

INSPECTION REPORT

THE DOVE FIRST SCHOOL

Rocester

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124121

Headteacher: Mrs. F Whitefield

Reporting inspector: Mrs. J E Platt
11565

Dates of inspection: 20th to 24th November 2000

Inspection number: 224740

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dove Lane Rocester Uttoxeter Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. K Flower
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. J E Platt 11565	Registered inspector	English Foundation stage Music Physical education Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr. A Dobson 9928	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs. C Waine 23081	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Religious education Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mr. P Martin 23262	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Dove First School is a smaller than average school in the village of Rocester. At present the school has 93 boys and girls on roll in the age range 4 to 9 years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (34 per cent) is above the national average. Currently, 31 pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and two pupils have formal statements of need and this is higher than normally seen. Just over one per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the school is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a happy and effective school. Staff value pupils' efforts and they are eager to learn. Teaching is good and as a result pupils make good progress as they move through the school. From a low level of attainment when they start school the vast majority achieve well and attain average standards in most subjects by the time they leave school. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by the governors and an able team of dedicated staff. They unite to provide a strong team committed to raising standards. Being a small school, funding per pupil is high by national comparisons; however the school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and motivates pupils to work hard and promotes their good achievement.
- Leadership is good and is effective in bringing about improvement. The headteacher is ably supported by all staff and the governing body.
- Standards in science are above average by the age of seven.
- Relationships are good. Pupils behave well and are enthusiastic to learn.
- Provision for children in the reception class is good and they settle happily into school.
- The school has very effective links with parents.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, particularly spelling and handwriting.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Planning for the teaching of geography skills and religious education.
- Management of subjects and the role of the co-ordinator for special educational needs.
- Attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996 and has made good progress in response to the key issues of that inspection. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has resolved concerns about the planning for mathematics and standards are now rising. The organisation of the curriculum has been changed and lessons are now linked effectively to what the pupils should learn. The accommodation has been extended to enable the hall to be used for physical education. Other improvements include the effective use of test results to set individual targets for pupils. This has raised standards in reading and mathematics. Effective monitoring of teaching has led to improvement in the quality of teaching and no teaching seen was less than satisfactory. Insufficient attention has been given to the development of ICT and consequently standards are still below average. However, the school has plans to improve this situation. A strong teaching team and effective systems are in place to move the school forward in the future.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	C	D	C	B	Well above average A above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Writing	C	D	D	D	
Mathematics	B	D	B	A	

In 2000, the pupils' results for seven-year olds show a mixed picture. They were below average in writing, average in reading and above average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools attainment was below average in writing, above average in reading and well above average in mathematics. With a small school results can fluctuate considerably but overall a positive picture of rising trends is evident and pupils are achieving well in reading and mathematics and more pupils are now exceeding the national average. The teachers' assessment in science showed standards were above the national average. The school has set challenging targets for next year and is well placed to achieve them.

Although there are no statutory tests at the end of Year 4 the school uses a range of tests that shows the vast majority of pupils achieve well enough and reach the level expected for their age in mathematics, science, speaking and listening and reading. Writing remains below average.

In response to recent improvements for children in the reception class they make good progress and achieve what is expected of them in all areas of learning recommended for this age group.

Currently the work seen in Year 2 shows that standards are average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Given the limitations of the pupils' skills on entry to the school this represents good achievement by the vast majority of pupils. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are not as high this year as there are more lower attaining pupils than last year. Standards in spelling and handwriting are below average as these skills are not taught thoroughly and pupils could achieve more. Pupils achieve a great deal in science and standards at the end of Year 2 are good. Pupils achieve well in Year 4 and reach satisfactory standards in mathematics, reading and science. Standards in writing remain below average. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress related to their previous learning but they underachieve in some lessons when adult support is ineffective or is not available. A number of boys are underachieving in reading and writing and the school has bought new resources to address this problem but as yet this has not raised their standards. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in ICT as they are not taught the required skills and standards are below those expected for their age. Pupils meet the required standards of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education although in Years 3 and 4 knowledge of other faiths is limited. Pupils' geography skills in Years 3 and 4 are underdeveloped. In all other subjects pupils achieve well enough and the standard of work was wholly satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and eager to take part in all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school does much to develop pupils' self-esteem.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are good and pupils work together sensibly in group activities during lessons.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and is below the national average. The school lacks systems to promote attendance.

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 is good. In 23 % of lessons seen teaching was very good, in 42% good and in 35% satisfactory. Teaching is consistently good in the reception class and the rate of learning is good as children settle happily and take advantage of all the experiences on offer. In Years 3 and 4 teaching was very good in half of the lessons seen and pupils make good and often very good progress in their last years in the school. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall. Pupils learn to read quickly and teachers have developed well pupils' enthusiasm for reading. In mental arithmetic teachers are good at drawing out from pupils different ways to solve problems. Basic numeracy and literacy skills are taught effectively and the new approach to teaching letters and sounds is already showing an improvement in pupils' confidence to write unaided. However, more attention is needed to the teaching of spelling and handwriting.

Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and teachers plan different tasks to match their previous learning. This is usually successful and pupils achieve well. Teaching is less effective when adult support is not available when most needed or when available is sometimes ineffective in helping pupils to tackle their work.

There were a number of particular strengths in the teaching and learning seen. In reception the good relationships and meticulous organisation creates a buzz of activity in lessons and children are eager to learn. Throughout the school the management of pupils is good so that they learn in an orderly atmosphere. Teachers use a variety of interesting methods that make learning fun. As a result, pupils try hard, work well with each other and achieve much new learning. Teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory, as teachers do not give sufficient attention to teaching the required skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for pupils in the reception class with a broad range of activities. Satisfactory for Years 1 to 4 with a suitable focus on numeracy and literacy. Insufficient attention is given to ICT and in Years 3 and 4 teaching about other faiths and geography skills. A good range of after-school activities enriches the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Teachers plan effectively for the needs of these pupils but adult support is not always available to provide effective advice.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good. Provision for moral and social development is good and leads to good relationships and a caring ethos in the school. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils do not learn enough about other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety, including child protection are good. Pupils' progress is tracked through effective assessment procedures. Systems to monitor and improve attendance are not in place.

The school has a very good partnership with its parents. They are welcomed into the school and the Parents Forum allows them to make suggestions so that they feel fully involved in all aspects of school life. Information about pupils' progress is very good with some examples of excellent reports to parents, which explain very clearly how parents can help their children

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and is committed to raising standards in the school. Subject co-ordinators and the co-ordinator for special educational needs have limited opportunity to find out about what is happening in other classes and this limits the extent to which they can develop the provision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They are fully involved in planning future development and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good methods to evaluate how well the school is doing are now in place and have led to changes and improved standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes suitable use of resources and money is spent to support priorities in the school development plan. Financial control is sound and the school checks it is getting best value when making major purchases. Accommodation is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. The hall is small for physical education. Staffing is good. Resources are used well although the use of support staff and ICT resources is not fully productive.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school and are making good progress Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best The school is well led and managed The school helps children to become mature and responsible The school is approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues raised

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children enter the reception class standards are below those expected for their age. In response to good teaching children make good progress and by the time they start in Year 1 the vast majority achieve well and reach the required standard in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical, physical and creative development.
2. In 2000, the pupils' results in national tests for seven-year olds were above average in mathematics, average in reading and below average in writing. When compared to similar schools standards in mathematics were well above average, reading was above average and writing was below average. Trends over time at the end of Year 2 are difficult to analyse because of the fluctuations caused by the fairly small groups of pupils involved. However, results show in these subjects more pupils are exceeding the national average and standards are gradually improving. However, writing remains below reading and mathematics and the school has identified this as a priority for improvement. Data shows boys are underachieving in reading and writing. The school has purchased new resources to tackle this problem but as yet there has not been any marked improvement in standards.
3. The work of the present Year 2 shows standards in reading and mathematics are average and writing is below average. Standards in mathematics are not as high as the previous year as the class has a larger than usual number of low achieving pupils. Spelling and handwriting are the weaker aspects. Considering these pupils started school with limited attainment their current standards show good achievement and reflect effective teaching.
4. Although there are no statutory tests at the end of Year 4 the school uses a range of tests to track the progress of pupils. Data shows good progress is being made and the vast majority of pupils leave school with standards that are typical for this age range except in writing, which remains a weakness. These standards were confirmed by the inspection and pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve well enough.
5. The targets set in English and mathematics are based on an analysis of test results. Last year these were exceeded by a considerable margin and the school has added an extra 'top up' score for the current Year 2. These are realistic considering the good progress these pupils are making and bearing in mind the good teaching in Year 2 the school is well placed to achieve them.
6. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and individual plans drawn up with appropriate targets. A difficulty arises in lessons when adult support is not always available or is not as effective as it could be and although the pupils' progress is satisfactory they could achieve more. The school does not identify any gifted or talented pupils although pupils starting school with high skills in writing have been given appropriately challenging tasks to enable them to achieve at a higher level. Pupils with English as an additional language are confident speaking English and this does not pose a problem to their learning.
7. In work seen in English during the inspection, pupils' standards are average in reading and speaking and listening and below average in writing. Teachers have successfully implemented the literacy hour and standards in literacy are satisfactory overall with reading being the strongest element. Pupils develop in confidence to use these skills in other subjects. For example, in science they label diagrams and in history they write about visits they have made to places of historical interest. Reading has improved in response to a wider range of texts and in Year 4 pupils have definite opinions about their favourite authors. Numeracy skills have improved and are satisfactory with a notable improvement in mental calculation. Pupils enjoy working out answers mentally and are developing the skills of explaining their methods. They are quick to apply these skills to other lessons, such as calculating and recording the results of investigations in science.

