

INSPECTION REPORT

BURNWOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

STOKE-ON-TRENT

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124221

Headteacher: Mrs D. Herbert

Reporting inspector: Geoff Jones - 11816

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th November 2000

Inspection number: 224626

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Community |
| School category: | Primary |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Chell Heath Road, Chell Heath, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. |
| Postcode: | ST6 7LP |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Pastor A. Steele |
| Date of previous inspection: | 26 th to 29 th January 1998 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Geoff Jones 11816 | Registered inspector | Science; Physical Education. | How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| Elizabeth Fraser 9813 | Lay inspector | | Attitudes, values and personal development of the pupils; How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| Brian Emery 2512 | Team inspector | History; Geography; Special educational needs. | How well does the school care for its pupils? |
| Ann Shaw 18524 | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage; Music; Design and technology; Equal opportunities. | |
| Michael Woods 7708 | Team inspector | English; Art and design. | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| Dennis Maxwell 8798 | Team inspector | Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Religious education. | |

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Burnwood Community Primary School has 18 classes. It has a total of 425 boys and girls on roll and is larger than most other primary schools. Pupils reside in Chell Heath and live on a large local authority housing estate in which there is high unemployment, low income levels and many houses vacant. A high percentage of pupils come from split or reformed families and have difficult personal situations at home. Well over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is well above the national average. When children are first admitted to the school, over seventy per cent of them are below average in their literacy, numeracy and social attainments and the overall level is very low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also above the national average. Fifty-seven pupils are identified as needing the help of outside specialists, of which ten have statements of special educational need. The proportion of children from minority ethnic families is below the national average and there are no pupils who speak English as a second language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Considering the difficulties faced by the school, particularly in terms of the high turnover of pupils, it provides a very sound education for its pupils. The pupils' standards are very poor when they are admitted to the school. They achieve well in their learning as a direct result of good teaching. When they leave the school they are well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and close to the national average in science. This represents sound progress in pupils' learning since nearly eighty per cent of the children have attainments below what is expected for their age when they are first admitted to the reception classes. The school enables pupils to achieve well and is making good progress in improving standards year by year, except in English where the steady rise in standards has fallen over the past year. The quality of teaching is good and this ensures that almost all pupils are interested in their work, behave well and make good progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Their progress is sustained through agreed targets set by class teachers and the impetus provided by frequent assessments and rigorous planning to meet their needs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling them to make very good progress. The leadership and management of the head teacher and key staff are very effective and have enabled the school to improve its work considerably since the head teacher was appointed. The results in the annual national tests do not do justice to the school, mainly because of the very high turnover of pupils. Teachers who have the responsibility of co-ordinating the development of subjects in the curriculum work hard and have a very clear idea of what needs to be done to develop the subject each year. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership provided by the head teacher, governors and key members of staff is very good;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables the pupils to make very good progress;
- The school's very good provision for extra-curricular activities
- The outstanding way in which the school uses the community to enrich pupils' learning;
- Relationships with partner institutions are very productive and enhance the work of the school;

- Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are highly effective;
- Use of assessment information to guide curricular planning and evaluate pupils' attainment and progress is very good;
- The good quality of teaching is maintained through rigorous monitoring and evaluation;
- The shared commitment to improve and the staff's capacity to succeed is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English throughout the school now need to follow the improving standards in speaking ;
- Although standards are improving, the overall levels of attainment in mathematics throughout the school could be raised further;
- Pupils' levels of attainment in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2;
- Pupils' levels of attainment in art and design at the end of Key Stage 2;
- Provision for developing pupils' awareness of the different ways of life of the range of ethnic groups represented in Great Britain.

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

The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses and this demonstrates very clearly the way the school has improved since the last inspection.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Pupils' attainments in speaking, mathematics and science have improved. However, information and communication technology has remained below the expected level at the end of Key Stage 2 but the newly installed information technology suite has not yet had time to make an impact on pupils' attainments. Schemes of work for all subjects have been produced and are currently being used as frameworks for planning. Co-ordinators now monitor the implementation of these to ensure that coverage of the National Curriculum occurs. The school development plan has clear priorities, time-scales, costings and details of who is responsible for each initiative. It is now monitored and evaluated by the governing body. Opportunities for play and exploration in the outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage have developed well. The quality of teaching is still good overall but the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons has been reduced from 7 per cent to 2 per cent. The teaching and provision for pupils with special educational needs have improved from being satisfactory to very good. As yet, pupils' attendance has not improved despite rigorous measures taken by the school to improve it. The effectiveness of the curriculum is now monitored and evaluated very thoroughly. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainments were evolving at the time of the previous inspection and are now very effective. Resources for teaching and learning mathematics have been purchased and the quality and quantity are now good

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| English | E* | E* | E* | E |
| mathematics | E* | E | E | D |
| Science | E | E | D | B |

| Key | |
|--------------------|----|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| Average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |
| very low | E* |

Over the past three years the school has steadily improved standards in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 from being very low in comparison with the national average in mathematics to below average and in science to close to the national average. Standards in English last year were in the lowest 5 per cent nationally but have now improved. Pupils' skills in expressing themselves are very low when they are first admitted to the school and it will take time before the school's strategies to improve standards become more effective. Compared with similar schools the results show that the school's standards are well below average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus but although pupils' attainments are sound at the end of Key Stage 1 in information and communication technology and in art and design they are below what is expected nationally in both these subjects at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainments in history, geography and music are satisfactory throughout the school. Their knowledge, skills and understanding in design and technology are above what is expected nationally throughout the school. Pupils' attainments in physical education are sound at the end of Key Stage 1 but very good at the end of Key Stage 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils enjoy coming to school and have sound attitudes to work. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour is good overall. Most pupils behave well but a small minority find it hard to have consideration for others at all times. |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development is good. Pupils willingly take on responsibility. Older pupils undertake jobs such as running the fruit shop or distributing the milk and readily accept responsibility for membership of the School Council and Eco-council. Younger pupils are involved in daily routines of the school. |
| Attendance | Attendance is below the national average. |

The poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils has an adverse effect on their progress in learning. Despite the school's efforts not all parents inform the school about the reasons for their child's absence. A number of families take holidays during term time when their child's attendance is already poor. This has a serious effect on their progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are taught effectively resulting in steadily improving standards in reading, writing and number work. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. There are a number of strengths in the teaching. Lessons are planned very carefully so that the differing needs of the pupils are met. Teachers get on well with the pupils and the pupils' behaviour is managed well. Where there are weaknesses, these are because teachers did not manage pupils' behaviour well or planned inappropriate tasks. Satisfactory or better lessons accounted for 98 per cent of the teaching and 27 per cent of the lessons were very good or better during the inspection. Most pupils enjoy learning and are interested in the work planned for them. Many pupils have difficulty in listening carefully and this does not enhance their learning. The school meets the needs of all pupils very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum covers the national requirements and those for religious education. The school has chosen to use a large proportion of time for the teaching of English. This temporary imbalance is justified by the need to concentrate on improving pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The provision for special educational needs is very good. Very good individual educational plans contain clear targets. Special needs support assistants provide good support and all teaching takes account of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision is good overall. Arrangements for pupils' cultural development are sound whilst those for their spiritual development are good and their moral and social development very good. Provision to make pupils aware of the different ways of life represented by different ethnic groups in this country is under-developed. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent. Assessments are carried out carefully by teachers and the information is used to judge pupils' progress and to guide curricular planning. |

The school works very closely with parents. Parents' views are sought informally at school events and through formal questionnaires. They are provided with written information about the curriculum and activities and staff make themselves accessible to parents to discuss concerns. The range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is very good. In addition to a wide range of sporting pursuits there are also other activities such as computers, choir, environmental club, reading, poetry and religious education. Assessment arrangements are very good. Teachers use a wide range of assessment information for monitoring pupils' progress and to inform them when pupils have done well or where help is required.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff | The leadership and management of the head teacher is outstanding. She provides a very clear sense of direction for the school. The assistant head teacher and the senior teacher work very closely with the head teacher to improve the work of the school. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governing body is very ably led by the chair person. It supports the school very well and works very hard to improve it. Governors fulfil their responsibilities and play a large part in shaping the direction of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The head teacher monitors teaching and the key co-ordinators analyse test results. Teachers evaluate the success pupils are having in meeting their targets. The school is clear about how well developments are going and assessment information is used to decide on priorities for improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources | The budget is used wisely and is used to improve and administer the school. Teachers are deployed well. The school administration officer and school secretary work very efficiently and provide a very good service for the school. The learning assistants are well trained and work very closely with teachers to enable pupils to make good progress. |

The staff is well qualified to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and religious education. The accommodation is spacious but in need of an upgrade in energy conservation. The school's priorities for development are highly appropriate and are aimed principally at improving pupils' standards in English, mathematics, science and information communication technology. The school applies the principles of best value very well. It consults with parents and other bodies and ensures that, whenever appropriate, decisions on purchases are made with best value in mind. It compares its own performance data very rigorously with other schools.

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 way the school expects children to work hard and do their best;• They feel children make good progress in school;• They believe that teaching is good;• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems;• The school helps children to become mature and responsible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The behaviour of the pupils;• They think that children do not get the right amount of homework to do. |

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views of parents. It disagrees with the main negative points arising from an analysis of the parents' questionnaire. The inspection team considers that arrangements for homework are reasonable; tasks are linked with the work covered in lessons and pupils' progress is enhanced as a result. Although a small minority of pupils find it difficult to achieve acceptable standards of behaviour, the rest of the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children are first admitted to the school's reception classes their levels of attainment are very low in comparison with what is expected for their age group. Assessments of the children's attainments in the present reception class when they first started school showed that over fifty per cent did not reach the level expected of children of their age. The overall attainments of the present intake of children are considerably better than is normal for the school because the proportion of children who are below average in their attainments is usually lower than this and is normally over seventy per cent.

2. By the time the children leave the reception classes they have made good progress in their learning as a result of effective teaching. Teachers use initial assessments to establish the learning needs of the children. Most children in the current reception class need teachers to concentrate mainly on developing their language as well as their personal and social skills in order to benefit from the rest of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The reception class teachers work closely together in planning a variety of activities that ensure the children's good progress. However, by the time they leave the reception class most pupils are not yet ready to start work on the National Curriculum.

3. The school has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than most other schools and many of the pupils who are not on the special educational needs register need much individual support to enable them to make progress in their learning. In addition, the school has a high turnover of pupils. For example, only 53 per cent of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 last year were on the school roll at the end of Key Stage 1 four years previously. Furthermore, 25 per cent of the pupils who left the school during Key Stage 2 were more able pupils and lower attaining pupils replaced these. These factors make it very difficult for the range of measures taken by the school to have a rapid impact on improving standards. However, strategies adopted by the school have enabled a good improvement in pupils' achievements over the past few years, with the exception of English where pupils did not achieve so well last year. Four years ago only one in every ten pupils was achieving national expectations and, with the exception of English, this has risen to approximately fifty per cent at present. Considering that nearly eighty per cent of pupils had very low attainments when they were first admitted to the school, this is a good achievement.

4. The school's results in the annual national tests in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the proportion of pupils achieving national expectations in reading and mathematics was well below the national average and very low in comparison with the national average in writing. The percentages of pupils achieving higher levels than expected for their age group were well below average in reading and writing and close to the national average in mathematics. Teacher assessments of the overall levels of attainment in science show that standards were well below the national average as were the percentage of pupils achieving higher levels. When these results are compared with similar schools, they were also well below the average in reading and writing, well below average in mathematics and above average in science. Since the previous inspection report the school's results in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved by over 70 per cent compared with what they were and in mathematics the results have improved by almost 30 per cent. However, the results for writing have only marginally improved.

