, are involved in the role play. Achievements in reading and writing are above the expectations for the Early Learning Goals. Very good support from the classroom assistant as well as volunteer help, increases the opportunity for reading and subsequent higher than expected achievements.

69. Children develop a good understanding of number. They are provided with a broad range of activities and experiences. Children count well and can add small quantities using numbers up to ten and beyond accurately. They enjoy practical mathematical activities and recognise and name colours and a good range of geometric shapes. Children are able to make patterns and correct sequences using coloured beads.

70. Children make good progress in developing knowledge and understanding of the world around them when provided with taught occasions alongside others. For example, children's learning was very good when they took part in investigations to test the waterproofing of different materials and clothing placed on a teddy bear.

71. The outdoor curriculum is not designed to cover the whole year sufficiently. Activities, which allow children to experience different conditions and to work and play on suitable outdoor equipment, are not readily available. Good use is made of the small hall for gymnastics and dance where children successfully join in with Key Stage 1 pupils.

72. A broadly satisfactory range of opportunities is provided for children to develop their creativity and imagination. Their ability to express ideas and feelings is developing well, for instance through stories, art and music. Children draw and paint with confidence expected of their age.

73. Teaching and support staff work effectively as a team. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and to develop independence. Taught activities are well balanced between practical and written or drawn, and are usually relevant to children's experience. Good provision is made for those starting

school, including good links with local pre-school services, which are well established and productive.

ENGLISH

74. In the previous report, English standards at the end of both key stages were above national averages. Progress was good overall. Standards have been improved upon since then. Now, the overall picture shows standards in English of the present pupils as well above national averages at the end of both key stages. Standards in some aspects of writing are very high and quite exceptional for the primary age range. These findings were confirmed in 1999 National Curriculum test results at the end of both key stages.

75. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 National Curriculum test results, the Level 3 standards in reading were almost double the national above average levels. Some pupils scored the very high Level 4 for reading at the age of seven years. In reading and writing no pupil scored below the average level. By the age of 11 in 1999 National Curriculum tests, all pupils gained the average levels or higher. Almost six out of ten pupils gained the higher Level 5 grade for English. This was quite exceptional. During the inspection, no weaknesses were noted in English, apart from some insecurity in using the encyclopaedia in the school's library, but there were major strengths. Standards in National Curriculum tests for the year 2000 dropped slightly, but were still above national levels. Standards of the present Year 6 are similar to those of 1999 rather than the year 2000.

76. Pupils enter their formal education of the National Curriculum at the end of the Foundation Stage with attainment in literacy which is above national expectations. They make consistently good progress in their learning in all aspects of English throughout all year groups, to achieve high standards by the time they leave school. Progress of the present Year 6 pupils reflects standards similar to the 1999 Year 6 pupils, and are very good.

77. In speaking and listening, standards throughout both key stages are well above the nationally expected levels. Pupils have good articulation, confidence and flow of argument. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have learnt to listen carefully to the constituent sounds of words in order to develop accurate enunciation. They respond confidently to questions, discuss constructively and have an excellent vocabulary which includes specialist terms relevant to different subjects. Pupils express opinions well and take very good account of others' views. Pupils show very good skills in adapting their speech to a widening range of circumstances and demands.

78. In reading, by the end of both key stages, standards are well above national averages. This reflects good learning, consistent throughout each year group. Memory of key words and a wide vocabulary is very good and pupils have very secure phonic strategies to tackle new words. Higher attainers are challenged well in all aspects of reading. By the time all pupils are in Year 6, the majority are fluent readers. They have, at times, excellent comprehension and recall. Dictionary skills are secure and the analysis of texts is very good. Evidence shows that pupils read regularly at school and at home. They have very good recall of plots and make perceptive comments about incidents in the story's development and the effects upon characters. Pupils' reference skills are very good and pupils know how to use the contents and index pages of reference books accurately. They use the school's simplified Dewey system competently, but slowly. The location of the library in an upstairs room, away from the main classrooms, limits easy access to reference books, such as the encyclopaedia, held centrally.