By the end of Year 2, the vast majority of pupils add and subtract numbers to 100 and higher attainers to 1000. These skills are extended in Year 4 so pupils use their skills to extract information from data and to solve problems.

8. Standards in science are above average at the end of Year 2 and this reflects the teacher assessments made in 2000. Good attention is given to investigation and by the end of Year 2 pupils understand the idea of fair testing when finding which washing powder gives the best results. These skills are further developed in Years 3 and 4 and pupils set up their own investigation and predict results accurately. The vast majority achieve the expected level for their age when they leave school.

9. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average as insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' skills and pupils could achieve more. In religious education pupils attain the level recommended in the Locally Agreed Syllabus although by the end of Year 4 pupils have limited knowledge of other faiths. Geography standards fall below what is expected for pupils at the end of Year 4 as the curriculum does not give sufficient attention to developing pupils' geographical skills. In all other subjects standards are satisfactory.

10. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been improving since the previous inspection and pupils are making good progress. In ICT, design and technology and geography at the end of Year 4 standards have fallen below those previously identified. The previous inspection identified high standards in design and technology but the school has not fully adjusted to changes in the curriculum and standards are now similar to that expected for their age. In all other subjects standards have been maintained and this reflects pupils are making at least satisfactory progress from when they entered school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The pupils' attitude to school is good. This judgement represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Parents report overwhelmingly that their children like going to school and this is apparent by the good punctuality and the look on their faces when they enter school. They clearly agree with the school's philosophy when it states 'We have fun at Dove First School'. Once there pupils generally settle down quickly and are enthusiastic to learn.

12. In lessons, most pupils are attentive, keen to participate and work hard when given a task to do. In some lessons the teachers tolerate a relatively high level of background noise although this is usually as a result of pupils discussing problems amongst themselves or with the teaching staff. Homework is taken seriously and pupils accept responsibility to ensure it is completed on time.

13. Behaviour is good. This judgement confirms the parents' opinion. High standards are expected and generally achieved although a few pupils find it difficult to be well behaved for the whole day. The teachers know how to cope with any incidents and disruption to lessons is minimal. Pupils understand the rules and think they are fair. Movement around the school is orderly. Lunchtime is a civilised social occasion, noise levels are not so high as to inhibit conversation and table manners are good. Behaviour in the playground is good and the atmosphere is very friendly and there are no signs of oppressive behaviour. The pupils do not consider bullying a problem. However, if an incident occurs they express confidence in the staff's ability to sort it out. There has been one temporary exclusion in recent times.

14. Pupils are polite and friendly. They get on well with each other and with adults in the school. The pupils have a particularly good relationship with the headteacher whom they look upon as their friend. Most pupils know how to share and take turns. Pupils work well together in groups. They are happy to listen to each other's views and show respect for their feelings. However, pupils have a very limited appreciation of the range of beliefs that make up the wider society.

15. Pupils mature very well during their time at the school. After-school clubs are very well attended. Pupils are very good at showing initiative, for instance when coming up with ideas and organising events to raise money during Lent for the NSPCC. They are enthusiastic about helping in the running of the school.

and make good use of the many opportunities provided, ranging from monitor duties in reception to lunch time duties in Year 4. Pupils respond very well to the school's policy of allowing them to invite a visitor to lunch once a year. Pupils handle equipment carefully and treat books with respect. Tidying away resources is taught effectively in the reception class and carried on as pupils get older. They are very proud of their work on display and eager to talk about it.

16. Pupils' enthusiasm for school, their good behaviour and the friendly atmosphere all make a positive contribution to their learning.

17. Attendance is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection. The current rate (94 per cent) is below the national average for similar schools and this is unsatisfactory. Holidays account for a significant number of absences. In the most recent reporting year almost a quarter of all pupils missed lessons by being taken on holiday during term time. This is inevitably affecting their learning. Unauthorised absences are negligible. Registers are correctly kept. Registration is efficient and sets a positive start to the session.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Since the previous inspection, teaching has improved and in lessons seen all of the teaching was satisfactory and better. In 23 per cent of lessons seen the teaching was very good, in 42 per cent it was good and in the rest teaching was satisfactory.

19. Teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. Numeracy skills are taught well and the lively mental arithmetic sessions are successfully improving pupils' skills in mental calculation. Teachers are good at getting pupils to explain the different ways they use to solve problems so that they all learn from each other. The new approach to teaching letters and sounds is having an impact on the youngest children's early reading and writing skills. Teachers have effectively implemented the literacy hour and are more confident teaching reading and standards have improved. Discussions are included in lessons and effectively develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. The weakness in using too many duplicated sheets has been resolved and pupils now write in a range of styles but teaching of spelling and handwriting remains a weakness. The school lacks consistent approaches to teaching these skills. Science is taught well and the focus on investigation has led to pupils being eager to experiment and test out their ideas. Teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory as teachers do not give sufficient attention to teaching ICT skills or provide opportunities for pupils to extend their skills and during the inspection computers were underused. Teaching of geography and religious education are affected by the school's overall planning of the curriculum that leads to insufficient focus on teaching geographical skills or other faiths.

20. In the reception class, the overall quality of teaching is good and often very good. The teacher provides a rich curriculum that effectively promotes learning. Assessment is used well to match tasks to children's previous learning and this effectively extends their learning. All staff are aware of the needs of this age range. They are quick to spot opportunities to extend the children's independent and social skills and the children are learning to accept responsibility for the resources in the classroom and for their own learning. The new approach to teaching sounds and letters makes learning fun and even the youngest children already know some letters and their sounds. Organisation is meticulous and a buzz of purposeful activity is present in most lessons.

21. Teaching in the rest of the school is good overall and in lessons seen was best in the mixed Year 3 /4 class when a half of the teaching seen was very good. The high quality teaching was apparent by the teachers' high expectations that challenge pupils so that they are prepared to work hard. Analysis of results indicates many pupils make very good progress in their final year in the school. Throughout the school, teachers have good subject knowledge (although less so in ICT) and pupils receive appropriate advice as they work so that they extend their knowledge. Another strength in teaching is the range of interesting activities presented that keep pupils on their toes and eager to learn more. This is evident in history when visits and the use of artefacts allow pupils to act as historians as they learn about the past. Puppets were used effectively in a mixed Year 1 /2 English lesson to capture pupils' interest. The teacher made deliberate mistakes which the pupils quickly spotted and corrected and this led to them learning more

from their own observations. In the best lessons, teachers have clear learning outcomes and share these with pupils so that they are clear about the focus of the learning. Class management skills are good and encourage self-discipline. Only occasionally when pupils are involved in practical activities does the noise level get too high. Relationships are good and pupils try hard to please teachers both with their behaviour and their work. The use of assessment has improved since the previous inspection and in the vast majority of lessons tasks matched previous learning. This was less effective in the mixed Year 1 /2 class where teachers are sharing the teaching. They are less secure about the ability of the pupils and tasks set were too hard for the lower attaining pupils and this hampered their learning. For the age of the pupils, the amount of work they have to do at home is satisfactory and supports their learning.

22. Although teaching is good overall there are aspects in lessons when teaching is less effective. Planning includes sufficient detail and identifies which groups are to be supported by adults. However, in practice this is not always effective. It is not always made clear what pupils are to learn in the group sessions and this leads to some support staff giving too much attention to completing the tasks rather than asking questions to extend pupils' learning. When a weakness is identified alternative resources are not provided so that pupils struggle to complete their work. This was evident in a numeracy lesson in Year 1/2 when pupils had difficulty solving problems and needed practical help with counting. It was only when the teacher intervened with number lines that pupils began to have success with their task. This is a particular problem for teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching for these pupils is satisfactory overall with teachers planning tasks to match targets identified in individual education plans although this is not always working in lessons. Activities in withdrawal sessions are linked to pupils' targets but pupils are unhappy missing other lessons and this affects their enthusiasm for learning in these sessions. The teaching of the additional literacy strategy is effective in helping pupils having difficulties with reading and writing. Although marking is satisfactory overall and targets for writing are included there are examples of missed opportunities to raise standards. For example, in spelling teachers often write the correct spelling over an error but this is not followed up to check pupils have learned from their errors. Similarly with handwriting there is inconsistency between teachers about presentation and expectations of some work could be higher.

23. The overall good quality of teaching has a significant impact on the good progress the vast majority of pupils make as they move through the school.

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

24. The quality of learning opportunities offered by the school is satisfactory overall with an appropriate focus on English and mathematics. The curriculum for the under-fives is good with a significant emphasis on personal and social development. This leads to children acquiring the essential skills of independence and they have good attitudes to learning. As a result, these children are achieving the suggested early learning goals for their age. The school meets all the requirements for the curriculum including religious education.

25. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 are offered a range of experiences in most subjects that are relevant to their age. They are planned through a series of topics that satisfactorily include most subjects other than literacy and numeracy that are taught separately. The two-yearly planning cycle helps to check that pupils build on what they have already learned and this avoids undue repetition. However, this approach leads to insufficient attention being given to the teaching of specific skills in some subjects. This is notably a weakness in geography in Years 3 and 4 where standards fall below those expected for this age group. Similarly, the provision for ICT is not fully developed and teachers do not plan to use ICT across the curriculum. This is one reason for pupils failing to reach the expected level for their age. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education but the school's guidelines fail to provide sufficient information for teachers. Currently the teaching of other faiths receives insufficient attention. The topics are currently being reviewed in the light of the demands of the new National Curriculum and the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The previous inspection identified a

weakness in planning for mathematics and this has been resolved with the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Literacy Hours take place each day in all classes and teachers plan activities that enable pupils to practise their reading and writing skills in other lessons.

26. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and teachers' planning usually meets the needs of all pupils. However, the timing and quality of support for those pupils with statements of special educational need reduces their ability to access some of the work in lessons and this hampers their progress and they could achieve more.

27. Many visits to places of interest enrich the curriculum. These visits, for example to Styal Mill, are a valuable addition to pupils' experiences and enhance their quality of learning. There is also a good range of sporting and non-sporting extra-curricular activities, which are well attended. The games club is extremely popular and approximately 40 pupils attend. Teachers and parents provide opportunities for pupils to play different team games. This provision makes a useful contribution to the physical and social development of those pupils who take part.

28. Provision for personal, social and health education is sound. Much of this provision is linked to the topics taught throughout the school. For example, the topic on caring for ourselves is enhanced by lessons from the school nurse about the amount of sugar in everyday foods and on hygiene issues. Lessons also include dangers of substance abuse and smoking. The school includes lessons about human growth and the development of a baby in the womb, in accordance with its sex education policy. The annual residential visit to Kingswood near Telford makes an important contribution to pupils' social development.

29. The headteacher and staff make sure that links with the community and with other schools are good. There are regular meetings with the staff of the local Middle School, and there are close and effective links with the local playgroup. Year 4 pupils visit the local Middle School and this ensures a smooth transition to the next stage of education. The school takes part in community events such as village performances. Pupils are taken to the Britannia Football Stadium to watch important matches and the school hopes to develop a coaching link with Stoke Football Club.

30. The curriculum is enriched by overall good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this effectively promotes a caring and supportive learning environment.

31. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There is a daily act of collective worship, which provides satisfactory opportunities for prayer and reflection but this is not always as successful as it might be. For example, pupils entered to the music of Bach but were not encouraged to empathise or reflect on what the music meant to them or how it made them feel. Class prayers are said, before lunch and at the end of the day but these are not written by pupils or directed to what has happened during the day. Work in religious education encourages pupils to think about their own feelings and about how others might feel. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils considered how Joseph's brothers felt when he was given the coat. They decided that it was not fair for one brother to have special gifts which others did not have and said that they would feel jealous too. In some lessons, time is given for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and share their successes with others. This enhances their self-esteem. Sometimes pupils are encouraged to think about their world and consider the wonders of nature and how we might best preserve them, as when studying rainforests, but there are many missed opportunities to do so.

32. Provision for moral development is good. Teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and pupils know that good behaviour is expected. Pupils distinguish right from wrong and the school functions as an orderly community. Team points can be earned for good behaviour and attitudes. Moral issues are raised in class discussions in lessons called Circle Time and these successfully promote pupils' wider understanding of the impact of the way they behave. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils discussed the damage man is doing to the way of life of people in the rainforests.

33. Provision for social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to show consideration for others in a variety of ways, including taking responsibility and supporting charities. The school provides a good variety of opportunities for its pupils to accept responsibility and take initiative. For example, Year 4 pupils help with setting up equipment for assembly and organising the music. Pupils select which charities they would

like to support and how they will raise the money. Pupils take part in assemblies and concerts, which they perform for their parents and the local community. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work together in extra-curricular activities. Year 4 pupils attend a residential weekend, which makes a significant contribution to their social and personal development

34. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn much about western culture through lessons in several subjects. For example, they study the work of many authors in English and of European and American artists, such as Mondrian and Georgia O'Keefe. They learn a great deal about local traditions and culture through their studies in history and religious education and country dancing. Whilst they also study cultures of other countries, such as Aboriginal art and African music, pupils' knowledge and understanding of multicultural aspects of life in modern Britain is limited. They are unaware of the diversity of cultures and have insufficient knowledge of the beliefs and customs of other faiths and ethnic groups.

35. The visits to places of interest and the visitors to school enhance pupils' social and cultural development and play a vital role in their personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The level of care taken over the pupils' welfare is good. This is a friendly community where pupils are valued as individuals. The headteacher knows all the pupils by name and all are looked after very well at all times in a safe and secure environment.

37. Health and safety is taken seriously and accidents are correctly recorded, equipment is checked and the premises are inspected on a regular basis. The procedures for recording and following up any problems or defects are simple and effective. Keeping attendance registers centrally would simplify procedures in an emergency.

38. Child protection procedures are effective. All staff have received training in the subject and are familiar with the school's procedures.

39. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. With an attendance rate below the national average and a high incidence of pupils having holidays in term time, the subject of attendance does not have a high enough profile within the school. The formal monitoring of registers is too infrequent. Parents are not made fully aware of the educational implications of taking holidays in term time and the school has no clear targets for improving attendance. The school's plan to introduce termly certificates for good attendance is a useful first step.

40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are effective. The credits and debits system is well understood by the pupils, is applied consistently by the staff and has the support of the parents. Pupils consider the system fair and are very keen to amass credits. Good records are kept of all serious cases of inappropriate behaviour.

41. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating bullying are very good. Very detailed records are kept of all incidents. When necessary the subject is dealt with in assemblies and discussion groups within classes. Pupils are left in no doubt of the seriousness with which the school treats the subject. The school has similar procedures to cover racism and there have been no incidents for many years.

42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are satisfactory. Being a small school the teachers know the pupils very well. Record keeping is largely informal but the maintenance of a pupil personality profile provides useful information for parents.

43. The school has a good range of procedures to assess pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. Good use is made of the information to identify pupils who need extra support and to set targets for each pupil. These targets are shared with parents so that they can help their children to make good

progress. Good records of these assessments are kept and these help teachers to check pupils' progress. Test results are analysed to identify areas for curriculum development. For example, following disappointing assessment results for the children aged five years old, the school re-organised its provision in the reception class. This is now good and is promoting good progress for the children. Results of national tests, at age seven, are thoroughly analysed and weaknesses identified. Effective action plans to improve teaching and learning in writing and mathematics have improved provision and progress. Pupils are now more confident in writing independently and the school has plans to give more attention to the teaching of spelling and handwriting.

44. The way in which attainment in other subjects is assessed is satisfactory. Pupils are tested at the end of each topic and this information is used effectively when planning future topics. However, the assessment systems do not always clearly identify the pupils' progress in learning or their increase in knowledge and skills in each subject. For example, in ICT a simple tick list is maintained to show which pupils have had experience of different aspects of the subject but this does not show how well their knowledge and skills are developing or the standards reached.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The partnership between parents and the school is very effective. This partnership is based on the one side, by the high regard parents have for the school, and on the other side, by the way the school sees the parents as an integral part of the school community.

46. Parents are very supportive of the school. Parents' comments at the meeting that was held before the inspection and in the parents' questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive. No areas of concern were raised by a significant number of parents. Parents particularly liked aspects of the school's ethos, the expectation that their children will work hard and the help provided for them to mature and become responsible individuals. They consider the school is well led, they think the teaching is good and they find the staff very approachable. Almost all parents (98 per cent) report their children like going to school. The inspectors are very happy to endorse the parents' positive views.

47. The school is very good at involving parents in the work of the school. This starts with an induction meeting where parents with children about to start in reception are invited to meet the governors and all the staff including lunchtime supervisors and the caretaker. A Parents' Forum exists to discuss developments within the school. Its meetings are very well attended, and the design of the pupil's annual report is a very successful product of this liaison. All parents have signed the home/school agreement, although there is little clear evidence of its value to the partnership. The school makes good use of helpers in the classroom. A Family Learning Initiative is about to start that aims to provide parents with guidance on how to help their children with their learning.

48. The quality of the information provided for parents, particularly regarding their child's progress is very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Parents see teachers at formal meetings held twice a year and the one informal meeting. There is a very good follow-up system for parents who are unable to make the formal meetings ensuring that they get to know the points that would have been raised. Parents are kept very well informed of their child's current targets in numeracy and literacy and these are stated in their home/school book. The pupils' annual reports are very informative. The clarity of the information is impressive. Whilst the reports are positive overall, punches are not pulled regarding weaknesses for instance, 'he is quite lazy when it comes to writing'. Progress is very clearly stated, often showing the increase in National Curriculum levels achieved during the year. The easy-to-understand 'personality profile' makes it possible for parents to monitor very effectively their child's personal development. The highlight of these reports is the section that gives parents advice on how they can help their child. This advice is clear, realistic and appropriate. In some reports in Years 3 and 4 the advice is excellent, being targeted specifically on keeping pupils learning during the summer holidays. For instance, 'Keep his maths going with loads of practical things during the holidays: work out bills, set video, send him shopping, work out distances travelled, look at bus timetables etc'.

49. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning. Pupils take work home on a regular basis and parents are very efficient completing the reading diaries. This is very valuable in extending pupils' learning at home. Parents of children with special educational needs attend review meetings so that they are aware of the help the school is providing and how they can provide more support at home. The 'Friends of the Dove' is an active parents and friends group that raises considerable funds to supplement resources in the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The leadership and management of the school are good. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and she quickly identified areas for development and drew up action plans to tackle identified areas of weakness. This has been notably effective in the re-organisation of provision for the youngest children and has led them to achieve well in the reception class. The headteacher, with the support of all staff and the governing body, give a clear direction to the development and improvement in the school. They are fully committed to raising standards and to creating a positive ethos in which the care and welfare of the pupils is paramount.

51. As at the time of the previous inspection the headteacher has a very full management role as well as being committed to maintaining a high teaching commitment. Staff changes and long-term absences have added to this difficulty and the headteacher has managed this time of instability very effectively. Now the staffing situation has stabilised further delegation of management responsibilities are planned to ease this situation. Currently, the headteacher is carrying out the responsibility of co-ordinator for special educational needs and this leads to overall management of this provision not being sufficiently rigorous. The allocation of support staff to help in lessons is not planned carefully and this leads to the current requirements of pupils with formal statements of need not always being fully met. For example, adult support is often not available for the group activities in the numeracy and literacy hours. Similarly the support these pupils receive is not monitored closely to check that the help provided is enabling pupils to make good progress. Other members of staff with management responsibilities have been effective in improving planning since the previous inspection. This has led to improvements in standards notably in mathematics. However, due to staff changes and absences the co-ordination of other subjects has not been as effective as there has been insufficient checking on provision in the classroom. This has led to weaknesses in planning. This is most apparent in ICT, religious education and in geography where aspects of the curriculum receive insufficient attention and this hampers pupils' achievement in these subjects.

52. Procedures to monitor the school's performance are fully in place and the headteacher collects and collates assessment data to help set targets and monitor standards in English and mathematics. This has proved useful to target pupils needing additional support to enable them to achieve the required standard. The school identified boys' underachievement in reading and writing and has obtained new resources to tackle this problem. Similarly, the school has identified writing as a weakness and has drawn up an action plan that includes reviews based on current data. As well as whole school targets, pupils are given individual targets and this information is shared with parents so that they can help their children at home. These procedures are leading to improved standards in reading and mathematics particularly in the proportion of pupils now exceeding the national average at the end of Year 2.

53. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively and all statutory requirements are met. It is very supportive of the school with many being regular visitors to help in practical ways such as hearing pupils read. The governors have opted to manage without a sub-committee structure for most aspects and due to the small size of the school this works well. They have a good knowledge of the strengths of the school and areas in need of further development. Interim meetings are held regularly and governors are kept aware of the impact of their decisions through detailed reports from the headteacher. Although the governors have attended training to set targets for the headteacher this is currently not in place. Appraisal for other staff is good and is carried out effectively by the headteacher and has led to effective training for teachers. Induction procedures for new staff lack any formal procedures but in practice new members of staff identify good support. Monitoring of teaching has been mainly in numeracy, literacy and science and has been carried out by the headteacher and governors. This has proved successful in identifying teachers' strengths as well as areas for development and has led to improvement in teacher competence and consequently in raising pupils' attainment. Other teaching is rarely monitored to help teachers delivering the content of all subjects in the National Curriculum.

54. The school development plan is well thought out and covers strategic planning for the next four years. It is a collaborative document and has been drawn up by staff and governors following discussion about

the impact suggested initiatives would have on standards. These issues are prioritised and are predominantly aimed at raising standards in numeracy and literacy and improving provision for the early years and ICT. Other aspects of development are also included and this leads to a lengthy document. However, as a small school all staff meet to check on progress to the identified priorities and this works well in identifying aspects that are not receiving sufficient attention.

55. Financial planning is good and is linked closely to the educational priorities set out in the school development plan. The governing body monitors the budget and is aware that the school currently has a large underspend. In a small school the number of pupils has led to a fluctuating budget with the school having financial difficulties in previous years. This has led governors to be slightly over-cautious about spending and some identified resources could have already been purchased. For example, the new equipment needed for physical education. The current excess is also earmarked for painting the school, new resources for ICT, library and a contingency fund. Governors seek to find the best value for money in their major spending decisions, such as in the decision to use the local authority for new ICT resources so that training and back-up support is available. The school has spent well providing additional classroom support and this has been beneficial in enabling pupils to receive help in small groups in the literacy and numeracy hours and this is having the desired effect of raising standards in numeracy and reading. However, the use of staff to support pupils with special educational needs is not always used effectively. The school makes satisfactory use of learning resources although computers are underused to support learning across the curriculum.

56. The school administration is very effective in supporting the work of the school. It provides a welcoming contact for visitors and contributes to the smooth running of the school. The most recent audit included a number of recommendations that have been addressed.

57. Effective management has led to a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of pupils. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when this match was judged to be sound. Teachers have kept up-to-date with developments in literacy and numeracy and all classroom assistants have taken part in relevant training. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and has improved since the previous inspection. The reception class has been extended and the hall is no longer in use as a classroom. However, its size and use for storage makes it somewhat cluttered and reduces its value as a resource for physical education. There is a new library although this is unfortunately at the opposite end of the school to the classrooms, reducing its usefulness for independent learning. The school and grounds are kept clean, well maintained and tidy. The playground is small and the grassed area is not usable in wet weather. This reduces pupils' opportunities for outdoor physical education. The quality and amount of learning resources are satisfactory overall although there are some weaknesses. The apparatus for physical education is too large and heavy for pupils at the school. There are not enough artefacts for teaching about other faiths in religious education. There has been an improvement in the quality of resources in ICT since the previous inspection and each classroom has two computers, linked to the Internet. However, these are not yet used widely enough to have a positive impact on standards and the school has insufficient computer programs to support learning in other subjects. The new library is not yet fully stocked but there are firm plans to buy new books.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. To further improve the work of the school the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) Raise standards in reading and writing by:
 - giving closer attention to the teaching of spelling;
 - implementing a more structured approach to teaching handwriting;
 - improving teachers' reading records so that they identify more clearly pupils' strengths and weaknesses;
 - continuing to check resources and activities are suitable for boys.(already identified in the school's development plan)
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 7, 19, 23, 43, 52, 68, 69, 71, 72, 74, 75)

- (2) Raise standards in ICT by:
- providing training so that teachers have the skills to teach all aspects of the ICT curriculum;
 - including in planning more opportunities to teach ICT skills and ensuring pupils use computers to support learning in other subjects;
 - extending assessment procedures to show more clearly pupils' gains in knowledge and skills.
- (already identified in the school's development plan)
(Paragraphs 9, 10, 19, 21, 25, 44, 51, 55, 57, 74, 77, 84, 98, 104, 105, 106, 107)
- (3) Check on the use of a topic approach for planning to ensure the teaching of geography skills and about other faiths in religious education receive sufficient attention.
(Paragraphs 9, 14, 19, 25, 34, 44, 96, 97, 115, 117, 118, 119)
- (4) Improve the effectiveness of subject co-ordinators and the co-ordinator for special educational needs by:
- providing more opportunities for them to gain an overview of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects;
 - matching the provision for pupils with special educational more closely to their needs and monitoring their progress regularly;
 - supervising more closely the use of support staff particularly those with responsibility for helping pupils with special educational needs.
- (Paragraphs 6, 22, 26, 51, 74, 80, 81, 86, 98, 102, 107, 119)
- (5) Further promote attendance by:
- monitoring attendance more closely;
 - setting realistic targets for improvement;
 - raising the profile of good attendance in the school;
 - making parents more aware of the educational implications of taking children on holiday in term time.
- (Paragraphs 17, 39)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	42	35	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		93
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		31

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	10	10	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	14	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (94)	70 (88)	100 (88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	16	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (88)	95 (94)	95 (94)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

* Due to the number of boys and girls being ten or below this data has been omitted.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	93
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	208992
Total expenditure	197699
Expenditure per pupil	1866
Balance brought forward from previous year	26940
Balance carried forward to next year	38233

Number of questionnaires sent out

93

Number of questionnaires returned

49

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
71	27	0	0	2
55	45	0	0	0
41	53	0	2	4
43	49	6	0	2
82	14	2	0	2
63	29	6	2	0
73	22	2	0	2
69	31	0	0	0
67	24	8	0	0
69	29	0	0	2
69	27	4	0	0

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

65	29	4	0	2
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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

59. Although the previous report included limited information about the children who were under five an analysis of assessment information identifies children have been underachieving. Over the last year provision has improved with extended accommodation, better learning resources and the new teacher has successfully implemented a rich curriculum in line with the requirements of the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good and in lessons seen 25 per cent of teaching was very good, 62 per cent was good and the rest satisfactory. This high quality of teaching is already having a positive impact on the children's achievements and the good progress children are making.