5. The results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the proportion of the school's pupils achieving national expectations was very low in comparison with the national average in English and well below average in mathematics. The percentage achieving national expectations in science was below but very close to the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was similar to the above outcomes. In comparison with similar schools the results show that English is well below average whilst mathematics is just below average and science is above average. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils achieving national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 had improved in English, but fell last year. The proportion reaching standards expected nationally has risen by almost a third in mathematics and has exceeded by over three times the percentage achieved in science.

6. The findings of the inspection show that at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' standards in reading are below average and in writing they are well below average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below what is expected for this age group and the majority of pupils do not find it easy to express themselves orally beyond short answers to questions. Pupils' listening skills are not developed sufficiently for them to be able to concentrate on instructions given by teachers. Reading standards amongst the seven-year-olds are below average but pupils are developing sufficient phonic knowledge to build their early reading skills. However, only the higher attaining pupils can read really accurately and with very clear understanding. Pupils' writing standards are well below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and only a small number are able to write in a consistent size, spell consistently and correctly a wide range of common words and structure their written sentences well.

7. Although pupils' speaking and listening skills have improved at the end of Key Stage 2 as a result of the strategies employed by the school, they are still below average. Pupils speak more confidently as they get older and are able to express their ideas and opinions with reasonable clarity but do not yet justify their own opinions or identify the key features of an argument or media programme. Their reading, although well below average, is developing well as a result of the consistent efforts of the teachers and pupils are achieving well overall and making good progress. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and with understanding. Pupils' standards of writing are also well below average and the good progress made in Key Stage 1 is not maintained in Years 3 and 4 but picks up again in Years 5 and 6. Despite the weak spelling there are positive signs that the work carried out in literacy lessons and in short spelling sessions is leading to improvements but the overall level of attainment in English is well below average.

8. The inspection findings show that levels of attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are well below average. Most pupils count reliably to 50 and recall a few addition facts to 10. They are beginning to calculate simple sums correctly and have an early understanding of place value. Pupils also count forwards and backwards in the 2, 3 and 5 tables. Most pupils know whether numbers are odd or even. At the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils' attainments are below average but the standards reached are appropriate and they make good progress. They add and subtract mentally within 100 and record additions with two and three digit numbers. Most pupils have a secure understanding of place value up to a thousand and the higher attaining pupils recognise the value of numbers up to a hundred thousand. They are beginning to recognise when a larger number is a multiple of a smaller number but do not know their tables well enough to see the connection easily.

9. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of science have improved considerably over the past few years and is now meeting national expectations at the end of both key stages. By the age of seven most know the difference between man-made and natural objects. They understand that forces acting on objects such as squashing, bending or stretching can change their shape. Pupils know that light comes from a variety of sources such as candles, torches and lamps. They know the names of the major external parts of the human body and that babies grow into adults and the offspring of other species also mature. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards of attainment meet national expectations. Pupils use keys to classify and identify animals and understand how plants reproduce themselves. They also understand how to ensure that scientific tests are fair. They understand that day and night are caused by the Earth spinning on its axis and that sound travels through different materials.

10. Attainments of pupils in information and communication technology meet what is expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 but not at the end of Key Stage 2. The knowledge and understanding of pupils in religious education meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' attainments in history, geography and music throughout the school are satisfactory. Levels of attainment in art and design are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainments throughout the school are above average in design and technology and Key Stage 1 pupils' attainments in physical education are sound whilst those in Key Stage 2 are very good.

11. The school's high percentage of pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, and the provision for supporting these pupils with their learning is very good. Pupils' needs are identified and met very well. Recent developments in teaching at the school, introduced by the head teacher, together with the literacy and numeracy strategies, have led to a rise in the standards achieved by these pupils in the annual national tests. Records also show that the number of pupils who require the support of outside specialists has been steadily reduced. Learning assistants in the classrooms support these pupils very effectively, adding to the provision and enabling pupils to make good progress.

12. The school has made sound progress in improving pupils' achievements in mathematics throughout the school. The national numeracy strategy has been adopted successfully by the school and as a result pupils' knowledge and understanding is improving steadily. Pupils' progress in English has been slower. The school has taken the rational decision to concentrate on improving pupils' speaking as a necessary precursor to improving their reading and writing. This process is, by its very nature, slow to take effect but in the opinion of the inspection team this is a sensible way to approach the problem. Improvements in science, particularly in Key Stage 2, have been dramatic and result from a more practical approach to the teaching and learning as well as through the extensive use of interactive displays in the classroom and the increasing use of homework kits.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Parents value their children's enjoyment of school and they are confident that the school helps their children become mature and responsible. Pupils' attitudes to their work are satisfactory overall and in a number of lessons observed they were either good or very good. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson pupils were very enthusiastic in recalling the text of a book they had all been reading which involved a naughty bear. They worked very hard throughout the session, including working together independently at the listening centre. Teachers help pupils to meet targets set for improving skills or behaviour and pupils enjoy earning team points for both academic and personal success.

14. However, in many lessons members of staff have to work very hard to maintain pupils' interest and involvement. A significant number of pupils find it hard to maintain their concentration, particularly when working without adult supervision, and their pace of working is often poor as a consequence. Pupils' listening skills are poor and many do not find it easy to recall instructions given by their class teacher. This adversely affects the pace of lessons and their own progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3/4, when pupils were making number pyramids, they were clearly asked and reminded only to use numbers between 1 and 5. Almost a third of the pupils ignored this instruction and used number up to 10. Pupils enjoy well-structured activities such as mental mathematics games and practical activities such as investigations in science, but are compliant rather than active and enquiring learners. The majority of pupils find it hard to transfer skills and give up easily if challenged by unfamiliar work.

15. All but seven parents who filled in the questionnaire are confident that pupils' behaviour in school is good and inspectors agree with this view. The behaviour of almost all pupils is good and a number of instances of very good behaviour were observed but a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, find it hard to achieve the expected standards of behaviour and to show consideration for others at all times.

16. Members of staff generally manage pupils' behaviour very well, but on a small number of occasions the poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, who call out, fidget and show a general lack of self control can be distracting to the rest of the class. This affects the whole lesson adversely because time is wasted in maintaining order. For example a history lesson, that involved tasting and discussing different kinds of Greek food, had to be abandoned because pupils were constantly interrupting the teacher and not listening. In most lessons the names of several pupils are written on the board for various misdemeanours and pupils are sent to other classes to calm down.

17. Pupils move around the school sensibly although there are high levels of supervision at all times to maintain and ensure this. Pupils are polite and friendly and enjoy talking to visitors about their work. They have sound relationships with each other but a number have a tendency to be aggressive. They are proud of their school. During the inspection there were many examples of pupils displaying good manners and consideration for others, holding doors open without being asked for adults and younger children, and helping visitors to find the way. Pupils generally work well in pairs when given the opportunity in lessons. For example, they support each other in reading written instructions, sharing resources, taking turns on the computer or when participating in mathematical games. Pupils know and value the school and class rules, and are confident that members of staff are firm but fair in applying the system of rewards and sanctions. The school's discipline policy is used well by staff to encourage and promote good behaviour, thoughtfulness and caring towards others. Members of staff deal with inappropriate behaviour very quickly and issues are discussed fully with pupils.

18. Bullying is not a major problem in the school, although there are instances of name calling, aggressive behaviour and fallings out between pupils. Pupils are encouraged to watch out for each other, and, when they feel they have been treated unkindly or hurt by other pupils, they have the confidence to talk to staff about it and get the problem resolved. They can also raise any concerns anonymously by putting a note in the 'bullying box'. There were six fixed period exclusions last year mainly for aggressive or threatening behaviour.

19. Personal development is good. Pupils show respect for school and each other's property, use equipment and resources sensibly and take responsibility for putting things away. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and get involved in the daily routines of the school, with older pupils undertaking a number of tasks, such as working the overhead projector and the sound system during collective acts of worship, and running the milk shop during break times. Pupils involved in the School Council and Eco-council accept their responsibilities very readily and are proud of the contribution they make to the school community. The School Council, ably chaired and minuted by its pupil officers, considers realistic and practical ways to improve the school environment and also help in the smooth daily running of the school. Pupils enjoy the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided and enthusiastically participate in competitive sports and in a number of activities in the community, such as the local carnival. They contribute to the community by raising considerable sums for charities.

20. Attendance is below the national average. The poor or intermittent attendance of a significant minority of pupils has an adverse effect on their progress and learning as they find it hard to catch up with work missed. Despite the schools best efforts, not all parents keep the school informed about the reasons for absence and a number keep pupils away from school without good reason, for example to go shopping, or because it is their birthday. A number of families have taken holidays in term time and when their children's attendance is already poor this has a very serious impact on their learning and progress. Despite the school's regular reminders to parents, the punctuality of a number of pupils at the start of the day is poor. Some parents do not support the school enough by ensuring their children arrive in good time and do not miss the very important registration period that sets the tone for the day. This session is used most effectively to reinforce aspects of the literacy and numeracy programme.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. There are a number of examples of very good lessons, mainly in the Reception classes, Key Stage 1 and in Year 6. Twenty-seven per cent of the lessons were very good or better and 49 per cent were good. Only two per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement over the last inspection when seven per cent of the lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.

22. Lessons for children who are under five are well planned and organised. The teachers are very caring and provide good role models. Children are assessed carefully and the outcomes are used very effectively to plan the next step in each child's learning. Reception class teachers have a very good knowledge of how young children learn and children's confidence is promoted strongly. Basic skills are taught very well and the teachers have very high expectations of the behaviour and attitudes displayed by the children. Children are given a very good start to their schooling and have a firm foundation on which to build their National Curriculum work at a later stage.

23. Literacy and numeracy lessons have been implemented according to prescribed guidelines and have enhanced pupils' learning. Of particular note is the good impact on pupils' progress in literacy made by a focus on their speaking skills. However, pupils' personal perceptions of this concentration on improving their speaking facility are often taken as a criticism of the way they speak. If teachers do not draw a distinction between dialect and formal language then the improvements in pupils' ability to express themselves verbally may slow. The quality of teaching in English is good and contributes strongly towards the pupils' good progress and positive attitudes. Mathematics lessons are also good and pupils' understanding and recall of factual information have developed well. There is little evidence of cross-curricular planning so that the skills learned in mathematics or information and communication technology lessons are used in other subjects so that the pupils' learning can be consolidated.

24. Examples of very good teaching in the school have a number of factors in common. Firstly, teachers get on with pupils extremely well. As a result, a high level of respect between both teachers and pupils is mutual. This leads to very hard work, real attempts from pupils to produce their best efforts and the security in knowing that they can always ask for support with their learning without fear of losing self-esteem. For example, in a very good Year 1 literacy lesson the teacher created a very warm and calm working atmosphere in the classroom by using a ventriloquist's soft toy that made deliberate mistakes when answering the teacher's questions on the sounds represented by different letters. As a result, pupils made very good progress, increased in confidence, developed a feeling of security in the classroom and were eager to do well.

25. Secondly, teachers have high expectations of the pupils and continually challenge and question them. This is sometimes an uncomfortable experience for pupils because extended speaking is a labour for many of them. Nevertheless, it is through such challenging experiences that pupils make progress in their learning. In an outstanding literacy lesson for Year 2 pupils the teacher challenged pupils to extend their explanations of yesterday's story. At the same time she supported them without making them feel inadequate. The good technique of returning to the story to provide a familiar context gives pupils highly effective support. The teacher was very careful to include all pupils in the questioning and responded with generous praise and encouragement. The same teacher took every opportunity in a very good science lesson to extend pupils' thinking by continually asking them to verbalise their thoughts and asking for alternative words that could be used in order to extend their vocabulary.