79. Attainment in writing is well above national averages by the end of both key stages, and occasionally exceptional. There is very good coverage of all the National Curriculum programmes of study for English. By the end of Year 2 there are strengths in written fluency, excellent vocabulary and strongly emerging complex sentence structures. Spelling and grammar are very good. Handwriting is excellent for the Key Stage 1 age group and pupils

present work neatly in a fluent, joined-up style. Higher attainers' work shows that even paragraphing and speech marks begin to emerge by the age of seven.

80. By the end of Key Stage 2, a high proportion of pupils' writing is at the higher National Curriculum Level 5 by the early part of the academic year. Writing is expressive, logically sequenced, imaginative and with good understanding of the poetic form. Grammar, spelling and handwriting are very good. Vocabulary used is excellent and mature, and competent paragraphing is the norm. The higher attainers are well challenged and attain higher standards. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support and make very good progress.

81. Overall, the school's English and literacy standards and achievements are high and well above nationally expected levels.

82. Teaching in English is very good. Occasionally it is excellent. Teachers' planning takes full account of the National Curriculum and is closely linked to the National Literacy Strategy's framework. At least an hour's dedicated teaching time for all pupils is ensured per day. Literacy is well linked to other subjects in the curriculum, particularly science, religious education, ICT and history. The work pupils do in other subjects helps to extend their literacy skills. This is particularly noticeable in researching books.

83. The impact of very good teaching on pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour, is significant. Pupils make very good progress as a result of high expectations, very good expertise and appropriate methods of teaching. The impact of very good management strategies is evident in both key stages, where it has encouraged very good pupil response. The subject has good leadership with very good assessment procedures at both key stages. Considerable new resources have been purchased in order to raise standards in the subject and the overall effect has been successful, particularly in reading. The timetabling of extra time allowed for extended writing has ensured a wide and rich repertoire for improving pupils' writing.

84. The literature introduced to pupils makes a powerful contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the analysis of different stories in a wide variety of settings. This strong stimulus encourages good attitudes and balanced viewpoints, all evident during the high quality discussion of texts. The support given to pupils to perform in role, in debate, in concerts and festivals, and through beautiful books on display, all add to a lively environment where the written word has prominence.

MATHEMATICS

85. Overall, mathematics is a well managed subject where there is strength in both teaching and pupils' achievements. This is an improvement over the previous inspection, where standards were judged to be average, but some teaching was unsatisfactory. Most pupils are sufficiently challenged and provided with work matched to their capabilities. Arrangements meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and National Numeracy Strategy.

86. Over a four year period commencing in 1996, results of national assessments show that the percentage of pupils, when aged seven and eleven who achieve the expected levels or the one higher, is well above most other schools nationally.

87. Pupils' achievements in assessments for year 2000 had not been moderated against national averages at the time of the inspection, but preliminary results showed that the percentage of pupils achieving at least average levels was likely to be above other schools at age seven; and at age eleven pupils' results were about the same as most schools.

88. Inspection findings show that pupils presently in the first half term of Year 2, are achieving broadly average standards, whereas the majority in Year 6 achieve somewhat above the national norm. Most pupils across the school are making good progress because,

in a majority of lessons, they are being taught well. This indicates that, at the end of the current year, pupils' achievements in national assessments will again be above average, particularly when pupils leave school aged 11.

89. Pupils in Year 1 have had a good start. For example, they count accurately, and explain number sequences and patterns. They have a good knowledge of the names of common shapes. This stands them in good stead for the work they are required to do up to the age of seven. Pupils across the school are very keen to get on with their work.