60. The vast majority of children start school with low levels of numeracy, literacy and personal and social skills. The school assesses children as they start in the reception class and the results confirm these low standards. In previous years standards have been even lower. In response to the recent improvements in provision the children are now making good progress in their learning and are meeting the appropriate level for their age. By the time they start in Year 1, the vast majority have achieved well and are on target to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development.

61. Children start school part-time in the term after their fourth birthday. Currently in the reception class there are seven children who are four years old. There are also some children in the class who are over five and will move to Year 1 after Christmas. The teacher manages this wide range of ages and experiences extremely well. She has introduced effective assessment systems so that work builds on previous learning. The curriculum is organised carefully so that all pupils have full access to an interesting range of activities. This makes learning fun and there is a happy atmosphere in the class.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. The good progress children make reflects the high quality of teaching and the emphasis the school places on children learning to be independent and to accept responsibility for their actions. By the time children start Year 1, most have achieved a great deal and the standards of the vast majority are in line with those found nationally. The younger children are encouraged by all staff to try to manage their own personal needs and they already dress and undress themselves with minimum fuss and take themselves to the toilet unaided. When required, the older children help the younger ones and this enhances their understanding of the need to care for each other. Discipline is fair and the teacher grasps every opportunity to explain to children when their behaviour is unacceptable. This is effective in teaching the children about how their actions affect other members of the class. The teacher actively promotes consideration for others and the children show an understanding of the needs of others. A regular feature of the day is 'tidy up time' and the older children are very good at putting all the resources away in the correct places. Sessions are organised so that pupils have time to select their own activity and they do this extremely well. When selecting a small game or using the toy cars the children take turns and share and have already established firm friendships. The teacher has established good working habits. Behaviour is good and children are eager to learn.

Communication, language and literacy

63. The basic skills of reading and writing are taught well and have a significant impact on the standards achieved. A structured system to teach letters and sounds has been introduced and the older children are starting to use this well as they start to attempt to write small words. These children are also confident in writing their name unaided. The younger children are making marks on paper to represent letters and

some are already attempting some of the letters in their names. Reading is a regular part of the daily activities and the choice of interesting stories capture children's interest. The repetitive text 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Can I See?' was very effective in getting children to join in with the shared reading. The younger children understand how a book works and make good use of pictures when talking about stories in their books. All handle books carefully and the older children recognise the names of the characters in the school's reading scheme books. The higher attaining pupils know other words and are using their knowledge of sounds to tackle new words. All of the children listen carefully to stories and enjoy joining in the discussions at the beginning of lessons. Several lack confidence when talking about their work but in the role-play corner communicate well with each other.

Mathematical development

64. The teaching of mathematics is good and a range of interesting activities is planned that promote the children's mathematical development and they make consistently good progress and achieve well. The opening 'blast-off' counting activity checks on children's number skills as well as making learning fun. Effective questions match the ability of the children and makes them think. Children enjoy practising odd and even numbers and the vast majority are confident doing this up to ten. Older pupils are more confident and understand 'more' and 'less' and count on in their heads up to ten. Pupils are less secure writing numerals and in group activities the adult helper did not always correct children when numerals were formed incorrectly. Similarly a few children required more apparatus to help them with the counting task and this was not provided. All children are becoming skilful matching numbers to the correct number of objects. They join in number rhymes, counting 'ten green bottles' and using their fingers to work out how many more are needed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. A wide range of activities enhances children's awareness of the world around them and they achieve well and most meet the expected level by the time they start in Year 1. Teaching is good and planning shows interesting ideas to provide first hand experiences for the children so learning is more relevant. They look at the local environment and identify what they see on their way to school. Children understand that people change as they grow older and have compared photographs of themselves as babies. They have sorted toys for babies and toys for themselves and recognise needs change as they grow older. The children are introduced to investigation and use different materials to identify how well they soak up water. The teacher uses questions effectively with the older children and they start to predict which materials will soak up water. Children working with the classroom assistant learned less in the lesson. The reason for this was questioning was less effective with too much emphasis on folding the paper and insufficient attention given to getting the children to observe what was happening. During the inspection children were taught very effectively how to control a programmable floor robot. A very visual introduction made the children understand the need to give careful instructions and by the end of the lesson all understood that a sequence of instructions was needed to make the robot move.

Physical development

66. Most children reach expected standards in physical development by the time they start in Year 1. In the physical education lesson seen teaching was satisfactory although too long was spent on balancing and children started to get restless. The vast majority of children make good use of the space as they move round the hall. They run and jump confidently although a few find skipping more difficult. Most children have good control of their bodies as they learn to balance on different parts of their bodies. The teacher reminds children of the effect of exercise on the body and they know it makes their heart beat faster and this is good for them. The apparatus in the hall is unsuitable for this age range and the school has plans to replace it. Outside on the playground children demonstrate increasing control of wheeled toys, steering the vehicles around an obstacle course. However, there is no opportunity for children to climb or swing, as during the winter the apparatus is not available. Finer movements are developed effectively through a range of cutting, drawing activities and children are skilful with jigsaws and construction toys.

Creative development

67. Overall the quality of teaching is good although on occasions support provided by classroom assistants is over-directive and this hampers the development of children's creativity. For example, when making masks the focus was too much on completing the task. Insufficient attention was given to the colours being created by mixing the different layers of colours. The teacher taught effectively how to make different colours using transparent paper and children quickly grasped, for example, blue and yellow make green. The children mix paint to match the colours of autumn leaves and use a range of items to print recognising repeating patterns. Creative play to develop children's imagination and social skills is available in the home corner and the teacher adds extra items to maintain children's interest in imaginative role-play. Children enjoy singing and know a range of simple songs and rhymes. The vast majority listen carefully and copy a simple rhythm.

ENGLISH

68. Standards in English have been maintained since the last inspection and at the end of Year 2 and 4 are average in reading and speaking and listening but are below average in writing. Results of the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds show that standards in reading were in line with the national average and were above when compared to similar schools. Standards in writing were below average compared with all schools and similar schools. Test results have varied over the past four years and are difficult to analyse because of the small groups of pupils involved. Figures suggest more improvement in reading and the percentage of pupils exceeding the national average was higher than the national figure. Writing has not shown the same rising trend although there are signs of improvement. Boys are underachieving in reading and writing and the school has started to tackle this problem with new resources but as yet this has not shown any marked improvement in standards. Although there are no national test results as the end of Year 4 the school uses a range of tests that indicate the vast majority of pupils are working at an appropriate level for their age in reading and are still below average in writing.

69. When pupils start school the school assesses their literacy skills and these are lower than those seen in most schools. Many children lack confidence speaking to adults and have inadequate knowledge of letters and their sounds. Taking into consideration the additional attention boys are now receiving most pupils achieve well during their time in the school. The school has recently improved the provision for the children in the reception class with a more structured method to teach early literacy skills. Effective teaching of the children in the reception class is already having an impact on pupils' progress although this is not as yet apparent in the test results at the end of Year 2. The vast majority of pupils are achieving well in Years 3 and 4 and many achieve a great deal in response to the good teaching and leave the school with standards typical for their age. Since the previous inspection, the school has started to make better use of assessment information to target pupils requiring additional help. This has been beneficial for pupils in Year 3 who have followed the additional literacy strategy that provides useful activities and has boosted pupils' confidence in reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall but they underachieve in some lessons when classroom assistants are not available. The reason for this is the inappropriate allocation of adult support to different pupils, which leads to staff not being available at crucial times in the lesson. Also, some tasks are not matched to the pupils' needs or have not been sufficiently adapted to enable the pupils to have full access to the curriculum.

70. Standards in speaking and listening are average by the age of seven and nine. As identified in the previous report, pupils talk confidently in a range of situations. In Years 1 and 2, a few pupils lack confidence discussing their work with adults but these skills improve in conversation with their friends. In the role-play activity in the mixed Year 1/2 class pupils included expression as they acted the part of different characters and the rest of the class were good listeners. Listening is not always effective and some pupils repeat other pupils' ideas, as they have not been listening with sufficient care to the discussion. Speaking improves in the Year 3/4 class when in one lesson pupils showed an interesting vocabulary as they suggested alternative verbs to make writing their more interesting. They are eager to take part in class discussions and show a clear understanding of the need to take it in turns when speaking.

The vast majority show increasing confidence of subject-specific language, which supports their learning in other subjects, notably in mathematics.

71. Given the low level of attainment on entry to the school, the vast majority of pupils achieve well and reach satisfactory standards in reading. The new approach to teaching letters and sounds is already showing benefits in the reception class with even the youngest children knowing the names and sounds of a few letters. In a Year 2 lesson, most pupils read the instructions about a visit to the zoo. This was taught very well and drama provided effective support for the below average pupils. They have a secure knowledge of sounds and use this well to tackle new words. The average and above average pupils are starting to check that their reading makes sense. The Year 2 pupils who read to the inspectors were confident retelling previous favourite stories and predicted suitable conclusions for the stories they were reading. The average and above average readers successfully use the contents and index sections of books to locate information. In response to the teachers' stimulating approach to literature pupils in the mixed Year 3 /4 class are more enthusiastic readers. They enjoy the shared story that is a regular feature of the day and have a wider knowledge of authors. Referencing skills have improved and all are confident finding facts in books and the above average pupils quickly scan a text to find key words. Reading records show the books and pages pupils read but few refer to the strategies pupils use as they are reading. This leads to teachers not always having a clear understanding of pupils' levels in reading and some tasks are set that do not closely match their reading ability.