26. Finally, a very good range of learning resources, together with their effective use by teachers, enables pupils to acquire skills more easily and develop understanding. Year 6 pupils made very good progress in a gymnastics lesson because the teacher used resources in a straightforward but very effective way to build challenges that met the needs of individual pupils. For instance, once pupils had been taught how to perform a straddle, the teacher used a beanbag initially to challenge the pupils to rotate their straddle around it without touching it. Once she was satisfied that individual pupils had accomplished this, she increased the level of challenge by replacing the beanbag with a football. In the same lesson there was a wide variety of gymnastic resources for pupils to use so they could develop a good range of skills. Similarly, in a very good Year 6 science lesson all the resources pupils needed during the lesson were ready and immediately available so that pupils wasted no time at all in finding apparatus and used the maximum amount of time to carry out a scientific investigation. This ensured that the lesson had a very brisk pace and pupils were able to learn more than would have been possible otherwise.

27. Almost all teachers had clear and unambiguous objectives for pupils to learn during their lessons. These were sensibly shared with the pupils so they had a very clear idea of what was expected of them during the lesson. This enhanced pupils' progress in learning. Teachers planned lessons thoroughly, assessed pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in the classroom and used the information to meet their future learning needs. Appropriate activities for pupils' different levels of attainment were planned so that all children could make good progress.

28. In the very small number of lessons that were unsatisfactory there were a number of factors that needed improvement. Teachers did not plan activities that were suitable for pupils' needs and mundane tasks led to poor behaviour. In consequence pupils made little progress and valuable teaching and learning time was lost. In another lesson, the teacher had difficulty in maintaining good discipline because of an over emphasis on the negative aspects of pupils' behaviour. This resulted in resentment and further disruptive behaviour that had an unnecessary and unsatisfactory impact on pupils' progress.

29. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in music and very good in science. Owing to the arrangement of the timetable it was not possible to make judgements in art and geography.

30. Pupils' learning is good overall and they achieve well. They are interested in the work planned for them and concentrate well during lessons. They work hard and are keen to acquire new knowledge and understanding as well as learning new skills. However, their rate of learning is slower than most pupils but they achieve well overall. Homework provided by teachers also assists pupils' learning. It is linked closely with the content of lessons and has a good impact on pupils' progress.

31. The large number of pupils with special educational needs are central to teachers' planning and teaching and this has a positive impact on the provision made for them and the quality of their learning. Very good individual education plans contain clear targets that are closely related to curriculum targets and are able to be implemented by teachers as part of a whole class or small group work. Special needs support assistants provide good support. All teaching in the school takes full account of the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

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

32. The quality and range of the learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects including religious education.

33. The school has chosen to use a very large proportion of curriculum time for the teaching of English until the pupils' attainments are closer to what is expected nationally. This temporary imbalance is justified in the circumstances faced by the school. The staff recognises how crucial it is to raise standards in English as a first requirement for raising standards in other subjects rooted in language. The curriculum being taught is structured carefully to meet the aptitudes and specific needs of all pupils, including children under five and those with special educational needs.

34. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very appropriate for the children. Their attainments are very low on entry to the school and initial assessments are used to target their needs. Much work is focused on developing the children's social skills and their language development. This provides an essential foundation for these children on which their reading and writing skills are built at a later stage.

35. In Key Stages 1 and 2, a full set of nationally provided schemes of work are being used to create long- and medium-term plans. Teachers are developing a set of locally prepared schemes of work that take account of the new requirements for Curriculum 2000 and the particular circumstances of their own school. There is a clear and appropriate timetable for the completion and adoption of these. Medium-term planning documents have been designed to link with schemes of work. The effective use of these ensures that careful thought is given to the sorts of activities that need to be undertaken and questions that need to be asked if the pupils are to stand the best chance of learning what is intended. Curriculum co-ordinators monitor and evaluate this planning carefully and are aware of the need to refine continually the way teaching is planned. The senior management team recognises that this work is at the heart of a programme of continuing school improvement. In-service training for teachers has been provided in the past and is arranged for the future. This is a marked improvement on the last report when the link between teaching and learning was not wholly secure. Overall planning and implementation was reported to be at an early stage of development and a smooth progression in pupils' learning throughout the school could not be assured. This is no longer the situation.

36. Arrangements for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are now well established and appropriate. Arranging pupils into different sets according to their levels of attainment is used to ensure the best possible match of teaching to pupils' needs.

37. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated into classes across the school. Within classes pupils are grouped according to their ability and this form of organisation works effectively. All teachers are fully aware of the content of the pupils' individual education plans and their individual targets.

38. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities designed to enrich pupils' experiences. There is an appropriate emphasis upon sport and good social contact with other local schools. In addition to sporting provision, pupils are offered clubs as diverse as computer, choir, environmental, reading, poetry and religious education.

39. There is a very clear homework policy developed by teachers and parents together and linked to the home-school agreement. Every effort is made to help pupils to get the most out of their homework experiences. This includes teaching time, when teachers emphasise the value of homework, and a homework club when advice and support are given.

40. The school has excellent links with the community and these make significant contributions to pupils' learning. For example, a local ceramics manufacturer was visited as the subject of a tapestry created for exhibition in the Millennium Dome; English work is promoted through study of the 'Staffordshire Newsletter'; the use of local centres promotes and enriches work in history and geography. Relationships with other schools in the area are also very good through sporting and music contacts, through partnership with a nearby special school and through curriculum development activities centred on the main receiving high school.

41. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is very good provision for moral and social development, good provision for spiritual and satisfactory provision for cultural development. This is the same judgement made at the time of the last inspection. It indicates that, whilst the very good work has continued in social and moral teaching, insufficient attention has been given to enhancing spiritual and cultural experiences across the curriculum to bring them up to the high standard of moral and social provision.

42. There is a strong and well-planned personal, social and health education programme which pays appropriate attention to sex education and to drugs misuse. This contributes to the very good provision for social and moral education, which is an anchor in the life of the school. All adults working in the school are alive to the need to provide a consistent framework in which the pupils can live, play and learn. There is a thorough behaviour policy that offers clear guidance to teachers and effective systems for rewards and sanctions. Pupils are taught through assemblies and circle times how to distinguish between right and wrong. Older pupils are helped to develop moral values and to make judgements on matters such as equal opportunities and responsibilities to society. Social development is nurtured through opportunities to take responsibility in lessons, and through activities such as caring for the environment of the school and serving on the School Council. The cornerstone of social development is the strength of relationships between adults and pupils. Some teachers have excellent skills in pupil management and the head teacher is aware of the value of these skills being shared with less experienced members of staff and with those who do not find class management easy.

43. Spiritual development is nurtured through some assemblies and through collective worship. The staff take considerable trouble to ensure that assemblies are varied in content and presentation and visiting clergy make a valuable contribution. These arrangements meet statutory requirements. Skills relating to spiritual development are encouraged across the curriculum through listening, reflection and giving opportunities for pupils to respond. This was seen to excellent effect in a Year 2 literacy lesson when the teacher challenged the pupils to recall and reflect upon the content of a story called 'Peace at Last.' Pupils were exhibiting joy, surprise and empathy as they worked through the plot and these experiences had a positive impact on their spiritual development. The staff offer other opportunities for the development of feelings of self-worth, the worth of others, a sense of community and joy and wonder at the natural world through, for example, award systems, involvement in the local carnival and visits to places of interest.

44. Cultural awareness is fostered across the curriculum through the content of planned schemes of work in religious education, literature, art and design, design and technology, music and history. The teachers find valuable time to read to pupils and to introduce new authors and their work. Pupils can follow this up by purchasing volumes from the school bookshop. Some art activities are based on the work of celebrated artists. A design and technology project resulted in the making of wall hangings reflecting the traditions of pupils from around the world. Music is enjoyed at the start and close of some assemblies. The school does not have a strong tradition of developing multi-cultural awareness. Pupils interviewed showed little appreciation of the ways of life of other ethnic groups represented in our communities.

45. The medium term planning documents have a column for the inclusion of cross-curricular links. At present the teachers are using this column to identify links between National Curriculum subjects. They are not yet identifying and planning for opportunities to include spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in the natural flow of subject lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Parents are positive about how well teachers and members of the support staff know their children and the level of support they are given.

47. The school gives a very high priority to pupils' welfare, to ensure their health and safety in and around school and to child protection issues. The staff is very vigilant and there is a high level of awareness and understanding of procedures for ensuring pupils' well-being. Where there are concerns about individual pupils, these are supported effectively. The personal, social and health education programme promotes pupils' self-awareness and self-esteem most effectively and is well planned to provide them with the skills to look after themselves, to become more self-confident and knowledgeable about themselves and about healthy and safe living. Pupils are encouraged to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle through lessons on healthy eating, drug awareness and road safety and support for such initiatives as 'walk to school week'. The breakfast club provides pupils with a nutritious start to the day and at break time pupils can buy milk from the snack bar.

48. Members of staff are very responsive to pupils' needs and the needs of families. An excellent number of initiatives are organised and managed by the enthusiastic and skilled home/ school worker and special educational needs staff in association with a number of other agencies and organisations such as the Workers' Education Association, the Britannia Foundation Trust and the Education and Social Services Department. These provide support, advice and help for parents and carers through an imaginative and well delivered range of courses to develop and foster their practical and parenting skills. These are most effective in helping them to support their children's learning and personal development as well as develop their own learning and personal skills.

49. The school's pastoral system provides a very secure framework for pupils. Senior staff support class teachers in implementing procedures for promoting and managing behaviour and attendance and pupils' personal development. Pupils appreciate that members of staff help them to do their best in lessons and they feel safe in school. Parents are confident that staff will deal with concerns effectively and they value how effectively the school promotes a very positive ethos, community spirit and a caring attitude to others.

50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and members of staff are consistent in implementing the assertive discipline programme calmly. The emphasis is on promoting good standards of behaviour and politeness, through rewards and a carefully structured programme of sanctions. Members of the senior staff support class teachers in monitoring pupils' behaviour and addressing the problems of pupils who conduct themselves in a challenging way. During lessons, individual good behaviour and effort are praised and stamps and team points are awarded for good effort and improvement. Displays remind pupils of rules, and there is a high awareness of pupils' individual personal targets as well as behaviour targets for each class. The school very successfully promotes an awareness of care and concern for others and there is a very effective anti-bullying climate. Members of staff deal with any instances of unacceptable behaviour and harassment quickly and effectively.

51. The school has improved the procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and for following up unexplained and intermittent attendance. There have been a number of initiatives to give good attendance a high profile and to reward good individual and class attendance. The School Councillors support the school by talking to individuals whose poor attendance is letting down the rest of the class. Parents are reminded regularly of their responsibilities and of the procedures for keeping the school informed when pupils are absent, and are discouraged from taking holidays in term time. Previous changes in the education welfare service have been of concern to the school, since they have resulted in the school no longer receiving regular visits by the welfare officer.

52. The school has very good procedures and arrangements for dealing with sick and injured pupils. Procedures for dealing with accidents and emergencies are well documented. Pupils are very well supervised at work, at play and on school trips. The very capable team of mid-day assistants knows pupils very well and works together most effectively to ensure break time is as safe as well as pleasurable time. They have received training in all aspects of their role, from first aid to promoting playground games and class teachers keep them well informed about any concerns that might affect pupils' behaviour or well-being. They have a very good understanding of the behaviour policy, health and safety procedures and child protection procedures. Mid-day assistants follow the behaviour policy closely by awarding stickers for good behaviour and helpfulness in the playground. The School Council is looking at ways to further enhance the playground with the creation of some quieter sheltered areas, with tables and chairs for more contemplative and social activities to improve behaviour at playtime.

53. A comprehensive whole-school approach to assessment is in place. This is a big improvement compared with the provision described in the last report when it was stated that the school needed a more effective system. Comprehensive data is now maintained on all pupils and careful analysis explores all factors affecting progress; assessment is seen as playing a key role in raising attainment. In addition to statutory assessments, non-statutory assessments are undertaken. For example, Year 4 teachers regularly test the pupils in their classes against the main teaching points of the lesson. A recent initiative has seen the appointment of a planning co-ordinator who oversees the link between teachers' planning and assessment opportunities so that what needs to be taught next is identified. All teachers know their pupils well and they use the wide range of assessment information available to monitor progress and inform them when pupils have done well or where help is required. Assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are very comprehensive and successfully identify any pupils experiencing difficulties. These arrangements comply fully with the Code of Practice requirements.