90. No lesson overall was graded as being taught unsatisfactorily. Some teaching was very good and most lessons were good. Where teaching carefully explains what pupils are to do and provides sufficient well planned practical activities, then learning is very good. In a Year 4 and 5 lesson, imaginative use of the hall to set out co-ordinates was made, and pupils were required to stand on markers. Because they were physically involved in the process, it became clear to pupils that accuracy of position may require the use of negative numbers. Learning is slower when teachers do not emphasise or reinforce the objectives for the lesson sufficiently. Where key words are flagged up and labels used as an easy reference, pupils can, and do, solve small problems for themselves. On occasions, expectations that pupils can reach the whole objective for the lesson in one go without first proceeding in small steps, are too high. For example Year 2 pupils found it difficult to transfer the idea of length, width, and height to articles they were required to measure without first consolidating the concept of shapes containing three dimensions. Teaching was made more difficult by having to help many pupils at once, but when these details were made known, pupils' learning improved.

91. The recent national requirement to teach numeracy and mental arithmetic is being applied well across the school. Staff have received sufficient training and are busily developing techniques and resources to raise pupils' skills in computation and quick memory of number facts. The most successful lessons enable all pupils to be fully involved and this is seen best where an element of competition is incorporated into the session. Great excitement and satisfaction arises when a previous time for remembering a sequence of computations in a domino-style loop game, is beaten.

92. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to improve planning. It has succeeded in making useful evaluations of tests and assessment data to pick out areas of weakness in pupils' knowledge. Subsequent lesson plans, incorporating whole year group work to overcome identified deficiencies in learning, is becoming established well. The tracking and predicting of the likely performance right across a pupil's stay in school is being developed, thus showing further improvements in curriculum and teaching since the previous inspection.

93. Although there are some very good examples, most lesson plans contain too little information about short term objectives matched to individual needs and capabilities. However, teachers' records reveal that pupils' assessments are being recorded regularly but sometimes this information does not influence details in subsequent lessons enough. Although ICT is used to support and complement some lessons, planning for computers is inconsistent, opportunities are missed and resources for measurement using computers are too few.

SCIENCE

94. National assessments in science carried out over the previous four years show that when pupils are aged eleven their achievements are usually above the national average. However, indications are that for the year 2000 pupils' achievements broadly match the national average for all schools as they did in 1999. Teacher assessments made in 2000, when pupils were seven, show standards for the school may, again, be well above average as they were in 1999.

95. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' achievements are somewhat above national expectations and standards, at the current point in the academic year. However, some pupils are constrained from doing as well as they might due to restricted accommodation and management of resources. Pupils at ages seven and eleven are in classrooms that are very restricted in space and storage. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan so pupils can make selection and choices for themselves sufficiently, a condition that is so important in the development of scientific skills. Pupils, especially the more capable, are denied the chance to follow their own lines of enquiry and access resources frequently enough. Arrangements of the school timetables for lessons do not always help where aspects of a similar line of enquiry are undertaken in different year groups at the same time, as resources are spread too thinly. This leads to over large groups of pupils sharing one set of equipment and gave rise to an inevitable lack of focus for the majority as they watched others assemble electrical circuits in Year 1 and 2 and Year 3 and 4, or in Year 6, as they made solutions to filter and separate rock salt from impurities.

96. Nevertheless, in their final year, eleven year olds show a good level of knowledge and understanding of the required aspects of the National Curriculum. They describe well, the three states of matter (solid, liquid and gas), and have a clear understanding of evaporation and condensation of water. They explain what they are doing when they attempt to separate rock salt, using solution, filtering and evaporation techniques. To some extent this reduces the impact of the practical investigation. Further challenge could be applied to make the outcome more indeterminate thereby raising pupils' interest. The lack of sufficient opportunities to postulate and investigate was a concern expressed in the previous inspection. Analysis of assessments made of younger pupils in the school reveals that investigation based on prediction is less well established than taught general knowledge and understanding.

97. Although information and communication technology is used to support and complement some lessons, planning is inconsistent, opportunities are missed and resources for measurement using computers are too few. Other curriculum planning and its organisation are satisfactory and an improvement over the previous inspection. Redefined management is recent and new leadership for the subject is reassessing the curriculum and assessment of pupils' learning in order to make further improvements. In most respects the subject is being managed and taught successfully, fulfilling statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

ART

98. Pupils' attainment in art by the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with expected levels nationally, but by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below expected levels. Progress in learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, pupils' progress overall is unsatisfactory. This is an improvement at Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection report, but shows a lack of improvement at Key Stage 2. The previous report identified a lack of progress in learning art skills and techniques in all classes. There was little evidence around the school that pupils learnt about the work of famous artists. In the main, these weaknesses are still the case at Key Stage 2.