72. Considering the limitations of pupils' skills in writing as they start in the reception class pupils do well in most lessons but have not made sufficient progress to achieve satisfactory standards at the end of Year 2 or Year 4. However, there are signs of improvement with the younger children in reception already writing their name unaided. By the end of Year 2, pupils are starting to write in a variety of styles. Higher attaining pupils write instructions for tasks in their classroom. However, average and below average pupils are unable to write at length. This is because they are still at the stage of using their knowledge of sounds to write simple words and are not sufficiently confident spelling many commonly used words. Teachers encourage pupils to extend these skills and higher attaining pupils make good attempts at writing poetry. Language is more imaginative as in the description of the snake 'moving slowly on slimy scales.' By the end of Year 4, pupils have written in a wider range of styles and the use of basic punctuation is usually correct. Higher attaining pupils structure their work carefully and have started to use paragraphs correctly. Although the previous report identified pupils drafted their work this was not evident during the current inspection and final pieces of work often contain basic errors. Similarly there was limited evidence of the use of word processing to support learning. Teaching of spelling and handwriting are not as effective as other aspects of English. Spelling standards are weak throughout the school. Many pupils rely heavily on their knowledge of sounds and are unsure about other spelling rules and common spelling patterns. Although pupils have regular spelling tests they are not taught how to learn new words and their own personal errors receive insufficient attention. Handwriting is a weakness throughout the school as there is no clear structure to teaching handwriting and inconsistent expectations from teachers. Younger pupils form letters correctly but many mix upper and lower case letters and very few pupils in Year 4 are joining up their handwriting.

73. Teachers plan carefully for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other lessons and this has a positive impact in extending pupils' skills. Although writing skills are below average pupils have sufficient skills to write up their results in science correctly labelling diagrams and listing methods. Reading skills are used for research. Writing skills are practised as Year 4 pupils write about the difficulties experienced by apprentices after a visit to Styal Mill.

74. Overall teaching is good across the school and leads to pupils learning well in most lessons. This is particularly evident in teaching reading and developing pupils' confidence in speaking. Teachers provide ample opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in writing independently but insufficient attention is given to the teaching of spelling and handwriting. In the lessons seen all teaching was good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 and 4. The National Literacy Strategy has been put in place and lessons follow a good structure and lessons include an interesting shared text that has extended pupils' reading skills and enthusiasm for books. The overuse of photocopiable worksheets was a problem at the time of the previous

inspection and this has now been resolved. Most lessons include interesting activities and that make learning more exciting for pupils. This was effective in Year 1 /2 when role-play was used and the pupils went on a visit to the zoo so that by the end of the session they all had a good understanding of the purpose of instructions. The teacher used a puppet imaginatively to encourage careful listening. The teacher allowed the puppet to make errors and pupils were delighted to spot them and consequently learned at a faster rate. Planning is good and includes a range of tasks for the different ages and abilities in their classes. This means work is usually pitched at the correct level so that pupils can extend their learning. This was less successful when support for lower attaining pupils was not always available and this hampered their learning. Plans include clear learning outcomes and most teachers are now sharing these with pupils so that they are clear about the focus of the lesson. This was effective in Year 3 /4 when the focus was the use of powerful verbs and through clear outcomes and effective modelling of good practice this outcome was achieved by all pupils. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection and teachers are more aware of the level of their pupils. Individual targets are set and included in pupils' homework diaries so that parents know how to help their children at home. In the vast majority of lessons teachers manage pupils' behaviour well so that, pupils concentrate and complete their work. Only in lessons where more practical games are being used does the noise become a problem and this could be managed more effectively. The quality of reading books has improved since the previous inspection and teachers check pupils are reading a wider range of authors. Resources for ICT have improved but during the inspection there was no evidence of computers being used in lessons although some previous work had been word-processed. Homework, notably in reading, makes a significant contribution to pupils improving standards.

75. The headteacher has responsibility for co-ordinating the subject and so has a good overview of standards in the subject. Assessment data is now used far more effectively to set individual targets for pupils and also to adjust the curriculum when a weakness is identified. This has been effective in the introduction of a new system to teach letters and sounds but the teaching of spelling and handwriting still requires more attention. The school is aware of the weakness in writing and has a detailed action plan to address weaknesses in the teaching of spelling and handwriting. The school has a new library and plans to extend the range of books available. Currently it is used as a base for teaching pupils with special educational needs and is not yet developed as a resource to extend pupils' research skills. Book fairs, theatre visits and the very popular school performances all enhance the formal curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

76. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds results were well above the national average and very high when compared with similar schools. All pupils reached the level expected for their age and an average proportion, (20 per cent) exceeded this level. Trends over time show standards have been gradually improving. There is no significant different in the attainment of boys and girls. The school has raised its standards considerably since the last inspection, when standards were average and some pupils did not achieve well enough. The weaknesses identified in planning have been fully resolved with the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and this has led to higher standards. Currently, standards in Year 2 are average. They are not as high as in 2000 as the group includes less higher attaining pupils and fewer are working at a higher level. There is also a significant group of pupils with special educational needs who are working below the level expected for their age. However, taking into consideration the low level of attainment as these pupils start school most pupils are attaining average standards and this reflects good achievement. Pupils in Year 4 are also working at levels, which are appropriate for their age and again this shows good achievement for these pupils.

77. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in number work and, at age seven, add and subtract confidently to 100. Higher attainers work on numbers to 1000. Most pupils understand the value of tens and units and higher attainers order three digit numbers accurately. They learn good strategies for adding and subtracting and apply them well in mental sessions. For example, they know that $37 + 11 = 37 + 10 + 1$ or $30 + 10 + 7 + 1$. They learn their 2, 5 and 10 times tables and apply these well in mental sessions and in solving problems. In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to make good progress and extend their work to larger

numbers. They add two digit numbers and higher attainers add three digits, using carrying figures. They extend their range of tables and apply their knowledge well in solving problems. Pupils understand simple fractions and begin to convert these to decimal places. All pupils learn to collect data and present it in the form of graphs. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils made a graph of leaf colours that they collected in science. Older pupils interpret the information from graphs that they produce in topic work. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils conducted their own research and produced graphs on a variety of topics, such as pets and soap powders. These were then displayed for other pupils to examine and answer questions. Some use computers to enter data and produce a simple graph but the use of ICT in mathematics is underdeveloped. Work on measurement, shape and time is at the level expected at the end of Years 2 and 4.

78. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this has been effective in promoting good learning in lessons. Pupils enjoy the lively mental arithmetic sessions and these improve pupils' mental agility. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' previous learning to target questions to individuals. Pupils are eager to answer and teachers consolidate their learning well by asking them to explain their answers. In Years 2 and 3, the teacher involved pupils in ordering multiples of 10 and 5 to a 100 on a washing line and then asked them how they might improve what they had done. This develops pupils' thinking skills as they discuss a variety of methods to solve problems. All teachers make good use of a "Number Detective" game that enables pupils to use their evidence to find the correct answers. For example, Years 3 and 4 had to find a number between 1 and 100 by asking up to 10 questions. The teacher encouraged them to listen and think hard about previous answers and most used their information well to solve the problems by asking good mathematical questions like "Is it an odd number?" "Is it between 30 and 50?" or "Is it a multiple of 5?"

79. Teaching is good overall, and teachers have good mathematical knowledge. They make good teaching points and give clear instructions about the independent tasks for their pupils so that pupils understand what they have to do. Teachers provide tasks that enable pupils to investigate for themselves, applying strategies they have learned in solving problems. Work is set that is usually interesting and is matched appropriately to the needs of pupils, enabling them to make good progress. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked on bank statements and writing cheques and they found this real-life task exciting. They worked hard on their calculations and made good progress. The younger and lower attaining pupils were supported by staff to help them to achieve well and succeed at the task. Older and higher attaining pupils worked independently and enjoyed the challenge. However, on some occasions work is not matched closely to pupils' prior learning and pupils find the work too hard or too easy. Teachers usually make good use of the closing sessions of each lesson to assess what pupils have learned and consolidate learning. They review the learning targets for the lessons so that pupils know what they have learned. Mathematical skills are applied effectively in other subjects, such as in timelines and graphs in history and graphs in science and pupils are confident in applying what they have learned.

80. The quality of help provided by special educational needs assistants and classroom assistants is generally satisfactory but varies considerably between classes. It mainly promotes satisfactory progress and in some lessons it is very effective and enables pupils to learn well. However, in other lessons pupils with statements of special educational need do not always receive support when it is most needed, in independent working sessions. On some occasions it is inappropriate and hinders progress rather than supports it. For example, when a group of Year 2 pupils were working on money to 10 pence and buying items at the shop the resources were not suitable for the needs of these pupils. The task became too complicated when pupils bought items over 10p and change was introduced and pupils did not make any progress.