54. Teachers not only monitor pupils' academic performance carefully but also their behaviour and personal development, thus providing a complete picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Consequently teachers can speak with authority about pupils' levels of concentration, behaviour and personal background. Very careful assessments of children are made when they are first admitted to the reception classes and the information is used to help the teachers plan work that meets their needs and to make predictions of their future achievements. Across the school an effective working policy allows teachers and pupils to share information about particular pieces of work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The great majority of parents' responses to the questionnaire and the small number who came to the parents' meeting hold very positive views of the school. Parents recognise that now there is a very positive climate in the school which works closely with parents, listens to their concerns, keeps them well informed about how their children are getting on and welcomes their involvement and contribution. All the parents who filled in the questionnaire were positive that they could approach the school with questions or concerns, that their children make good progress and are expected to work hard and achieve their best. Nearly all are confident that the school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed. Most feel children receive the right amount of homework.

56. Although the involvement and impact of many parents in the life and work of the school are somewhat limited, good relationships between the school and parents have been developed in the past few years and many more parents are being encouraged and helped to become involved in their children's learning. This development is strongly underpinned and reinforced by the very effective programme of courses, advice and support offered to parents. It is organised by the enthusiastic and effective home-school worker and supported by a range of local agencies and organisations such as the Workers' Educational Association, Sure Start, Gingerbread, the Continuing Education Department, the Child Community Forum and the Health Service. The Britannia Room is invaluable to the school, offering a rich resource and base in the school for parents and carers. The very good range of progressive courses and activities offered to parents includes a family literacy course, first-aid course, a women feeling fine course and a craft course and support for families of pupils with special needs. The very skilful and committed parents' resource group give valuable practical support to the school taking on major projects, such as painting and decorating, making equipment and games and ensuring the home school packs are complete and up to date. The parents' resource group helped to ensure that last year each child in the school had a carnival costume. The photographs of the carnival procession show what an exciting and colourful event it was.

57. Parents' views are sought both informally at social and school events, by the parent governors, and more formally through questionnaires sent home. The school provides parents with a good range of written information about developments in the curriculum, events and activities through displays, information in the entrance area, letters home, newsletters, but some of the written information could be a less 'wordy' and more accessible. As well as formal consultation evenings there are coffee afternoons, display days, and special meetings to discuss particular issues; members of staff make themselves very accessible to parents to discuss any concerns.

58. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for parents to be involved with their children's learning. Homework is regularly set, although not all parents ensure this is completed and returned. A homework club has been established to help older pupils develop good work habits. The home-school book provides a good way for parents to support their child's reading development at home and many in Key Stage 1 enter into useful dialogues with teachers about how well pupils are doing and possible areas for support. A significant number of pupils in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 enjoy the home-school packs, funded by the local education authority which provide a very good range of literacy and numeracy activities for parents and carers to pursue with their children. Pupils are involved effectively in setting targets for improvement in areas such as literacy and numeracy and personal development, and these are discussed with parents at the consultation meetings. Annual written reports on pupils give useful information on how well children are doing and on the progress made in meeting targets. The quality of these have been improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership and management of the school are very good overall, which is an improvement on the position noted in the previous inspection when the present head teacher had only recently been appointed. The head teacher, assistant head teacher and senior teacher work tirelessly and very well as a team to guide the school through measures that have been introduced to improve its work. This senior management team is highly effective in improving practices in the school and has regular meetings focused on developing the school. The staff of the school now has a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed.

60. The head teacher provides excellent leadership and has a very clear idea of the direction the school should take and the ways in which it should improve. Since her appointment she has created a climate of improving standards and efficiency. Schemes of work in all subjects have been drawn up so teachers had a clear framework on which to base their planning and areas of weakness in pupils' knowledge and understanding have been identified through test results. Target setting as a means of improving standards in the school has been introduced and has been effective. A number of other strategies have been adopted. These include the introduction of booster classes for pupils who are under-achieving and procedures to target higher attaining Year 5 pupils for higher National Curriculum levels in mathematics and English pupils by placing them in the top sets in Year 6. This provides them with real challenges so their learning can be extended. Literacy targets for all pupils are provided for parents so they can work with their children at home. A sequence of writing targets, couched in language children will understand, is provided for all Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils so they have a clear focus on how to improve. Year 2 pupils who only met national expectations in reading and writing marginally at the end of Key Stage 1 are provided with additional literacy support three times per week in Years 3 and 4 to provide opportunities for them to improve their attainment levels. All support staff have received a whole day's training in additional literacy activities from the literacy co-ordinator and the senior support assistant. Finally, numeracy support assistants have been appointed to boost the chances of pupils who have the potential to achieve the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1.

61. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons is monitored by the head teacher. Individual teachers are provided subsequently with very good advice on facets of their teaching that could be improved. This has developed staff confidence very successfully. Pupils' answers in the annual national assessment and optional interim tests are analysed to identify weaker areas in the pupils' understanding. Once identified these become a focus for some of the teaching during the following year. Samples of pupils' work are monitored regularly to make judgements about progress and to ensure that the National Curriculum in English, mathematics, and science are being covered. All of the above factors have assisted in raising standards throughout the school. The head teacher and staff, however, realise that the process of improving pupils' learning in the school will be a long process and cannot take place quickly. 'Sure Start' records show that only 17 per cent of three-year-olds in the school's catchment area have the quality of speech and language expected of the age group. As a consequence, the head teacher has arranged for a speech therapist to work alongside class teachers in Key Stage 1 to develop pupils' language and support the staff appropriately.

62. Subject co-ordinators monitor class teachers' plans periodically to make sure that the curriculum is covered as well as checking that pupils make progress in their learning. As yet, teaching is monitored mainly by the head teacher and this task is too much for one person to undertake in a school the size of Burnwood Primary. In addition to her class teaching commitment, the senior teacher monitors effectively the progress of higher attaining pupils in Year 3. The assistant head teacher has this responsibility in the rest of Key Stage 2. The assistant head teacher also monitors gender issues conscientiously and co-ordinates procedures for assessment. The latter are thorough, rigorous and link planning and monitoring. The assistant head teacher also inducts new teachers to the school very well. They are introduced rigorously to staff development systems, discipline policies, assessment procedures and approaches to collective acts of worship. This process is followed up to ensure that the policies are being implemented. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that all statutory procedures are fully and efficiently implemented. Reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs are very thorough and carried out on time.

63. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very well. It supports the school well in pastoral and developmental concerns, works hard on its behalf and is fully informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It fulfils its statutory duties and keeps itself well informed of the way the school is performing and how it is improving. The recently elected chair of governors works very closely with the head teacher and has very quickly and efficiently acquainted himself with the important factors of the school. Governors help to set the overall direction of the school and are active members of a number of committees. Members of the premises committee inspect the school premises each term to ensure that there are no safety or health hazards for the pupils. They draw up a list of problems and monitor the progress of the action taken to address them. The governing body ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to participate in all the school's activities, including all curriculum subjects and religious education, extra-curricular activities and educational visits.

64. The school development plan involves consultation with the whole of the school community. Questionnaires specific to the groups of people to whom they are addressed are distributed to parents, mid-day assistants, governors, support staff and teachers. The resulting responses are carefully analysed before deciding on the priorities for developing the work of the school. The current initiatives in the plan are highly appropriate for the needs of the school and revolve around raising standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology throughout the school. The initiatives are costed carefully so that a good link to the school budget is established. Success criteria to judge the effectiveness of the different elements of the plan are not linked sufficiently to improvements in pupils' attainments. It is, therefore, difficult for the school to be able to judge whether the over arching aim of improving standards in the core subjects is being met.

65. The budget is used wisely. It has sound systems in place to monitor the budget regularly. Day-to-day management of finances is undertaken effectively by the school's administrative officer who has a very good knowledge of current levels of expenditure and balances. The local authority finance officer, who pays ten visits per year to the school, supports her very ably. The school is well staffed and the accommodation and learning resources are of good quality and are adequate to deliver the National Curriculum. The school under-spent the amount available during the current academic year and intends sensibly to use the money to maintain the staffing levels when the number of pupils on the school roll falls at the beginning of the next school year. The budget is monitored regularly

by the finance and premises committee through a careful consideration of a spreadsheet of the expenditure produced by the chairman of governors from information provided by the local education authority. The finances allocated to pupils with special educational needs are used wisely and enable the provision to be of very good quality. The standards fund grant is used sensibly for a variety of purposes and has enabled the school to improve its work in steadily raising pupils' standards.

66. The aims of the school are well reflected in the work of the school. The staff ensures that it is a caring community that works closely with parents and tries to enable pupils to achieve to the best of their abilities. The needs of all pupils are met through well-planned lessons that enable pupils with differing attainments to make appropriate progress. Very useful weekly literacy classes for parents have been provided that enable parents to support their children's learning at home. Numeracy sessions will be starting in the very near future. The head teacher has also run a course of 40 weekly sessions entitled 'Supporting your child with Primary Education.' All of these regular sessions have had an indirect yet very positive impact on pupils' progress.

67. The school uses new technology effectively. The budget, including the standards grant is managed well through the use of computer technology. Registers are marked efficiently using optical read-out facilities that enable the school to identify regular absenteeism by individual pupils. The school has the means of using information communication technology for assessment processes but, as yet, is awaiting the relevant training to be able to use it effectively.

68. The school applies the principles of best value in an outstanding manner. Parents and mid-day assistants are consulted about their views on the effectiveness of the school by issuing them with questionnaires. There is much work that has taken place to compare the work of the school with other similar schools, including expenditure, rates of exclusions of pupils and attendance. All members of staff are involved in evaluating the outcomes of teaching pupils and they are challenged whenever they want to purchase learning resources to ensure they are in line with the school development plan. Whenever purchases are made, the school compares prices from a number of different sources and decides on the best value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further and ensure good progress for all pupils the head teacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) raise standards further in English throughout the school by:
 - focusing on pupils' listening skills as well as their speaking skills in order to improve their facility with language, emphasising the difference between formal language and dialect; (Paras. 6 and 80)
 - ensuring that the progress made in improving pupils' writing in Key Stage 1 is maintained in Years 3 and 4; (Para. 79)
 - ensuring that teachers' practices in guided reading sessions during the literacy hour are consistently efficient throughout the school and are aimed at enabling the whole group of pupils to benefit from teaching simultaneously; (Para. 83)
 - reinstating the school library so that pupils have opportunities to learn basic reference skills and in locating information from non-fiction books; (Para. 86)
 - providing professional in-service training in behaviour management of pupils for those Key Stage 2 teachers who would benefit. (Para. 83)
- (2) improve standards further in numeracy throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that whenever pupils are taught new mathematical processes or ideas these are practised and used in other areas of the curriculum as soon as possible so they can consolidate their learning; (Para. 96)
 - provide even more opportunities for pupils to become aware of patterns in numbers and other areas of mathematics; (Para. 95)
 - sharing good practice in teaching mathematics so that all teachers can benefit; (Para. 96)
 - using structured apparatus more frequently when teaching mathematics; (Para. 95)
- (3) improve Key Stage 2 pupils' attainments in information and communication technology by:
 - planning opportunities for pupils to practise newly acquired skills in information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum; (Para. 128)
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use data handling and graphics applications and to monitor external events; (Para. 126)
 - providing in-service training for teachers who are insecure in their own skills in information and communication technology. (Para. 128)
- (4) improve Key Stage 2 pupils' attainments in art and design by:
 - ensuring that pupils develop a sequence of skills in art and design through a more carefully considered and implemented scheme of work; (Para. 106)
 - ensuring that pupils have ample opportunities in art and design lessons to develop their creative talents. (Para. 106)
- (5) enhance pupils' cultural development by including in the curriculum more opportunities for them to learn about the ways of life of different ethnic groups represented within the United Kingdom. (Para. 44)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 88 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 42 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 3 | 24 | 49 | 22 | 2 | | |