99. However, by the end of both key stages, pupils' fine line drawings are satisfactory, detailed and precise. There are good links made with other subjects in pupils' drawings: for example on illustrations of scientific experiments, historical timelines, and work on the Olympic games. In Year 1 and 2, acceptable standards are observed. Paintings show evidence of effective colour mixing and of accurate reproductions of Tudor houses during the Great Fire of London. Portraits drawn at Key Stage 1 show balanced proportion. At Key Stage 1 there is evidence of a broader range of experiences, such as when using painted, unspun fleece for collage work, block printing, tie-dye work and a collage linked to history.

100. Evidence of pupils' work at Key Stage 2 is disappointing and reflects unsatisfactory standards in shading of drawings, progression in portraiture and skills in representing

landscapes. There is no evidence of large scale three-dimensional work at this stage, and ceramics produced are below standard for this age level. Apart from a frieze in the style of Lowry, pupils' knowledge of, and work produced in the style of, other famous artists, is very limited. Due to display boards generally being positioned too high, displays are not interactive enough and lack imagination and stimulus, with the exception of the youngest pupils at Year 1.

101. Pupils' work in Year 1 reflects the teacher's good knowledge of art and allows pupils a full range of broad experiences. Teaching of older pupils at Key Stage 1 ensures an appropriate range of experiences and satisfactory standards, with work well linked to class projects, although pupils' paintings lack clean, well defined lines when colour is applied.

102. Pupils' work at Key Stage 2 reflects a lack of good expertise for the subject. Progress of skills in the use of perspective, in the use of different textures, techniques and large scale productions has not been well supported. There is very little evidence that teachers have enabled pupils to interpret the work of well known artists imaginatively.

103. The impact of teaching on pupils' attitudes at Key Stage 1 is positive. Pupils have good and enthusiastic attitudes to the subject of art. They express their emotional reactions imaginatively. They are attentive, co-operate well, and are independent in choosing materials and colour. This is not so at Key Stage 2. Although helpful and courteous to visitors, pupils lack animation when talking about art.

104. The subject of art lacks strong leadership at Key Stage 2. In some classrooms, the resources are difficult to access and of poor quality.

105. Overall, the subject does not make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development in all classes. Art is undervalued throughout older year groups, as an enlightening activity to communicate ideas and feelings in the visual form. Throughout Key Stage 2, art is not developed successfully as a subject in its own right, with its own skills and disciplines.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. There are still deficiencies in the provision of a structured curriculum for design and technology. Skill development and knowledge are only now beginning to be remedied since being highlighted as a weakness in the last inspection.

107. No lessons were seen in the current inspection, but teachers' planning and some recently constructed models indicate a reasonable coverage for the subject. Pupils' achievement by the time they reach the end of Year 6 is average.

108. Often the focus for the subject tends to support another curriculum area. For example, the shadufs (used for irrigation in Egypt) made by Year 6 pupils are part of a history topic. Construction shows a good quality of manufacture and finish. Pupils have designed and made all weather shelters suitable for a fictitious desert island. Pupils' descriptive writings and diagrams show that their designs are thoughtful and ideas are carefully considered before manufacture. Pupils are competent in comparing strengths and weaknesses of design and materials and appreciate the success of other models. Tasks provide good challenge for different pupils' capabilities, although some of the reviews pupils make after construction do not show what could be done to improve their work sufficiently.

109. The school has recently reorganised the leadership of this subject. There are good plans to improve the policy and planning so that time and teaching to cover the full range in design and its evaluation can be carried out efficiently.

GEOGRAPHY

110. As in the previous inspection, little direct teaching or samples of geography were seen. However, scrutiny shows Year 6 pupils' overall knowledge and understanding are slightly above the national expectation.