81. Management is good and the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and is effective in supporting staff in planning interesting lessons. All staff have worked together and drawn up a detailed action plan that is resulting in improved teaching and learning and rising standards. The headteacher has observed work in all classrooms and checked the quality of work in pupils' books and this has had a positive impact on standards. Currently the co-ordinator does not have opportunities to check on provision in lessons.

SCIENCE

82. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2000 showed standards were above average and nearly all pupils reached the expected level. When compared with those of similar school results indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well above the average. The proportion reaching higher levels was below average for schools nationally and similar schools. However, the small numbers of pupils actually taking the tests mean that comparisons between results of different years and other schools should be treated with caution.

83. Inspection evidence reflects teachers' assessments and indicates standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Standards are satisfactory for those pupils due to leave school at the end of Year 4. This reflects the picture from the previous inspection for pupils at seven years of age, but not for those at the end of Year 4 when attainment was felt to be good. However, the current Year 4 includes a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and this affects the overall standard. Pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well from a low level of understanding. By the end of Year 2, pupils use the idea of a fair test to find out which is the best washing powder. They know the difference between living and non-living things and that there are different stages in human growth. They consider carefully what it means to have a healthy diet. They learn about the five senses, carry out and efficiently record investigations into these. Pupils understand that electricity is a source of power and that it has to travel in a circuit. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 extend these skills and become more confident when investigating. They have a clear understanding that if their results are going to be correct they have to check the investigation is fair. As part of an investigation into the qualities and features of different kinds of paper, pupils successfully decided on their own questions and designed different ways of finding the answers. Knowledge about a healthy diet is further extended by a talk from the school nurse. Pupils were fascinated by the amount of sugar in food and have a good understanding that too much sugar is bad for them and is often a cause of tooth decay.

84. The quality of teaching is good overall, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Teaching is a key factor in pupils' good quality of learning. Teachers plan lessons with clear, attainable and relevant objectives. The good relationships between the teacher and pupils lead to positive attitudes to work and good behaviour. A strong feature of science teaching is the focus on promoting the skills of scientific investigation and encouraging independent research and skills of analysis and prediction. Lessons arouse pupils' interest and teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to succeed and they are eager to learn and carry out the planned investigations enthusiastically. For example, pupils were given the challenge of making a bulb light and they were delighted when they did so. The teacher provides a good range of resources, for example, electrical components prepared in a way that made them easily handled by pupils in Year 2. This enables pupils to accomplish their tasks and meet the challenges set for them. However, there are not enough opportunities for older pupils in particular to make and record measurements when appropriate. ICT is underused in teaching, being restricted to producing occasional bar charts. Teachers make sound assessments of how well pupils achieve, but the results of these assessments are insufficiently used in planning future work. Supportive and evaluative comments on completed work contribute effectively to pupils' progress. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs in lessons and they make similar progress to their classmates.

85. Pupils use their literacy skills soundly in science. They talk about and record their work using appropriate vocabulary. Much of their written work in science is completed on suitably prepared worksheets that prompt them to consider their answers carefully. They extended their understanding of writing in different styles when older pupils wrote a playlet for younger ones explaining the importance of washing your hands.

86. Management of the subject is satisfactory although the co-ordinator has no opportunity to check on teaching in the classroom and this limits the extent to which she is able to develop provision.

ART AND DESIGN

87. Standards in art and design are satisfactory and are similar to those seen in most schools at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils have used a satisfactory range of materials, including pencils, paints and pastels and have practised a sound range of techniques, producing pictures and three-dimensional work. This is similar to the standards found at the time of the last inspection.

88. The work on display shows pupils achieve satisfactorily and build on their own skills and increase their understanding and knowledge of techniques and artists. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a sense of colour, looking at rainbows and mixing primary colours to try to produce their own. They gain a greater understanding of the idea of colour mixing and improve their skills with scissors when they make card spinners. They show an understanding of colour and design in their geometric pictures in the style of Mondrian. Older pupils use the skills they have learned to produce pictures in the style of artists such as Georgia O’Keeffe. They design and make intriguing models of imaginary germs using a range of different materials as part of their topic on ‘Caring for Ourselves’. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and make satisfactory progress related to their previous learning. Pupils at Year 1 and 2 look at Australian Aboriginal art with the help of ICT and listen to didgeridoo music when preparing to produce artwork in that style. However, pupils only have a few opportunities to study the work of art and artists from a variety of cultures and traditions.

89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Although only one art lesson was seen during the inspection, the artwork on display shows that teachers cover the subject appropriately, introducing the required skills and using a satisfactory range of materials. Pupils produce a fair amount of pleasing artwork, finished to a satisfactory standard. In the lesson seen the teacher stimulated work on rainbows and colour mixing through discussion and reminding pupils of the many rainbows seen the previous week. Resources, such as brushes and appropriate colours of paint, were prepared before the lesson and suitable for the task in hand. Consequently, pupils were able to start their work quickly and their positive attitudes to art were evident in their enjoyment.

90. Displays of work around the school, often linked to topics in other subjects, such as work on the rain forests, enhance the school environment. A popular art club makes a useful contribution to participants’ artistic achievements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. At the end of Year 2 and Year 4, all pupils including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily and attain standards in design and technology similar to those seen in most schools. In the previous inspection, standards were good at both key stages. However, since that time, the school has focussed on numeracy and literacy and has not kept pace with changes in design and technology. Pupils draw plans of what they intend to construct and draw up lists of materials they might need. They use a range of skills and techniques to make their finished products and older pupils evaluate these in terms of what they found successful and where they might make improvements. In doing so, they learn a range of skills including, for example, how to saw wood safely and accurately. They consider different ways of joining materials and which materials are suitable for different purposes.

92. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory and teachers include opportunities for design as well as making. For example, teachers set a design task to modify Santa’s sleigh so that it sails instead of flying (to protect the ozone layer). Teachers challenge pupils and there is often a requirement in tasks to include electrical circuitry. For example, an alarm to warn an imaginary character Erm the Worm if someone tries to invade his burrow. In this way, the topic is linked to work pupils have done in science. Effective links are made with other subjects and as part of their work on Tudors, pupils were given the task of constructing a Tudor house. Pupils are given an appropriate degree of freedom in selecting their materials and techniques, which enhances their progress and independence in learning. Pupils share materials and tasks and help each other. In the lesson seen, there was a good level of supervision from the teacher and

support staff so that safe practices were always being observed. This led to good behaviour and pupils become engrossed in their work. Activities capture pupils' enthusiasm and one pupil was very disappointed when he had to leave his work. A less effective aspect of teaching is insufficient attention to the teaching of a wider range of techniques, such as the use of different methods for the construction of chassis for vehicles or other frameworks.

93. Since the previous inspection, there has been an improvement in the range and quality of resources and these are now satisfactory, organised well and accessible.

GEOGRAPHY

94. The subject was not taught during the inspection and judgements are based upon a limited range of evidence from the previous year and discussions with pupils. Attainment at age 7 is similar to most pupils nationally and meets the expectation of the National Curriculum. This indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. At age nine, pupils' attainment is below average for their age. At the time of the last inspection pupils' attainment was average.

95. All pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily and enjoy the range of topics they study. In Year 1 they study the local weather and keep a diary to look at the weather pattern. They learn about how this affects what we wear in different seasons. Year 2 pupils in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class make good progress in mapping skills and learn about local, British and world maps to a satisfactory level. For example, pupils learn their address and place it on a local map; they then locate Rocester on a map of Britain and locate Britain on a map of the world. They also locate holiday venues in Britain on a map of the British Isles and link children around the world to their countries on a world map. In a topic on their own village pupils learn about their own village and how maps show that it has changed since Roman times. However, they do not compare their own village with those of other villages or towns.

96. In Years 3 and 4 pupils do not build upon this work sufficiently and could achieve more. They learn about the countries and capital cities of Europe and locate these on a map. However, they do not study any other village or town locations to compare and contrast these with Rocester and investigate why there are similarities and differences. Nor do pupils learn enough about geographical features of their own area. When asked about the local river several Year 4 pupils said that it floods when it rains and that it started at the bridge at the end of the village. A higher attaining pupil knew that it started a long way away but even she thought that it began as a big river, rather than a small stream. Year 3 and 4 pupils are currently learning about rainforests and have a satisfactory understanding of how human action affects the environment.

97. As no lessons were observed and there was little written evidence of work it is not possible to make a fully balanced judgement on teaching. However, indications are that it is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4 in promoting learning of geographical skills and knowledge. This is at least partly because of the way in which the curriculum is planned into topics. Geography is largely taught through other subjects and there is no clear guidance to teachers on the geographical skills that should be progressively developed.

98. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed and a new scheme of work is being developed. However, this is in the early stages and has not made an impact on teaching or standards. The co-ordinator has multiple responsibilities and has not had time to audit resources fully or check on what is happening in other classes. Resources have changed little since the time of the previous inspection and remain inadequate. There is only limited use of ICT in the subject because of a shortage of suitable programs.