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) | 425 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 246 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 7 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 102 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 44 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 62 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 8.1 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.7 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 00 (99) | 29 (44) | 29 (29) | 58 (73) |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 13 | 19 |
| | Girls | 21 | 18 | 23 |
| | Total | 36 | 31 | 42 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 62 (45) | 53 (58) | 72 (64) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 85 (83) | 90 (86) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 14 | 13 | 23 |
| | Girls | 21 | 13 | 24 |
| | Total | 35 | 26 | 47 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 60 (52) | 45 (59) | 81 (70) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 88 (86) | 88 (87) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | 00 [99] | 34 [31] | 33 [42] | 67 [73] |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 7 | 18 | 30 |
| | Girls | 11 | 15 | 26 |
| | Total | 18 | 33 | 56 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 27 (41) | 49 (42) | 84 (52) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 8 | 17 | 27 |
| | Girls | 13 | 14 | 22 |
| | Total | 21 | 31 | 49 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 31 (40) | 46 (42) | 73 (48) |
| | 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 | 3 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 4 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 417 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 1 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 6 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

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

| | |
|--|-------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 20 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21.25 |
| Average class size | 23.5 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 18 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 382 |

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Financial year | 1999 / 2000 |
|----------------|-------------|

| | £ |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 860335 |
| Total expenditure | 855115 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1805 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 24040 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 29260 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 492 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 63 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 59 | 36 | 3 | 2 | |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 56 | 41 | | | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 41 | 48 | 8 | 3 | |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 42 | 45 | 9 | 3 | |
| The teaching is good. | 66 | 31 | 2 | | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 56 | 34 | 8 | | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 53 | 44 | | | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 64 | 36 | | | |
| The school works closely with parents. | 50 | 42 | 6 | 2 | |
| The school is well led and managed. | 50 | 38 | 6 | 2 | 5 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 58 | 36 | 2 | | 5 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 56 | 36 | 5 | | 3 |

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

69. Children enter school in two phases, the older ones begin in September and the younger children in the following January. There is a useful three week induction period to allow children to experience the school routines in timed sessions, gradually building up to a full day including lunch-time. The school takes every opportunity to form positive relationships with the feeder nursery schools and with parents before the children begin their school life. Parents and pre-school children join the established class for story time and for coffee mornings where they are provided with information on the school and participate in curriculum activities. As a result the children settle happily into a secure and caring environment.

70. Children enter the class with very low levels of attainment compared with those expected nationally. Their personal and social skills are also very low in comparison with the average. The school uses initial assessments to establish the learning needs of the children. The results are very carefully analysed and records of achievement are thorough. The teaching is focused upon the areas of the curriculum requiring immediate attention namely language development and personal and social skills. Many children require a great deal of language-based activities as their speaking and listening skills are poorly developed.

71. The quality of teaching is good and the children quickly learn the simple rules of the class. The teachers are very caring and this is appreciated by the children who themselves begin to show care and concern for others as a result. Members of the teaching staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and this is reflected in the planning of the activities and the choice of resources used. Basic skills are taught very well and the teachers have very high expectations of the behaviour and attitudes displayed by the children. Since the last inspection the quality of the resources both in and outside the classroom have improved, giving good learning opportunities in all curriculum areas. The children's levels of attainment have therefore risen, especially in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development but they are still well below the national expectations.

72. The children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development during their time in the reception class. They come into the classroom with enthusiasm and are eager to learn. They are beginning to listen with concentration and interest but their development in this respect is slow compared with most children of this age. The children begin to be more independent and many can dress and undress themselves, tidy up after activities and show care for one another. Their social development is good and they learn to take turns sensibly and to listen to each other patiently without interrupting each other. For example, they sit in a circle to talk about what frightens them and learn to take turns by following rules such as passing a doll to each other and only speaking when they have the doll in their hands. The good teaching and the high expectations of the two class teachers together with their praise and encouragement enhance the self-esteem of the children. This has built successfully the children's self-confidence in building relationships and in other activities in the classroom.

73. The children's overall attainment in communication, language and literacy by the end of the Foundation Stage is low but standards are rising due to the good teaching and learning that is now becoming established. The teachers have quite rightly decided that the promotion of speaking and listening in the children is fundamental to raising their attainments across the whole curriculum in the foundation year. The teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum are good. The children are able to listen quietly for short periods and respond to new experiences. As time goes on they talk more readily but some of their vocabulary is very limited. Teachers take every opportunity to extend the children's knowledge and understanding of language and how to use it expressively. Some children are able to link sounds and letters and can recognise and say the initial letters of many words. Teachers use good strategies to enable children to learn and consolidate their knowledge such as asking them to name the initial letter sound to the items hidden in a 'secret bag.' For example, one child comments that tiger starts with a 't', it has a tail and that also starts with a 't'. A large picture of a doll's house enables children to acquire the vocabulary necessary to understand and describe the position and place of the furniture. A few children can distinguish the final sounds of words. For instance, they recognise 'sh' as in fish. About half the class is able to use phonic knowledge to write their names and to read simple words with help, but few can make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words. Most children can hold their pencils correctly to write recognisable letters and captions to their drawings. Good use is made of a computer program to test pre-reading discrimination.

74. Over half of the children are unlikely to meet the standards required in mathematical development by the end of the reception year. This is low compared with the average but is an improvement on the last inspection report that stated that hardly any of the class was likely to meet the desirable outcomes by the time they were five. Some children count reliably to ten and can recognise the numerals from one to nine. A number understand the concept of one more and one less. The more able children can order numbers up to ten and a few are able to make number stories based upon the story of the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff'. The quality of mathematics teaching is good and teachers plan effective opportunities for children to build upon their mathematical understanding and vocabulary through carefully selected games and activities. Information and communications technology is used very appropriately to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of numbers using computer programs.

75. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world but, again, half will not meet the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching in this area of the curriculum is good and children, for example, have good opportunities to investigate and explore how magnets attract metal. A wide variety of activities is provided for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. For instance, some children can explain how the goats which are attached to paper clips move across the bridge with the aid of the magnet. Other children are very interested in the way in which cacti grow, whilst other children observe carefully the movements of the class hamster with fascination. The teacher has made a very useful storybook about the hamster that provides good opportunities for children to develop their speech and language. Children can observe the growth of bulbs, flowers and shrubs that have been especially planted to attract birds and insects in the secure and safe outside learning environment. There are many interesting opportunities for them to experience their world, such as the use of the telephone box or the cottage in the classroom. This area of the curriculum is much improved since the last inspection through the wise and thoughtful purchase of games and equipment that enhance every aspect of learning.

76. Children make good progress in physical development, particularly in their co-ordination and handling of implements. Many of them will meet what is expected of this age nationally by the time they are five. Most of the class can handle scissors, pencils and brushes with confidence and there are many opportunities for children to extend their skills. The school has addressed the key issue from the previous report concerned with developing the outside play area for children who are under five. Outside the classroom the children can now play with large items of apparatus such as trucks, tubes, stepping stones and bikes. They develop their physical skills by jumping and rolling in the 'ball pool,' and learn to judge space and distance by using the tricycles. They work well in physical education lessons, attempting to walk on tiptoe quietly or to run and stop instantly. Many improvements have been made since the last inspection to develop the children's sense of adventure, creativity and physical skills, both during physical education lessons and in the way the children are organised when using the outside play area. The quality of teaching concerned with the children's physical development is sound. Although the provision since the previous inspection has improved the teaching of lessons in the hall is sometimes slow in pace and pupils do not have sufficient opportunity for vigorous exercise.

77. The children's attainments in creative development are low when they are first admitted to the school and well below what is expected by the time they reach the end of the reception year. They enjoy cutting, sticking and sewing when exploring the use of different materials. Here they can extend their vocabulary, creativity and knowledge but their communication and imaginative skills are well below the national average. They have opportunities to paint and observe colours in the colour corner and to use the musical instruments. Most of the children can beat in time responding to rhythms and they make satisfactory progress in their listening skills. They enjoy singing 'questions and answers' games with the teacher during a mathematics lesson in order to teach the sequence of numbers. The quality of teaching concerned with the children's creative development is sound. However, musical activities are approached with high expectations in mind. Children are encouraged to experience rhythm through clapping, beating, rubbing, clicking and tapping on the floor. Children match their names to a rhythm and 'read the rhythm' of different words with the teacher using picture cards.

ENGLISH

78. Standards in English, particularly in reading at age seven, have improved significantly since the last inspection in 1998. However, after a significant improvement in the English results in the 1999 annual national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, they fell again in the most recent test. Results in these tests show that standards were well below average in both key stages when compared with national averages. Since the appointment of the head teacher the school has taken the decision to focus on speaking and listening throughout the school, seeking to improve the pupils' vocabulary and grammar from the very low skills base when they are first admitted to the school. The school's results in the latest annual national tests were very low at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 when compared with national averages. Speaking skills are improving pupils' language facility at both key stages. Girls achieve better than boys across the school.

79. Despite good provision in the Foundation Stage pupils enter Key Stage 1 with short attention spans, limited listening skills and poor speaking skills. Very few have started to read or write. Good teaching continues in Key Stage 1 and the special emphasis put on speaking and listening is raising standards. Sound progress is made. This progress is maintained in Key Stage 2 but written work in books levels off in Years 3 and 4 before picking up again in Years 5 and 6.

80. Speaking and listening are given high priority across the curriculum but the majority of pupils up to Year 4 do not find it easy to express themselves beyond short answers to questions. They appear to be listening but questions often reveal shallow understanding. By the end of Key Stage 2, speaking skills are appropriate for the pupils and they have improved, sharing ideas and describing events. Pupils' listening skills are not developing at the same rate as their speaking and pupils often miss valuable teaching as a result of lack of concentration. When gently pressed and supported by teachers, pupils in Key Stage 1 attempt to explain their thoughts more fully. They show good retention of words where teachers have constructed a particular focus to be revisited over several days – a technique used frequently in literacy sessions. In Key Stage 2 the overall picture is of pupils showing growing factual knowledge but a general inability to make observations beyond the obvious. There is a small number of pupils in each year group with satisfactory speaking and listening skills. This was most clearly seen in a 'house' assembly when Year 6 pupils presented their work on Sir Francis Chichester, and in a formal discussion with a group of selected Key Stage 2 pupils about 'life in school'. It was in that discussion that some older pupils showed confusion over what they interpret as being criticism of their dialect by teachers who exhort them to "speak properly". If this feeling is widespread it could inhibit the development of confident speaking. It is the low level of speaking and listening that continues to pull down overall performance in English to well below average.

81. The well structured work on reading activities, particularly with the large number of pupils with special educational needs, is having a positive effect on reading standards in Key Stage 1 and the overall level of attainment is now just below average. Pupils warm to books, know what they are for and delight in using them. They are developing all the early skills and phonic knowledge that gives access to reading, even though only the higher attaining pupils can read accurately and with understanding. When supported by their teachers and other adults they all thoroughly enjoy stories and information books and often make good or even very good progress in lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2, the above average pupils who have the general language skills and a good attitude, take advantage of the support offered to them, and read at an appropriately high level. They can read fluently, show understanding and make sensible comment on what they have read. The great majority are below average in their attainment, and do not show the habits that are needed to become confident, regular readers. Nevertheless, as a result of the consistent efforts of their teachers they are developing enjoyment of popular literature shared as a class and their reading achievements are appropriate. They do not read a great deal at home and make little use of local libraries. Pupils are learning basic reference skills from the non-fiction books in the classrooms but they are not well practised in the more advanced skills of locating sources in a library and finding and using ideas and information.