111. Planning for geography is timed to alternate with history, although, frequently, some good and relevant links are made between the two. For example, an important part of a history study unit on Ancient Egypt includes comparisons with the present day. Pupils make good use of research skills to interrogate the Internet to ascertain the differences in climate and weather in London and Cairo. This information is helpful in making contrasts in housing construction and materials. Scrutiny of retained work in pupils' notebooks shows further good links are established, such as that between a Saxon settlement and landscape. Pupils explain, with some authority, where they would have built a village given the conditions of the day.

112. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they have a good idea about mapping and can use associated keys to explain symbols. Conversation with pupils shows they have a good understanding of locality and land use. They explain clearly, important features of rivers and waterways. They know that the sandstone used to build their school is a sedimentary rock. They have a reasonable appreciation of the world, different peoples, vegetation and geological features, such as deserts and mountains.

113. Due to the emphasis the school has been required to place on the core subjects, a systematic approach to monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the geography curriculum has been understandably delayed. Although the above weakness was an area for improvement in the previous inspection, current planning for the subject provides a reasonably balanced programme that is enhanced by some good cross-curricular links. Pupils' awareness of other peoples has been heightened by the letters they have written to, and received from, a school in Kenya, and represent a good example of cultural appreciation.

HISTORY

114. Provision for history throughout the school is good. Standards are above national expectations by the end of both key stages. This is an improvement from the previous inspection, when standards were in line with the expected levels nationally and progress was slow.

115. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand clearly that they live in a community with their own heritages and history. They have a good sense of their own and their families' past. They have accurate understanding about the lives of prominent people and events: for example the event of the Queen Mother reaching her one hundredth year in 2000, Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, the Olympic games, the Great Fire of London and of Samuel Pepys and his diary. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have a good sense of chronology and explain their awareness of change over a period of time well.

116. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils describe accurately some of the main events, people and changes in history: for example in the life of Ancient Egyptians. Pupils' work records accurately the Egyptians' beliefs, the significance of pyramids and of hieroglyphics. Pupils' sense of chronology is good. Pupils correctly order periods of history:- the Ancient Greeks before the Saxons and Vikings, and Tudors before Victorians.

117. Pupils interpret differing viewpoints of history perceptively. They organise their findings and questions in history competently and record evidence in a wide range of ways. Good links are made between other subjects and history. For example, in an Ancient Egyptian project, pupils completed a mathematical enquiry on the time taken for a shaduf to lift water on to a field. Findings were plotted accurately on to a line graph to show how much water could be lifted in intervals covering a period of 16 minutes.

118. Teaching is good overall in history. Teachers ensure that evidence of the past may be interpreted in different ways. Tasks given to pupils are appropriate for their needs. Good research skills are fostered and pupils are shown how to make good use of key questions for different periods in time: for example, “What is this period like?”; “Why is it like this?”; “How is it connected to other places?” Teachers give good guidance on how to look at and use artefacts and photographs meaningfully. The good teaching has a good impact on pupils’ learning and encourages a positive interest in the subject.

119. The imaginative provision in history is supported by visits to places of historical interest, such as the museum at Tunbridge Wells, Lullingstone Roman Villa, Hever Castle and the local church with its beautiful windows designed by William Morris. History, as a subject within the school’s curriculum, successfully enriches and develops the imagination of pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

120. Standards in ICT are in line overall with nationally expected levels by the end of both key stages. During the inspection, effective teaching and use of resources were seen. Despite good learning occasions, pupils’ progress in learning is slow. Scrutiny of retained work shows that more could be accomplished, especially as pupils are very well motivated and capable of sustaining interest. As identified in the previous inspection, the narrowness of taught experiences is, to some extent, still present, but the quality of teaching is much improved. A good feature has been the introduction of a published set of lesson cards, which provide good support for teachers and pupils alike. Reorganisation of the leadership for the subject is affording further evaluation of the curriculum in the light of new National Curriculum guidelines. There are positive plans for the continued improvement of the subject.