HISTORY

99. At the age of seven standards are in line with those expected for their age and this signifies satisfactory achievement by all pupils including those with special educational needs. In Years 3 and 4

pupils build well on previous work and achievement is satisfactory and standards are average at the end of Year 4.

100. At age seven, pupils have a sound understanding of the passage of time and know that things such as transport and clothing change. They compare their own toys with those of their parents and grandparents. They learn about famous people, such as Guy Fawkes. Average and higher attaining pupils work on the Year 3 and 4 topics at a simpler level and gain an appropriate knowledge of some eras, for example the Tudors. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. They have a sound knowledge about the Romans, the Tudors and the Victorians. There is a strong emphasis on the development of historical skills of investigation through examination of artefacts and extracting information from books. Their understanding of chronology is satisfactory and is enhanced by the use of timelines and they know that the Romans were first of the eras they study and were a long time before the Tudors and Victorians. Most correctly identify appropriate artefacts for each era and say why they made their decisions.

101. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and sometimes good. Pupils develop good attitudes to the subject and learning is satisfactory in lessons. . They are interested and enjoy the varied activities that teachers provide. Teachers make good use of the village locality and of resources in the area and this effectively enhances pupils' learning and attitudes. Teachers organise theme days in school and visits to historical venues, such as Styal Mill. These provide pupils with opportunities to examine artefacts and re-enact history and deepen their understanding of life in the past. For example, they have held a Victorian school day which helped them to appreciate the differences between then and now. Good links are made with other subjects, such as geography and design and technology. For example, when pupils study the Romans they look at maps of their own village in Roman times and as it is now to see the changes that have occurred.

102. Co-ordination of the subject is effective and the co-ordinator is developing a new scheme of work to match the new National Curriculum. Currently there is no monitoring of how this new scheme is being put in place in the classroom. The school has few artefacts but makes good use of loans from teachers, parents and the local community and the impressive displays in the school bring the subject to life for pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. No direct teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work at both key stages, including work stored on floppy disks, discussions with pupils and teachers and a scrutiny of planning.

104. By the end of Years 2 and 4 standards are generally below that expected from pupils of that age. This is a similar picture to that noted in the previous inspection when attainment and progress were judged to be unsatisfactory.

105. Pupils at both key stages have insufficient experience and understanding of using ICT as a subject in itself or as applied to other subjects. Progress is unsatisfactory and pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs are underachieving. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use an art program to produce firework pictures. Older pupils produce simple drawings using art programs and carry out basic word processing tasks, for example, producing a name plate for their bedroom doors, selecting the size and appearance of text they want. They load these programs, use them using a keyboard and mouse, print and save their work. They find words to do with their work in literacy and enter these into a word processing program. However, pupils have little experience of using a wider range of ICT to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, as part of a history lesson, some older pupils find pictures with connections to their history work, but use those in a simple art program to do so, rather than researching CD-ROMS or pages from the Internet.

106. Currently teaching is unsatisfactory, as teachers do not give sufficient attention to the teaching of ICT skills. During the inspection, the majority of computers in the school were underused. The uses that were observed did little to enhance pupils' quality of learning other than to consolidate and practise basic

skills. The outdated technology reported in most classes has been updated and new computers bought. However, a number of teachers lack the confidence and understanding to make better use of them in teaching and learning. One teacher had made good use of new technology to show Year 1 and 2 pupils examples of Aboriginal art, downloaded from the Internet. Planning for ICT is not yet firmly embedded in teachers' planning and currently is implemented through the school's topic plans and as such receives insufficient attention.

107. Another factor hampering pupils' progress in ICT is the limited range of computer programs to support the work that is being done in other subjects. Co-ordination of the subject has not been effective due to lack of close monitoring of what is being taught. However, the school has recognised its shortcomings and has produced an action plan to boost teachers' skills and confidence and to provide appropriate software.

MUSIC

108. Only one music lesson was seen during the inspection and other evidence included attending extra-curricular activities and reviewing school videos. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily and reach the standard expected for their age.

109. Evidence gleaned from the video of school performances and school assemblies indicates that singing is satisfactory. When the choir was singing in assembly pupils sang different parts and due attention was given to the quality of the singing. The video shows pupils had been taught about music from different decades of the last century. They sing popular songs from the wars as well as Beatles music and obviously enjoy singing in front of an audience. Pupils have an opportunity to learn to play the recorder after school. These pupils read music and play simple tunes. By the time they leave school pupils have a clear understanding that music can be represented by symbols and in the lesson seen were beginning to read musical notation. Higher attaining pupils use correct terminology for the musical notes. The teacher shares an enthusiasm for music with the pupils and they know different types of music and compare jazz and blues music. Pupils listen carefully to a rhythm and then repeat it clapping or using percussion while other pupils bring in different rhythms to produce a class performance. They are very proud of their efforts and keen to practise to make it better.

110. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Teaching seen was very good and included opportunities to compose a simple tune as well as play together as a class. The pace was brisk and tasks challenged pupils and they gave close attention to instructions and were eager to learn more. Lessons build on previous learning. For example, pupils use pictures of instruments in their early attempts at composition before moving on to using correct musical notation. This leads to pupils gaining in confidence and they are happy to try new ideas.

111. Teachers give generously of their time to provide activities after school and the choir and recorder group performs in special occasions in the village. Links with the local middle school are strengthened by the brass band visiting and playing for the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. As at the time of the previous inspection no physical education was observed due to the organisation of the timetable. The school has resolved the lack of a school hall with the recent building of a new classroom. Resources for gymnastics are old and unsuitable for younger pupils and the school has plans to replace this equipment.

113. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 have a weekly swimming lesson. The scheme allows pupils to attain awards for their swimming skills and currently as pupils leave school all can swim. As many pupils enter school as non-swimmers this shows good achievement during their time in school.

114. The school has a good range of activities after school and the sports club is very popular and provides opportunities for pupils to play netball, football, rounders and other team games. Teams have played against other schools and also take part in local athletic and swimming competitions. The dance club celebrates pupils' local heritage as they learn several country-dances and they perform these well showing competence of several different steps. The school organises a visit to Kingswood near Telford for Year 4 pupils and they take part in a range of challenging activities such as, rock climbing, caving and computer activities. This experience was highly praised by parents and is successful in extending pupils' physical and personal and social skills as they learn to live together and help each other.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. At age seven, pupils have made satisfactory progress and achieve the standard recommended in the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. At age nine, pupils have made satisfactory progress in their knowledge of Christianity but their knowledge and understanding of other faiths is below average for their age.

116. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and the way that Christians live. They know a range of Bible stories and discuss the implications of these at an appropriate level. For example, pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class discuss the rights and wrongs of the story of Joseph's coat of many colours and appreciate the feelings of both Joseph and his brothers. At age seven, pupils talk about their feelings and those of others and think how their actions might help others. They develop good knowledge about Christian festivals, such as Christmas, harvest and Easter and of celebrations, such as birthdays and Christenings. This is enhanced by the close links with the local church and the expertise of the vicar. For example, a Christening service was held in the church so that pupils could experience this for themselves. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build well upon this work and understand the symbols of Christianity. For example, they know that candles represent light and that Jesus is the light. Their visits to the local church enhance this knowledge well and they talk confidently about artefacts they see there, such as the font. They know an appropriate range of Bible stories, such as the Good Samaritan and discuss the deeper meaning of these, making links to their own lives. Although the scheme of work indicates that pupils should study other faiths, particularly Judaism and Islam, they have unsatisfactory knowledge of these. Year 4 pupils know that Jesus was a Jew but some believe that all Jewish people live in Israel. They have studied Hanukkah, whilst in Year 3, but none could recall this work. They have no knowledge of Islamic beliefs and customs. During the inspection pupils made Diwali cards. They learned that Diwali is a festival of light but did not learn anything about the underlying beliefs of the festival or of Hinduism. Some believe that Hindus attend the Catholic Church. They know the story of Rama and Sita but cannot say why this is so special to Hindus. None of the pupils spoken to could name any artefacts of other faiths. For example, when asked what a diya (a Hindu oil lamp) was they replied that it was a candle but was thicker than those you find in a Christian church.

117. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have sound knowledge of Christianity and use this well to teach knowledge and skills. They provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss what they learn and pupils enjoy this and develop good attitudes to their work. Pupils learn to understand the underlying beliefs and values of Christianity and how being Christian affects their lives. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of other faiths and pupils underachieve in this aspect of the subject. Whilst teachers plan appropriate activities there is insufficient guidance in the scheme of work to help teachers in planning for teaching of the beliefs and values of others. As a result, pupils enjoy the activities but do not learn enough about why artefacts or festivals are important to followers of other faiths nor how this relates to modern Britain.

118. Co-ordination of religious education is unsatisfactory, as the subject has received insufficient attention due to staff changes. A new co-ordinator is developing a scheme of work. This does not yet provide the level of support that teachers need to plan for full coverage of the subject. The co-ordinator has a clear view of provision and knows that more guidance and artefacts are needed for the study of

world faiths. Currently staff make very good use of their own personal resources and loaned artefacts. At the time of the inspection a lovely display of artefacts and pupils' writing about a Christening service provided an attractive welcome to the school as well as enhancing pupils' learning.