82. Writing is well below national expectations for almost all of the pupils in both key stages. A small number of pupils in their final year of Key Stage 1 are forming their letters correctly, writing in a consistent size, spelling common words correctly and structuring sentences well. This is an average standard appropriate for the age group. The great majority is still working towards all of those attainments. Much of the work done in literacy hours is completed well, due to the tight focus and the availability of support and guidance. Once the structure and support is not there, pupils find it difficult to use what they have experienced in their own writing. Nevertheless, pupils are achieving well according to their prior attainments in writing. The most able pupils in the final year of Key Stage 2 are also producing work in line with average national expectations. They are writing at reasonable length and presenting their work neatly. They have a satisfactory knowledge of sentence construction and punctuation and spelling is generally accurate. Again, the great majority is still working towards this in their free writing. All pupils are writing for many different reasons,

including for other subjects of the curriculum. They are learning to adjust style according to task and audience, although within a limited vocabulary. Standards of handwriting are improving with the introduction of a new scheme. It is having most effect with younger pupils who do not have strongly established habits. The use of ballpoint pens may be convenient, but these are not designed to offer resistance to the writer, which is important for controlled letter formation. Although spelling is weak throughout the school in free writing, there are signs that the structured work on word formation in literacy lessons, and in short spelling lessons, is leading to improvement. This is particularly noticeable in the work of pupils with special educational needs. The progress made by Key Stage 2 pupils overall is appropriate but the level of attainment in English is well below average.

83. Teaching is good or better in the great majority of lessons with a quarter being very good or excellent. Pupils' learning is satisfactory or better with almost half of those being good or very good. The best teaching in this subject is in Key Stage 1. This is a great improvement upon the last inspection when no very good or excellent teaching was seen. In most lessons the work is well planned and structured and teachers are clearly confident in what they are doing. Pupils are used to this and settle very quickly in anticipation of an interesting experience. Teachers are patient, sympathetic and encouraging, drawing in even the most reluctant contributors. At the same time, teachers are stimulating, as they use clever techniques to gain and retain interest - for instance, the use of a soft toy as a ventriloquist's dummy to enliven phonic work. Pupils respond to this with attention and enthusiasm. There are times when pupils cannot see the shared text properly and their attention drifts. Questioning is challenging, requiring pupils to think through and extend their first limited answers. This was seen at its best in a Year 2 lesson, when the text of a story already read with the pupils was covered over, and they were required to recall what happened using the illustrations as prompts. A lively pace is used as part of good behaviour management and pupils remain on task throughout lessons. Group work is well planned and usually includes a mixture of consolidation activities and more extending work for those who can work independently. There are times when guided reading is not being used to its best effect and teachers are hearing pupils read rather than exploring the nature of the text. Support staff are used well to assist those with learning difficulties and to help maintain the calm atmosphere. In a small number of lessons in Key Stage 2 the teaching is not stimulating and badly behaved boys are not well managed. Where this is the case, attainment of all pupils falls.

84. Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans. These are well used by teachers and support assistants to provide well-focused teaching, often in additional literacy support sessions, but also in normal lessons.

85. There has been a great improvement in planning and assessment since the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy is being used as a framework for planning, with extra lessons being linked increasingly into needs identified during that work. A marking policy has resulted in more frequent and consistent supportive marking of pupils' work and close track is being kept of strengths and weaknesses across the subject.

86. Management of English is good. The co-ordinator is well informed and is a member of the senior management team. She has recently completed a new policy that draws together all the different aspects of English teaching. She monitors planning and provides in-service training. Resources are adequate and there is a plan for their development. The loss of a school reference library to provide an information and communications technology suite was a sensible decision because the room was very large, arising from its previous use as a secondary school library. However, the lack of a reference library places a limit upon progress through the higher levels of reading attainment. It also sends a poor message to pupils about the place of books, and other means of organised reference, in their education.

MATHEMATICS

87. The school has made good progress in improving pupils' achievements in mathematics since the previous inspection. In the Key Stage 1 national tests in the year 2000 the proportion of pupils gaining Level 2 or above was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was also well below the national average. The trend of improving standards has broadly been steady over the past four years. In comparison with schools of a similar context in 2000 standards were well below average. However, despite the good strategies used in teaching in Key Stage 1, the high turnover of pupils in the school has made it very difficult for the school to make an impact on improving standards.

88. Using the teachers' assessments to provide more detail, the proportion of pupils gaining level 2 or above in using and applying mathematics, in number and algebra, and in shape, space and the measures were all well below average. The proportion of pupils gaining higher levels was very low in all these aspects, indicating again that there are few higher attaining pupils.

89. In the summer 2000 national test results for Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils gaining what is expected nationally or above was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining higher levels was also well below the national average. The trend has shown steady improvement over the past four years in line with the national trend. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, standards were not well below average in 2000 but just below average.

90. Lesson observations during the inspection show that pupils' levels of attainment broadly reflect the test results. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is well below average and is just below average at the end of Key Stage 2. This matches the school's expectation for both of these year groups and, despite the difficulties the school encounters, shows that the school is making good progress in improving standards. The higher attaining pupils are reaching standards that indicate above average performance will be achieved by the end of the key stages, although there are only a few pupils showing this promise. There are no significant variations in attainment between boys and girls, or among pupils of different backgrounds in either key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress against their targets.

91. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have below average standards across the mathematics curriculum by the end of the key stage. By the end of Year 2, most pupils count reliably to 50. The good mental numeracy sessions provided by the teachers help them recall a few addition facts to 10 and pupils are beginning to connect pairs of addition and subtraction as in $7+3 = 10$, and $10 - 3 = 7$. They calculate most simple sums correctly but are dependent on their fingers. The pupils have an early understanding of place value, for example that 35 is $30 + 5$. The teachers give them good practice in building the lower numbers in the 2, 3 and 5 tables, counting forwards and backwards in them. Pupils do not count back confidently in tens from 84 when they reach the lower numbers. Most know about numbers that are odd or even. The teachers give good attention to building mental skills, although pupils' recorded work is frequently untidy or incorrect. Pupils are beginning to apply number to simple everyday contexts in science, history and art so that their numeracy skills are developing but remain below average. Pupils are usually given worthwhile learning experiences, such as in using strips of paper with which to measure. They understand how to measure round their wrists and are reasonably accurate in practice. They have a basic understanding of capacity and are given practical tasks that allow them to apply and extend their skills. However, some

tasks provided by the teachers are not sufficiently structured to help them reason and understand the use of non-standard measures. They know several shapes, such as squares and hexagons, and recognise simple properties, such as having equal sides. A few pupils use mathematical language correctly through the good emphasis given by the teachers, but the acquisition of confident mathematical language is a problem for many pupils. A few pupils explain their methods clearly, although teachers give less emphasis to reasoning than the pupils need. Teachers plan from and use the numeracy materials well, and several use good interactive teaching to ensure understanding and secure progress.

92. Most pupils have below average attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. The teachers provide good tasks and opportunities for pupils to carry out mental addition and subtraction to 100. They help pupils to build simple strategies such as making up to the nearest ten, and around half the pupils are reasonably quick and accurate. By Year 6 pupils record additions with two- and three-digit numbers using standard layout, and are usually correct in the carry figures. They have a mostly secure understanding of place value, and the higher attaining pupils know the meaning of the position for hundred thousand for example. They are encouraged to speed up through the good activities provided by the teachers, for example in using speed cards with answers and the next question. Pupils are beginning to explain their methods, for example by doubling, and while pupils are keen to answer, many of them lack confidence. They are beginning to recognise when a larger number is a multiple of a smaller number but do not know their tables well enough to see the connection easily. A good choice of activity enables pupils in Year 5 to have an early understanding of how to recognise simple patterns, but many lack the skills to extend the sequence. Many pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of two-dimensional shapes, such as hexagons, and they make attractive symmetrical patterns. They understand how to carry out a survey and know how to represent their data in a block graph, sometimes using information and communication technology.

93. Pupils enjoy applying their skills to everyday problems such as how domino numbers and totals work, and they use their numeracy skills in several subjects such as science. Most children build well on previous learning through the careful progression that teachers provide. Most tasks are matched suitably to their needs, although some lack challenge. Pupils have developed a few problem-solving skills but are not methodical and are not fully aware of patterns in mathematics.

94. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are mostly good, with several pupils quickly becoming interested, although a significant minority lacks the independence to sustain concentration. Most children are keen to give answers even if they are incorrect and the teachers' good relationships encourages all children to take part. A few pupils in Key Stage 1 already work well independently and want to complete their work, so that they make appropriate progress. A few pupils require constant help which is usually provided effectively through the support staff. They make appropriate progress through the carefully targeted support. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support so that they maintain their interest and effort, and make good progress.

95. The quality of teaching for mathematics is good overall in both key stages, though a few aspects are unsatisfactory at times. Teachers' planning is usually good, is based carefully on the national numeracy strategy materials, and leads to good teaching in most lessons, for example, in consolidating mental methods of calculation. Teachers identify learning objectives carefully and share these with the pupils but they make insufficient notes on the teaching methods they will use. They provide direct explanations and demonstrations with materials that have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Many teachers have a skilled

questioning style that focuses on the main ideas and challenges pupils to explain and think carefully. They do not provide enough experiences for pupils to become aware of patterns in number and other areas of mathematics. All teachers have good relationships with the children, and listen carefully to their answers to make assessments of their understanding. Teachers' management of the children is good, establishing a good working atmosphere with high expectations for work and behaviour. They use effective behaviour strategies that are clear and understood so that pupils are usually kept on task well. The teachers use mathematical apparatus such as number fans to promote the mental number sessions but do not use structured materials sufficiently to confirm understanding in other tasks. Teachers observe pupils' work carefully and make on-going assessments of their mathematical development, making weekly evaluations that are used well for further planning and teaching. The school has a good system of record sheets to build up information about pupils' understanding and progress.

96. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the national numeracy strategy materials are used well. New mathematical ideas are not consolidated by using them in other areas of the curriculum as soon as possible. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and supports colleagues well, having been identified as a lead teacher for mathematics in the City. He monitors teachers' planning and has occasional planned time to monitor standards through observing lessons and sees samples of children's work. However, when good practice is observed in mathematics lessons, this is not shared so that the quality of teaching overall might improve. There is a good range of resources for mathematics that support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

97. Teachers' assessments of Key Stage 1 pupils' knowledge and understanding of science in 2000 show that standards were below average overall. The 2000 test results show that the proportion of pupils achieving national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 was below but very close to the national average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was below the national average. In comparison with similar schools the above test result was above the average. This result shows a very large increase in the percentage of pupils achieving national expectations. The proportion of Year 6 pupils in the summer term of 2000 who achieved national expectations in the annual national tests was three and a half times the proportion in the year prior to the previous inspection.

98. The present level of knowledge, skills and understanding of Key Stage 1 pupils in science meets national expectations. Pupils are encouraged to use their five senses to explore the environment and this helps them gain valuable experience and knowledge. As a result, most know the difference between man-made and natural objects. After examining and experimenting with a range of different materials they know that some objects can have their shape changed by squashing, bending or stretching. Pupils understand what constitutes a healthy diet and also know that light comes from a variety of sources such as candles, torches and lamps. They know the names of the major external parts of the human body and that babies grow into adults and the offspring of other species also mature.

99. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is meeting with the standard expected nationally. Pupils use keys to classify and identify animals and understand that different kinds of habitat suit different kinds of animals. They understand how plants reproduce themselves and also understand how to ensure that scientific tests are fair ones by only changing one variable at a time and comparing it with a control with no factor barred. For example, pupils carried out an investigation on the effect on a plant's growth of lack of water, light and warmth. Pupils' scientific vocabulary is developing but is still below average and this does not enhance their progress. They understand that day and night are caused by the

Earth spinning on its axis and that sound travels through different materials. Pupils' satisfactory knowledge and understanding of science are under-pinned by practical work and first-hand experience. For instance, during the inspection Year 6 pupils gained a good understanding of how to separate solids from liquids and Year 5 pupils learned, in a very direct way, that exercise speeds up the pulse rate because the body requires more oxygen and energy.