121. Pupils are making best progress in learning about word processing and publishing. Planning and resources provide for data handling and using computers to control situations. By the time pupils are eleven as well as those much younger, they operate computers and printers and save their work with ease. A majority of pupils is willing to try out different commands, controls and solutions, but the quality and range of work produced indicate they could do better.

122. Since the previous inspection, the school has been aware of the difficulties of organising computers in classrooms not specifically designed for their use. In most cases teachers have worked hard at establishing a good learning environment. However, there are deficiencies in providing a good enough working base as many of the tables and trolleys provided are unsuitable for the heights and age range of pupils. In some cases keyboards are not in front of monitor screens and this makes efficiency hard and pupils’ posture unsatisfactory. However, a good attempt to provide enough resources has been made since the previous inspection. Priorities include the eventual provision of a computer suite once new accommodation is built. This should facilitate an increase in pupils’ use of resources. The expertise of teachers is at least satisfactory and there is a shared desire to improve even further. This is resulting in pupils’ raised performances and improved achievements. In the meantime, some organisation of lessons affords too little chance for pupils to practise what they have been shown. Some teachers provide too many lesson objectives at once before time runs out, after which an unrelated lesson follows. Subsequently, when they can work on computers, pupils have to ask for help all over again. Such management increases the teachers’ workload whilst reducing the rate in pupils’ independent learning.

123. The school has come some way to improve the subject since the last inspection. There are encouraging signs that priorities for the subject are being pushed forward and that this is helping to raise pupils’ achievements. The school fulfils the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, but the new leadership now needs to ensure a further increase in the rate of change.

MUSIC

124. In the previous report, standards of music were in line with the expected levels nationally, but pupils' progress in learning was unsatisfactory. Now, music provision is good and a strength of the school. Standards are good overall and sometimes higher. Pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages is above the expected level nationally. There is very good use of visiting specialist teachers for music.

125. Throughout the school, pupils sing to a high standard in an expanding repertoire with good rhythm, clear entry to phrases and accurate duration of notes. Pupils make very good use of dynamics to add texture in their whole school singing. During assemblies, singing is correctly pitched and confident. Diction is very clear.

126. Rhythm work is successfully developed throughout both key stages. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have a clear understanding of ostinato and dynamics: for example when singing and accompanying to the 'Hammer of Thor' song, and when singing in counter rhythms during musical rounds. Pupils perform well together using percussion and wind instruments and show good awareness of the different effects created through pianissimo and fortissimo music. There is good evidence that pupils have composed successfully their own rhythmic patterns, using symbols. Pupils reach good standards in their individual instrumental tuition by visiting specialists.

127. Teaching is overall very good. Occasionally it is excellent. Teachers ensure that pupils have a wide experience of all the elements of the National Curriculum for music: in performing and composing, listening and appraising as well as singing. The policy and guidelines are excellent and implemented thoroughly. The expertise amongst staff to accompany and perform is overall good, and occasionally excellent. Leadership in music is a strength in the school. Lessons are well prepared and pupils' efforts are praised well. Pupils are taught with patience and encouragement. Sensitive support ensures that all pupils gain confidence and make steady progress throughout. The pace of lessons is very good and pupils have a variety of interesting tasks.

128. The impact of teaching on pupils' attitudes is very good. Due to good management of time, pupils maintain good concentration for long periods. Pupils respond in an alert manner to music. They show good self control when handling instruments carefully and in returning them to storage. Pupils are co-operative and are respectful of adults and the performances of other pupils.