100. The overall quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. However, there was a very good lesson in Key Stage 1 and good lessons in Key Stage 2. In both key stages teachers place a strong emphasis on planning practical work for the pupils which assists their understanding of scientific ideas and enables pupils to make good progress. For example, Year 4 pupils made very good progress in consolidating their understanding of the conductivity of metals by working out for themselves how to construct a simple switch that completes and breaks an electrical circuit. Pupils were asked to make a switch using a number of given materials and in the process had to use their knowledge of conductivity and insulation to be successful. This had a good impact on their progress and developed their intellectual and creative efforts. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils effectively and have good relationships with their classes. This promotes hard work and enhances the pupils' concentration. Teachers make good links between science and other areas of the curriculum. For instance, in one very good Key Stage 1 lesson the teacher promoted pupils' speaking development by continually asking them to verbalise their thoughts. General vocabulary was built through very good open ended questions and groups of pupils had reading boards so that the verbs relevant to the activity could be read and selected. Teachers plan carefully and share the main aims of the lesson with the pupils. This provides a clear focus to the lesson and enables pupils to develop a sound knowledge of their own success in learning. Year 6 teachers use good strategies to enable pupils to revise their learning. For example, interactive displays are used very effectively to consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are invited to attach the correct scientific names to parts of an illustrated flower or to assemble the characteristics of living things so that the initial letters form another word. Such very effective practices enable pupils to remember scientific facts.

101. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved considerably. It has improved from satisfactory to very good overall. The work planned for pupils is now far more challenging and builds upon pupils' prior levels of attainment. Regular assessments of what pupils can do, know or understand now enables teachers to focus more on their needs in subsequent lessons. There is now a much more appropriate and frequent focus on investigative and experimental science so that pupils gain a deeper understanding of scientific principles. The improved quality of teaching results from regular monitoring of lessons, a provision that has been introduced since the last inspection. The better teaching has enabled standards throughout the school to rise from attainments that were well below national averages to levels close to them. All teachers are now confident in teaching science.

102. The present science co-ordinator has very recently been appointed. He monitors teachers' planning to check whether the science scheme of work is being covered fully. A very good innovation that is at present being introduced for Key Stage 2 pupils involves 'investigation boxes' which pupils take home for extra work outside of lesson times. They carry out investigations and scientific experiments using instructions and equipment found in the boxes and record their findings for the teacher to check. This is having a very good impact on pupils' progress and enthusiasm for science and more investigation boxes are planned for the near future.

ART AND DESIGN

103. It was not possible to observe the teaching of art and design during the inspection. Judgements have been made about the subject from close study of the work displayed around the school and that available in sketchbooks.

104. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 but below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents maintenance of standards in Key Stage 1 and a fall in standards in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection.

105. In Key Stage 1 classes there is evidence of pupils being offered the chances to explore a variety of media and to work on a variety of scales appropriate to the age group. In Year 1 work is executed in pencils, paints, pastels, chalks, torn and cut paper, found materials and using a computer programme. The pupils produce drawings, paintings, collages, prints and computer-generated images. In Year 2 the work available includes use of a similar range of media with the outcomes showing a growing maturity. In these classes, the computer-generated graphics link with studies of the work of Piet Mondrian and Jackson Pollock, and show personal responses to the very different styles of the artists.

106. In Key Stage 2 there is very little feeling that the pupils are working around a topic or building up skills. Sketchbooks have been used to record a small number of observations, ideas and experiments and to make notes. They are not strongly developed and show insufficient attention to detail. They do show that the work of artists is beginning to be considered. The pupils from Years 3 and 4 have completed very little artwork since last summer. Their first half-term block of this school year was not well used. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 are at the beginning of their units of study. There is no evidence of careful build up to the work they are doing. They are engaged in directed activities that require little decision making. The silhouette Greek urns in Year 5 are made to instructions, as are the traced and re-arranged print designs from William Morris prints. Neither of these activities is in the spirit of making personal responses to the work of celebrated artists. Where pupils mix paint they show poorly developed skills in making subtle tints and shades.

107. Art and design appears to have suffered from pressure on curriculum time, from greater priorities for curriculum development and from the blocking of art experiences into alternate half terms. These blocks of time mean that there can be as long as four months from one art experience to the next, and what is being planned is not giving pupils experiences of depth. This subject requires attention across the school but particularly in Key Stage 2 where pupils' progress is slower than would be expected for pupils of this age group. Careful thought needs to be given to how the time available can be used to ensure that what is done builds up to something worthwhile.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress including pupils with special educational needs. Levels of pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 are good and above those expected nationally for this age group. At Key Stage 2 the progress of pupils is good and their attainment is also above the level expected nationally. This is an improvement at the end of both key stages since the last inspection when attainments were judged to be satisfactory.

109. Key Stage 1 pupils learn successfully to move parts of a picture using levers, slides or flaps, selecting a method that is appropriate for their individual design. For example, one pupil used a flap to hide an elephant in a bush whilst another pupil used a lever mechanism to move the elephant's trunk. These are imaginative uses of devices to make elements of the design move. Pupils learn and understand very well the processes involved in making

'pop-up' books based upon a favourite story. By Year 2 many pupils are skilled in using scissors to cut out patterns on paper and material. They learn to fasten materials together by sticking, sewing or stapling. The more able pupils can thread a needle and sew skilfully and neatly using running stitches. At the end of the key stage pupils make good progress in the art of selecting materials to add features, for example, braid for hair and buttons or sequins for eyes. They acquire good evaluation skills and can reason if their puppet is strong enough to withstand tough handling.

110. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 investigate and can distinguish between icons, patterns and designs from a range of familiar products. They make good progress in drawing and cutting out a net, scoring and folding it to make a box.

111. Year 4 pupils make good progress in planning and designing their own torches having previously disassembled a manufactured model. They use good observational skills to translate what they see to their own design. Pupils can apply their understanding of the way a circuit and a battery work and they use this knowledge in the construction of the torch. They discuss the problems involved in attaching and securing the bulb to a cardboard tube collaborating and sharing their solutions. Pupils make good progress in the skills required to hold the bulb in place using tin foil and blue tack. Older pupils at the end of the key stage develop the skills necessary to complete a model using construction kits and to make the model move with the aid of a motor.

112. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers plan well matching the task to the abilities of the pupils. Teachers ask effective questions challenging the pupils to think carefully about their designs and evaluate the results. They use and encourage the pupils to use technical language, so that pupils develop a good working vocabulary. However, the presentation of pupils' plans and drawings is frequently untidy and the creative writing associated with them is under-developed. Handwriting skills are poor. Teachers make good links with other subjects such as science, mathematics, music, art and English, insisting that pupils speak in complete sentences when answering questions or describing their products. Pupils make good use of drama in Year 1 when they use their completed puppets as a vehicle to develop speaking and listening skills.

113. Since the last inspection good progress has been made in developing design and technology. The co-ordinator has worked well with staff to increase their knowledge and confidence. A comprehensive scheme of work is now in place covering the requirements of the national curriculum. Whole-school workshops take place, which raise the subject profile and increase the progressive skills of pupils. Each pupil is assessed and their progress is reported to parents. There is an annual report presented to the governors by the subject co-ordinator.

GEOGRAPHY

114. The last time the school was inspected, standards in geography were average at the end of both key stages. Although due to timetable considerations only two lessons were observed, those lessons plus an examination of pupils' work shows that this standard has been maintained and that pupils' progress is sound.

115. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are developing some sense of the wider world. They produce simple plans and are beginning to understand maps. They use and understand simple geographical terms and can describe routes, for example around the school or from home to school. They use secondary sources particularly photographs and pictures to widen their knowledge. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their geographical skills and knowledge. In Year 4 two classes are using photographs as a

secondary source of information to study village life in Kenya. In one class they were perceptive in identifying key differences which had a clear geographical association e.g. smaller windows due to the heat in Kenya. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have undertaken a study of rivers and have an understanding of source and tributaries. They are familiar with the countries that make up the United Kingdom and have good understanding of weather.

116. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was limited to two classes and ranging from unsatisfactory to good. In the best lesson pupils were required to identify from secondary sources important facts about a location contrasting with their own.

117. Challenging questioning and good teacher input allowed pupils to display some good in-sights into life in Kenya. In another lesson the tasks set were undemanding and pupils gained little geographically from the same exercise. Teachers geographical knowledge is sound and lessons are prepared thoroughly. Pupils' responses to the lessons seen varied as a result of the teaching. In the successful lesson pupils enjoyed the challenge and gained geographical understanding, they behaved well and clearly enjoyed the lesson. In the less successful lesson the undemanding nature of the task failed to capture pupils imagination and this had a negative impact on their attitude and behaviour.

118. The subject is led effectively by the co-ordinator. A good quality scheme of work and policy are in place and both are currently being revised.

HISTORY

119. At the time of the last inspection, attainment at the end of both key stages was average and this standard has been maintained.

120. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are becoming increasingly aware of how many of the every-day things they are familiar with have changed over time and they are beginning to gain some sense of chronology. A Year 1 class compared present day toys with those of the past and noted, not only changes in design, but also in materials. One pupil noted that two yo-yos were very similar in appearance but one, being made of plastic needed to be categorised as 'new' or 'modern'. In Year 2 pupils have gained considerable knowledge and understanding of historical events and facts. In a class studying the Fire of London pupils not only knew the date of the fire, but also where and how it started. They noted key features, such as the closeness and building materials of houses, and concluded a fire would spread very quickly.

121. This interest in history, knowledge and sense of chronology is carried forward into Key Stage 2 where pupils have good understanding of how the ancient Greeks and Egyptians lived. In one Year 3 class pupils know how the Egyptians wrote using hieroglyphics and concluded the scribes would have been key people in Egyptian society. In a Year 6 class pupils appropriately used primary and secondary information sources to compare school life today with that of Victorian children. They concluded that school days in Victorian times were longer but did not draw out features of life in Victorian schools, such as longer lunch breaks, longer lessons and corporal punishment. They related with accuracy and interest their visit to a museum containing a Victorian schoolroom. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils interpretative skills in history are satisfactory.

122. The quality of teaching in history is good overall and was very good in lessons seen in Year 3 and Year 6. This good and very good teaching motivates pupils, captures their interest and stimulates their enquiry skills. As a result they behave well and gain good insights into historical material. Teachers prepare their history lessons well. Source materials are of good quality, good use is made of visits and teachers subject knowledge is good allowing them to explain facts and events in an interesting manner and prompt pupils learning by good, open-ended questioning. The least able pupils were skilfully included and the few more able pupils were encouraged to explore the subject in more depth.

123. The subject is led effectively by the co-ordinator. The scheme of work and subject policy are of good quality and both are currently being carried in line with new a curriculum requirements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. As the school's computer suite was only set up from September, there has been insufficient time for older pupils to practise, consolidate their skills and benefit enough from the facility to bring their attainment up to the expected level. However, although the overall level of attainment by eleven is still below what is expected, there are now examples of work where pupils' skills and understanding are good at both key stages. In this respect, the school has made satisfactory improvements overall to standards since the last inspection, when they were judged to be below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The improvement to information and communication technology facilities is very good and gives the pupils access to the full curriculum requirements. The higher attaining pupils generally have good skills and understanding. The mostly good teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress through the school, helped by their good interest and support.

125. Within Key Stage 1 pupils have satisfactory skills to generate and communicate ideas using text and pictures. Thorough teaching enables the pupils to have the early keyboard and mouse skills to enter simple text and change the style in producing a story or account. By Year 2, pupils use the mouse with good control and with satisfactory skill. They know how to open up a program, enter commands and use features of programs by clicking on the mouse. They can also print a copy of their work. The good choice of task by the teachers gives the pupils good motivation to understand the simple commands to make clown pictures or a picture in the style of Mondrian, selecting colours from the palette to create their attractive designs. They produce attractive designs based on wrapping paper patterns, for example, with a few being accomplished very well. Pupils have a little experience in using subject-related programs that support language and mathematics work, for example, but this aspect is under-developed.