129. The school involves pupils fully in music during Christian festivals, and there is good use of music from other cultures. Pupils are given very good opportunities to perform solo and to participate with other schools in music festivals. A range of extracurricular activities is on offer during lunchtimes and after school: for example the school choir, guitar and recorder groups. Pupils' musical experiences are enriched by visiting professional musicians and expeditions to other venues. Resources are of good quality and used frequently. The lively musical provision ensures that music plays a high profile in the strong links between the school and the community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Encouraged by some very positive teaching, pupils' attainment in many aspects of physical education is above national expectations. Judging by documentation as well as observation, pupils' achievements in swimming, games and dance are of a good standard, maintaining the above average achievements identified in the previous inspection. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils work very hard to improve gymnastic dance routines using jumps, twists and rolls. Their energetic approach leads to significant improvement and achievement. They display very good attitudes and behaviour, and negotiate together in small

groups with enthusiasm to produce very good quality sequences showing good control of their movements. Teaching is altogether good with sufficient guidance to encourage pupils to improve their performances. Pupils are provided with strategies to establish good timing in synchronised dance sequences. Another dance session held for Year 1 and 2 pupils resulted in very expressive, uninhibited responses to music of a high calibre.

131. In games, appropriate attention is given to warming up and the reason for doing it. Pupils are managed well, and good attention is paid to learning specific skills before playing a game. Challenging demands are made, and good use is made of pupils to demonstrate. Greater attention needs to be given to safety issues, such as the wearing of bracelets and watches for physical education.

132. In swimming, the information supplied indicates that attainment is high, with all pupils being able to swim 25 metres and often much further before they leave the school. Observing pupils' netball skills in lessons and a club session, together with information of the good results in inter-school games competitions, indicate that such games skills are good.

133. The school makes good use of the facilities it has available, including its own outdoor pool, field and playground, and the local swimming pool. Bearing in mind the difficulty in working within a small hall, which makes teaching difficult and reduces the opportunity for larger groups of pupils to develop some gymnastic skills with ease, the school is justifiably proud of the standards achieved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in religious education was in line with the expected levels by the end of each key stage, but progress was insufficient for all pupils. Improvements have been made and provision for religious education is now good. Standards overall are above the levels of the newly agreed local education authority's syllabus. Pupils' progress in learning is at least satisfactory and predominantly good throughout all year groups. Good spiritual provision, through collective worship, supports the religious education in the school and is predominantly Christian based in keeping with a Church of England school's aims.

135. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they show good understanding in using religious terminology and symbolism. They have good experiences and understanding of Christian festivals. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss and meditate on deeper issues and to grow in personal insight. For example, when Year 2 pupils were asked about their feelings when told about the New Testament parable of The Prodigal Son and his father, they wrote perceptively about five ways in which they could be a good friend. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 understand clearly the symbolism of the Jewish Festival of Pesach and can compare this with the Christian thanksgiving for Harvest.

136. Pupils have positive attitudes to their own religious beliefs and the beliefs of others. Even very young pupils in Year 1 have a basic understanding of the cultures in other countries and correctly identify some costumes and ethnic groups. Pupils' ability to be still, to meditate and reflect, is marked in the sensitive handling of assemblies, corporate worship and class prayers. The school provides a very good opportunity to be part of the community of the church and the responsibilities and benefits this brings. Pupils have a secure knowledge of the Bible as the word of God and as a guide and ultimate means through which they can understand the concept of God. Pupils understand the importance of worship as an individual and as a shared act of expressing praise and thanks to a Deity. Pupils have good respect for the community of the school, the natural environment, and the achievements of individuals in the world.

137. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a very good understanding of the Christian faith. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils securely understand aspects of Judaism, such as

ceremony and law, and the origin of and ceremony in Hinduism. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' work shows secure learning in selected units of work in Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism.

138. Teaching is overall good. Teaching encourages good attitudes towards the subject and very good behaviour. Teachers encourage good relationships and reflection about the beauty of the natural world. They ensure that pupils explore questions of the meaning and purpose of life. They succeed in helping pupils to be aware that religions put forward explanations as answers to their queries. As a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Planning is thorough and reflects the locally agreed syllabus fully. The enthusiastic new co-ordinator for religious education updated the policy for the subject in September 2000 well. It has successfully linked it more closely to the local education authority's newly agreed syllabus. Resources are satisfactory and there is good use made of Speldhurst's local Church of England church with its unique windows designed by William Morris. Visitors to the school, such as local Christian ministers, enrich pupils' experiences for religious education.