126. Within Key Stage 2 pupils change and edit text that is already stored. They know how to highlight text and copy and paste passages but are slow and hesitant when carrying out these operations. Many challenging tasks are encouraging pupils to learn to import pictures into their text to give interest and style, choosing carefully where to place it for the effect, but they have had insufficient experience to become confident in these processes. Most pupils understand how to save files and to print a copy. By the end of the key stage, good teaching enables a number of pupils to understand the structure of a spreadsheet and have the skills to produce a graph of the data they have entered. They do not yet know about simple calculations with the information, using a formula for example. Their mouse skills are mostly well-controlled and accurate. Pupils tend to be over-reliant on the mouse and make insufficient use of the keyboard to enter commands. Pupils have the skills to search for and retrieve information from a CD-Rom. Pupils using the control device

'Roamer' know the basic commands to make it move forward or turn and are beginning to build a sequence of moves to complete a shape such as a square. The pupils have satisfactory basic skills in the use of the keyboard and mouse that shows steadily increasing confidence to the end of the key stage. Whilst pupils have had experience of most of the elements of the National Curriculum programme of study in information and communication technology pupils are not sufficiently confident in using them. They lack confidence in data handling, graphics and in using art packages. They have had little experience in monitoring external events with information and communication technology equipment.

127. The teachers provide a good choice of tasks, giving interesting and challenging activities with good learning experiences. The higher attaining pupils frequently make good progress and apply their skills to tasks that give good purpose to the development and consolidation of skills. Most pupils in both key stages quickly become interested and are keen to use the computers. They are very motivated by the use of information and communications technology and usually sustain their concentration to produce their work. This is supported and promoted well by the teachers through the careful planning and interactions. Most pupils work together very well, taking turns to enter information and exchanging ideas, showing that their personal development is growing. Very few pupils find co-operation difficult and all pupils have equal access to the tasks. The pupils are becoming independent in tackling the tasks, but many, including those with special educational needs, remain reliant on the teachers. The children's attitudes and behaviour are good overall throughout the school.

128. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Most teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the subject and plan carefully for the computers to be used to good purpose. However, some teachers feel insecure about their own personal level of skills in information and communication technology and are in need of professional training to enable them to improve. Most teachers make a good choice of task that challenges and extends the pupils. There is a good focus on direct teaching for understanding and skill development. Teachers use their time well, giving direct instruction, but also ensuring that the pupils use the skills themselves. The teachers' class organisation and management is good in the information and communication technology suite, balancing good use of the information and communication technology facilities with class discussion. The use of information and communications technology as a natural facility to support class work is still under-developed and the school is aware of this. As yet, teachers do not plan opportunities for pupils to practise newly acquired skills in information technology in other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers make assessments of the pupils as they work, picking up points to reinforce and as an extra support to assessment each pupil in Years 3, 4 and 5 has their own floppy diskette on which all of their work is recorded.

129. The co-ordinator provides good support for colleagues. The school has a subject policy and has adopted national guidance to ensure progression. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, with appropriate breadth, balance and progression through the school. The subject is still at a development stage, although there has been good progress in providing well-chosen tasks promoting achievement well. The school has made very good investments in information and communication technology resources, with a clear continuing action plan.

MUSIC

130. The standard of music throughout the school is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress and learn to recognise the lengths of sounds and use their voices to represent time patterns. The use of cards showing caterpillars, spiders and ants help pupils to sound out the syllables and to clap the rhythms which the syllables represent, for example, semi-quavers, quavers and crotchets. They tackle this with enthusiasm and enjoyment and this has a good impact on their progress. The more musical pupils are able to clap extended rhythms and then to play it on untuned percussion instruments such as a tambourine and triangle. There is no opportunity for them to record their own music.

131. Key Stage 2 pupils learn about pulse, rhythm and beat from taped radio programmes and make satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills from one year to the next. Pupils in Year 5 learn the songs from 'Bugsy Malone' and understand musical terms such as stave, time signature, rest, rhythm and beat. They describe the feelings that songs can convey and can identify the changes of mood and rhythms in early film music. Pupils sing songs enthusiastically for most of the lesson but the quality of sound is poor. Pupils in Year 6 count the number of beats in a bar contained in the song 'Limbo Rock' accurately. They understand that music is written in bars with a regular number of beats in each bar and they recognise and can clap a number of simple rhythms. Pupils gain an understanding of the use of a metronome and can beat in time to the different speeds. The quality of singing is not as good as it should be as pupils do not have the basic knowledge of improving the quality of sound, for example, simple breathing techniques, opening the mouth wider and using the muscles of the mouth and face to raise the standard of singing. There is no opportunity provided for improvisation nor composition using information and communication technology.

132. The quality of music teaching overall is satisfactory and in one lesson observed in Key Stage 1 where the teacher has some musical knowledge and ability it is good. Teachers plan effectively, organise the resources well and question pupils to develop their listening, appraising and thinking skills. An assessment record sheet is available to record the progress made by pupils. The peripatetic specialist teachers who provide instrumental and choral tuition to pupils in both key stages enhance the music curriculum.

133. There is a satisfactory music policy in the school and a scheme of work has recently been introduced that provides a full framework to develop pupil's musical skills as they get older. Progress in music since the last report has been satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop the subject and to upgrade the resources, particularly percussion instruments, which are inadequately stored and in a poor condition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. During the inspection it was possible to observe games and dance lessons in Key Stage 1 and swimming, gymnastics and games in Key Stage 2. No athletics lessons were available for observation. However, from discussions with staff and an examination of documents it is clear that the physical education curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils make satisfactory progress and have sound attainments in games and dance at the end of Key Stage 1. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are very good.

135. Key Stage 1 pupils trap moving balls under their feet with reasonable competence and are developing sound skills at travelling with a moving ball close to their legs. Their hand-eye co-ordination has developed to the extent that they are able to hit a soft ball with a racquet when another child throws the ball. However, many Year 1 pupils were unable to throw a ball to a partner with accuracy. These pupils are developing sufficient co-ordination to respond to music by moving in different directions, speeds and levels and assuming a variety of shapes and facial expressions. Pupils know the importance of warming-up before energetic physical activities and wearing suitable clothing. At the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in swimming are very good. All pupils, with the exception of a very small number, can swim 25 metres unaided. They swim on their back and front and all are confident in the water. The higher attaining pupils swim with a very good style using breaststroke, front crawl and backstroke. Older Key Stage 2 pupils throw and catch a rugby ball successfully over short distances and pass the ball whilst running. They have good control of a hockey ball using a hockey stick to dribble it in front of them. During gymnastic lessons pupils perform good handstands, forward rolls, straddles and cartwheels. They also work very well in pairs or groups of three to build sequences of gymnastic movements that demonstrate good skills and synchronisation.

136. The quality of teaching is good overall, although there are examples of very good and satisfactory teaching. The specialist teaching in Key Stage 2 has enabled pupils' progress and levels of attainment to be very good. These teachers have high expectations of the pupils that result in a very good response that motivates a high level of striving to perform very well. Teachers provide challenges continually for pupils to improve their performance. For example, during a very good Year 6 gymnastic lesson the teacher improved pupils' straddle movements by placing a bean bag in the middle of the mat for pupils to rotate around. When pupils were accomplishing this with ease the bean bag was replaced by a large ball to make the task more difficult. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and this results in a good pace to the lessons and good behaviour. Teachers assess pupils' attainments during the lesson and take action to improve these. Following assessments, pupils are used effectively to demonstrate movements or techniques so that others can observe, at first hand, how these should be done properly. Teachers use praise and encouragement to good effect. This was demonstrated well during a swimming lesson when the teacher urged low attaining swimmers to do well by saying "Well done, keep going, I know you can do it." Conversely, in the less successful lessons, teachers do not praise and encourage pupils sufficiently to induce them to work harder and do their best. In addition, Key Stage 1 teachers do not always ensure that pupils are listening to instructions and this leads to confusion when pupils are asked to begin working.

137. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved overall. This has enabled pupils to build effectively on their skills so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they are attaining levels which are much better than pupils in most other primary schools. The school's facilities have improved and the school now has a purpose built gymnasium as well as a large hall where physical education lessons can take place in spacious surroundings with good quality equipment.

138. Improvements in the quality of teaching have largely resulted from professional training for the teaching staff. In-service training has been carried out in collaboration with the local education authority and courses include gymnastics, dance and games. The school is involved actively in competitive sports in the local area. It competes with other schools in leagues for netball and football and also participates in swimming, cross-country and athletics competitions. There is a wide range of school sporting clubs for pupils to take part in that includes hockey, netball, football, cricket, rounders and cross-country.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. Attainment is broadly satisfactory by the end of both key stages in relation to the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school in their knowledge of religions and their understanding of the ideas. Within Key Stage 1 teachers are helping pupils to understand the significance of special events, such as Christmas, and ceremonies. They relate their own family experience or those of people they know to consider how people act if they have a religious faith, such as Christianity. They know some of the stories about the nativity, and have an early understanding of why Christians celebrate Advent. Within Key Stage 2 pupils are making satisfactory progress in considering Judaism, and worthwhile tasks are beginning to help them use the correct terminology for features such as places of worship, books, naming ceremonies and clothing. The teachers' good subject knowledge is used to good effect in teaching the older pupils about stories from Hinduism, and aspects of Islam such as the five pillars, famous places such as Mecca and Medina and the history and place of Muhammad within this faith. At both key stages pupils are reflecting upon the concept of what it means to live a faith especially behaviour, worship and dress. Pupils are consolidating the skills of using language to convey meaning and feelings, giving respect to key prophets such as Moses and sacred texts such as the Torah, the Bible and the Qur'an.

140. Pupils take part well in their work in religious education. They are involved with their tasks and with help remember many details of their previous lessons. Most pupils want to contribute to discussion and give their ideas, and are learning to work at the task until it is completed. Many pupils find the task of writing out their work difficult and many do not have the speaking skills to express themselves clearly despite encouragement and good teaching. Nonetheless, the pupils at both key stages demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the ideas being discussed. The teachers help the pupils to keep their attention and to concentrate by their thoughtful questioning and clear exposition. Most pupils are happy to settle down to written work or some form of recorded work. They enjoy the discussions that help to bring out the deeper meaning of their lessons. Pupils enjoyed the opportunity to act out the vision of Muhammad which brought out the significance of the experience appropriately. By Year 6 pupils recognise that having a faith leads people to act in a certain way, and understand that Thomas Barnardo acted from his faith to set up a home for homeless children.

141. The quality of teaching is sound at both key stages with some very good teaching. Teachers' clear lesson plans and good subject knowledge show through in their discussions and focused questions that prompt pupils to think and discuss the ideas. The teachers bring out the significance of events well and give a strong emphasis to unusual terms being used so that pupils learn them well. They hold high expectations that pupils will develop their moral and spiritual understanding, and show more consideration for each other and for the variety of each others' beliefs. Teachers' planning is clear and their good choice of interesting tasks is directly linked to the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' work is marked regularly, based upon the objectives for the subject. Teachers use good methods to involve the pupils actively, and are careful to stress what people believe as well as the factual information about religions.

142. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and provides helpful support. Overall management of the subject is satisfactory, since it is not a current focus for development. The co-ordinator monitors coverage of work through the years informally, but does not yet look at samples of children's work to see standards through the school. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus carefully and ensures balance and full coverage within a slightly tight time allocation. There is a sound range of resources for the subject that is extended as funds allow, with a few artefacts that include examples for the major world faiths. During the inspection there was a good display of Muslim artefacts in one classroom.